



early childhood

# ACTIVITY GUIDE

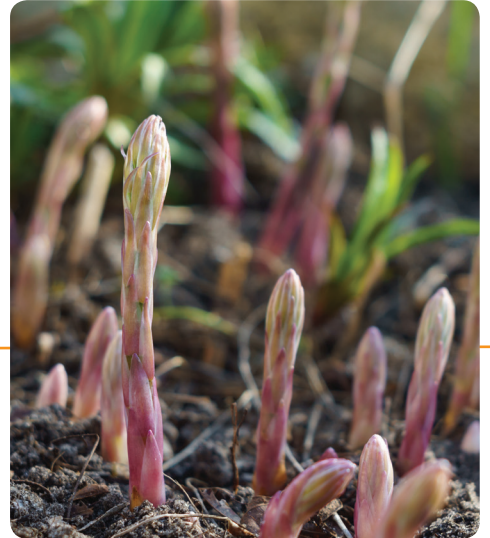
## ASPARAGUS

### LEARN



#### facts

- Spanish translation: *Los espárragos*
- Hmong translation: *Kaus Ntsuag/Kaus Ntoo*
- Asparagus is a stem vegetable that grows from the ground up.
- Asparagus stems can be green, white, or purple.



### EAT



#### nutrition & seasonality

- Asparagus has folate. Folate is a B vitamin that our body uses to create new blood cells and keep our blood vessels and heart healthy.  
**Share with children:** Folate is used in our bodies to make new blood cells and keep our heart healthy.
- Fresh asparagus grown in Wisconsin is available in May and June.

### TASTE



#### taste testing

Give children a spear of raw asparagus and a spear of cooked asparagus. Ask questions like:

- What does the asparagus taste like?
- What does the asparagus look like?
- How do the asparagus spears taste — the same or different?
- Which one is your favorite?

Nutritious,  
Delicious,  
Wisconsin!



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## FUN



### activity: Bendable, Snap-Able Asparagus Spears

**Gather** one or two bunches of asparagus with woody ends attached. Ask children to explore the asparagus with their hands, eyes, and noses. Invite children to gently bend asparagus spears to test their flexibility.

**Ask** children to compare the look and texture of asparagus buds (tips) and stems. Remove some of the buds from the stems so children can explore the pieces separately. How does the asparagus bud feel (bumpy?)? What about the asparagus stem (smooth? soft?)? Ask children to compare the texture of and color of the very bottom of the asparagus stem (the woody end) with the rest of the stem.

**Teach** children how to snap off the woody ends of the asparagus spears. Hold the tip with one hand and the end with the other. Bend the asparagus spear until it snaps naturally above the woody end. Invite children to try!

— Adapted from: *Harvest for Healthy Kids*

**Share pictures** and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.



## READ



### books

- *Asparagus: Fun Facts on Fruits and Vegetables* by Michelle Hawkins
- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by Lois Ehlert
- *Vegetables* by Sara Anderson



## GARDEN CONNECTION

### planting

Asparagus plants are usually grown from one-year-old crowns (an underground stem). This provides a crop more quickly than if asparagus is grown from seed. Plant asparagus early in the spring. Asparagus requires about three years from the time of planting to establish permanent roots and produce quality spears. If uncut, the edible stalks develop into fern-like plants in warmer temperatures. In the first year, it is essential for ferns to develop and for the spears to be left unharvested so the roots can develop. Asparagus will return every year for 20 to 30 years!

### harvesting

Harvest asparagus in the late spring and early summer. It is best to wait until after the third year of growth to harvest your first crop. Snap or cut spears close to the ground that are pencil-thin and 5 to 8 inches long. Refrigerate asparagus for up to four days by wrapping the ends of stalks in a wet paper towel and placing them in a plastic bag.