

Item of the Week: ASPARAGUS



Asparagus is a spring vegetable that's packed with nutrition. When you buy asparagus, either fresh from the farmers' market or grocery store, it's best to eat it right away. Asparagus pairs nicely with lots of other spring vegetables and flavors—think peas, garlic or new potatoes. 1 cup of cooked asparagus has 40 calories, 4 grams of protein, 4 grams of fiber and 404 milligrams of potassium. Potassium is good for blood pressure and asparagus also contains asparagine, which helps improve blood flow and in turn helps lower blood pressure. If you need more reasons to enjoy this yummy vegetable read on to see some surprising reasons it's so good for you.

Health Benefits of Asparagus

1. Keeps Your Bones Healthy

It keeps your bones healthy. A serving of asparagus contains an impressive 69.6% of your daily recommended dose of vitamin K. This is fantastic news for your bones, because vitamin K is essential for keeping them strong and healthy. It helps with bone repair and formation, and has been known to aid in the prevention of osteoporosis and osteoarthritis. Vitamin K is also important for the synthesis of osteocalcin—a protein within your bone tissue that calcium crystallizes upon.

2. It Assists Digestion

Asparagus contains fiber, which is essential for a nice healthy digestive system. This is particularly important if you enjoy going number two on a regular basis and don't particularly want to be constipated.

3. It has Anti-aging Properties

Asparagus is rich in vitamin E, which is also a lipid-soluble antioxidant and therefore highly beneficial for your skin. It helps to protect tissue cells from mediated oxidant injury, which basically means that it keeps your skin looking young and healthy.

4. It's Good for Healthy Hair

Since we're on the vain train already, we might as well talk hair. The calcium, antioxidants, and vitamins A and C within asparagus all promote healthy hair. They stimulate your hair follicles, which subsequently produce sebum. Although that word is generally associated with nasty, oily pimples, it can be a good thing when it comes to the top of your head. Sebum is a natural conditioner and moisturizer for your hair, which means it makes it stronger and prevents it from becoming dry and brittle.

5. It Can Prevent Cancer

Being a leafy green vegetables, asparagus is high in folate, which is known to protect against cancer. It should be noted that eating foods that contain folate is much better than taking folic acid. The latter is a mere supplement and therefore the benefits derived from natural folate are greater.

6. It Prevents Birth Defects

Speaking of our good mate folate, it's also imperative for pregnant women. In fact, many doctors recommend a folic acid supplement for those who are even considering pregnancy. This is because folate regulates the fetal and embryonic nerve cell formations. Furthermore, it can also help to prevent premature births.

7. It Assists with Weight Loss

A serving of asparagus contains roughly 10.9% of your daily fiber requirements. This is important for weight loss because, as previously mentioned, it helps to kick start your digestive system. In addition, fiber helps you feel fuller for longer, so you're less tempted to gorge yourself on food you don't really need.

8. It's a Brain Booster

Another anti-aging property of this delicious spring veggie is that it may help our brains fight cognitive decline. Like leafy greens, asparagus delivers folate, which works with vitamin B12—found in fish, poultry, meat and dairy—to help prevent cognitive impairment.

White & Purple Asparagus

White Asparagus



White asparagus is the same plant as green asparagus, but it lacks color because it's grown underground. Farmers cover it with soil as it grows, so the stalks don't undergo photosynthesis. There's one other big difference: Before cooking, you'll need to peel away the stalks' thick, bitter skin. After that, your best bet is to boil or steam. Here are seven of our favorite recipes for ultra-seasonal white asparagus.

Nutritional Value - White asparagus offers a lower amount of antioxidants than regular asparagus, a result of the lack of chlorophyll. Rutin, ascorbic acid, tocopherol, glutathione and ferulic acid are all found present in White asparagus along with vitamins B, A and C. White asparagus contains a high amount of non-essential aspartic acid, which was named after asparagus, the source of which it was first isolated.

Purple Asparagus



Purple asparagus is similar in appearance and flavor to both white and green varieties as its original cultivar came from green asparagus. It's differentiated by its violet hued stems and conical crowned tips, however its feathery foliage is still green. Its attractive violet coloring is only skin deep as its flesh is pale green to creamy white. It is inherently less fibrous thus more tender than other asparagus types. Also, its preferred sweetness is due to its twenty percent higher sugar content than other asparagus varieties. Cooked purple asparagus develops flavorful notes of artichoke, barley and almonds.

Nutritional Value - Purple asparagus' colour comes from the high levels of anthocyanins in the spears. Anthocyanins are potent antioxidant flavonoids that have protective and preventative health benefits, including anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.



Crosset Company's Annual Produce and Floral Conference will be held on
Wednesday, August 22, 2018

Recipe (Source: Allrecipes.com)

ROASTED ASPARAGUS WITH PARMESAN

Ingredients:

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 1 pound fresh asparagus, tough ends trimmed
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder, or to taste



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
2. Spray the inside of a 9x13 casserole dish with olive oil cooking spray. Place asparagus in the dish and lightly spray spears with cooking spray.
3. Sprinkle asparagus with Parmesan cheese, sea salt, and garlic powder.
4. Roast in preheated oven until fork easily punctures thickest part of stem, about 12 minutes.

CREAM OF ASPARAGUS SOUP

Ingredients:

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| 2 tablespoons butter | 1 pinch cayenne pepper, or to taste |
| 1 onion, finely diced | freshly ground black pepper to taste |
| salt to taste | 1 pinch ground nutmeg |
| 4 cups chicken broth | 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream |
| 2 cups water | |
| 2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces | |



Cream Topping:

- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream (optional)
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest (optional)
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper (optional)

Directions:

1. Melt butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Add minced onion and salt; cook and stir until onion is soft and golden, about 10 minutes.
2. Pour chicken broth and water into pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and simmer 15 minutes.
3. Place asparagus pieces in simmering broth. Cook, stirring occasionally until asparagus is just tender and still bright green, 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Use an immersion blender to blend soup until smooth, about 3 minutes.
5. For a finer texture, strain soup through mesh strainer. Return strained soup to pot and place on stove.
6. Turn heat to low. Season with cayenne pepper, black pepper, and nutmeg. Adjust salt to taste. Whisk 1/2 cup cream into soup.
7. Place 1/4 cup cream, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and lemon zest in a small bowl. Whisk until frothy and slightly thickened, about 1 minute.
8. Ladle soup into bowls. Drizzle a spoonful of Parmigiano-Reggiano-lemon cream on top of each serving and swirl to form a random design.
9. Sprinkle with a pinch of lemon zest and cayenne pepper, if desired.

Organic Produce

BEETS: Beets still remain a challenge due to curly top virus that impacts the plant leaves and bulb. Supplies will be limited for a few more weeks until growers move to lower elevation new fields that should be clean.

BROCCOLI: Supply has leveled off on broccoli but we are still seeing some higher cost from suppliers. We are seeing the Salinas growing region come on early that could lead to supply gaps later in the season.

BUNCH CARROTS: Supply has rebounded quite well and we are seeing much better quality.

CABBAGE: Supply has been stable and the warmer temperatures in Florida have increased supply.

CAULIFLOWER: Supplies are starting to become a little more limited and cost is rising. We are seeing some suppliers cut inbound supply due to insects and discoloration issues.

CELERY: Supply is getting better as we have moved up in to California regions. Pricing has started to tick up over the past couple weeks.

CUCUMBERS: Supply is starting stable in the market but we are going to see a little dip in supply as Mexico is seeing colder temps. We should remain in stock, but cost could increase.

GREEN PEPPERS: Steady supplies are available between Florida and growers out west.

KALES: Great supplies of kale currently, plenty of regional product from all over the Midwest available. We are sourcing from Georgia, Florida and other regions. Product is in great supply and pricing is very promotable.

LETTUCES: Inbound quality on leafs from the west have rebounded in quality and we are seeing much better supply. Lady Moon has had great supply in Florida with great quality!

RADISHES: Supplies are improving with better quality tops. Very little damage now to the tops and they look much cleaner than they have been.

YELLOW SQUASH & ZUCCHINI: Like cucumbers, temps have really affected supply in the Nogales growing region. We will see very limited supply on organic yellow squash.

Western Vegetables

ARTICHOKES: Volume is very good on artichokes. Now is a great time to promote; all sizes are available

AVOCADOS: Promotable pricing on smaller size fruit. Larger size organic fruit has become available again. Should see pricing decrease in the coming weeks.

BROCCOLI: There has been a wide range in quality and pricing throughout the industry. Volume in Yuma has started to decrease in numbers as we have pulled ahead the entire Yuma season. Cold temperatures have effected growth in the Salinas as we begin harvest.

CAULIFLOWER: Market has tightened up greatly. Cooler temperatures have caused quality issues throughout the region. Harvest has been poor with little to no yields.

CELERY: The celery market has been depressed, however both sizing and quality have been good. Numbers on the smaller sizes have been on the tight side. Good deals and great time to promote, especially going into the Easter holiday.

ICEBERG LETTUCE: The lettuce market has been depressed for the past few weeks, however with cooler temperatures expected throughout the week in the Yuma region we are seeing lighter numbers. The Huron region is seeing cool temperatures throughout. Quality has been improving, although still specific to discoloring and rib rusting.

ROMAINE/ROMAINE HEARTS/MIXED LEAF: The mixed leaf market remains steady, quality remains good. Numbers have decreased as we near the end of the Yuma season. With the exceptional weather that the

Yuma region has yielded the entire season, product has pulled forward. Numbers have decreased the last week and will continue to do so moving forward until the transition to Huron is made.

Value-Added

Cold nighttime temperatures and rain in the western U.S. growing areas is affecting most raw crops. Most processors are struggling to get enough raw product from the fields to keep up with demand. Currently, we are experiencing shortages of organic butter lettuce salads, organic salads containing arugula and organic Romaine hearts. Weather forecasts predict three consecutive storms to impact the west coast growing areas over the next 7-10 days.

Southern Vegetables

BEANS: Good supplies on beans with the decreasing market.

CABBAGE: Good supplies out of the south.

CORN: Spring corn deal is starting; market has dropped substantially with a fixed price between now and May.

CUCUMBERS: Market is up a few dollars out of Mexico.

GREENS: Coming out of the south; now back to levels they were prior to the freeze.

HARD SQUASH: Good supplies on all hard squash.

ONIONS: Western onions remain firm; supplies continue to be good.

PEPPERS: About where they were last week out of Mexico.

POTATOES: Idaho markets remain firm; supplies and quality remain good. Most of the Russet potato growers will be finished by the end of March or early April.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH: Up substantially out of Mexico.

Asparagus

Significant drop-off in overall Mexican volume has sent markets up dramatically in last week. Supplies will continue to stay on downward trend through Easter with potential shortfalls in supply. Peru could help offset some but no large volume available due to low point of their season. Organic supplies have also tighten and markets moving upward but not as significantly as conventional.

Fruits

APPLES & PEARS: Supplies of organic Honeycrisp are starting to tighten up coming out of Washington. However, all other varieties of conventional and organic apples in Washington are in strong supply. Next week we will be introducing a new variety of organic apple, the Pacific Rose from Oppenheimer.

BLACKBERRIES: Blackberry production slowly causing markets to move up slightly as we cycle into new production areas in Mexico sometime in late March/early April. Organic blackberry supply steady.

BLUEBERRIES: Volume continues to be strong and transition from northern district into southern districts is allowing for stronger late season quality fruit to be available but height of Chilean season is past and will need to monitor closely on quality. Warm southern USA temperatures may push earlier start to the domestic Florida crop with higher volume at the front of season. This could help ease the price sticker shock as blueberries transition out of pints back into 6oz. Organic supplies on same track as conventional and promotion deals still being offered.

CANTALOUPE & HONEYDEW: Good volume on imported cantaloupes and markets remain stable. Del Monte Mag melons remain highest quality cantaloupe available with outstanding eating quality. Honeydews are rebounding after a few weeks of tight supplies.

CITRUS: Rain this week is hindering navel harvest. The rain does not hurt the fruit but they cannot get into the groves to pick fruit. Markets remain firm; quality is very good.

CLEMENTINES: Market unchanged as product flow remains steady out of Morocco. 3# bags are the popular retail pack but 5# wood boxes still good promotional item. California clementines/mandarins are in steady supply; eating quality is excellent out of both areas.

GRAPES: Imported Chilean and Peru grapes continue in full swing on all varieties. Perfect time to promote all colors of grapes with multi good quality varieties available to offer. Organic red seedless set to load and be available for next week out of Peru; organic white seedless moving into product out of South Africa.

PINEAPPLES: Organic very tight right now. Seeing some availability on 7/8ct size. Conventional product is spotty due to rain in Costa Rica affecting loading.

RASPBERRIES: Supply should remain stable on both conventional and organic product; price still remains much firmer than the other berries, but good quality and supply.

STRAWBERRIES: The strawberry market is showing very promotable volumes from several growing regions. Be cautious when asking for Florida strawberries as the warmer nights they are seeing will not allow the berries to cool down, meaning the berries are softer at pick (this leads to bruising).

Chilean Stone Fruit

Full variety of Chilean stone fruit still available, but season is wringing down. Peaches have nice color and sizing; nectarines are tight. Black and red plums (New Larry Anne variety) coming on are best quality items with good eating flavor. Florida peaches will come available into the late part of March for first domestic stone fruit.

Tropical Fruit

BABY FRENCH BEANS: Market on down end; good promotional prices.

KIWI: Steady supplies from Italy/Greece.

LIMES: Prices has firmed up and increased on some sizes, with better demand this week. Size 200 and large remained limited. Overall quality is very nice.

MANGOES: Seeing pricing come down as Mexican deal begins. Very promotable right now.

MARIDOL PAPAYAS/ GOLD PAPAYAS: Supplies have become lighter after some rains affected growing regions.

SUGAR SNAP PEAS/SNO PEAS: Great pricing; predominate Guatemala product. Markets at low point.

Merchandising Tips

Basketballs March madness will soon be over. Major league baseball starts in April. Easter falls on April 1. Time sure flies doesn't it?

Now is the time to start planning and getting ready for that Easter week business. Where am I going to build my yam display? How many boxes of celery did I order last year? What items was I short or long

on last year? Pull out last year's Easter week order guide and review your orders and notes. Things stay pretty much the same from year-to-year.

If you did not save your guide from last year, I suggest you start now, on a weekly basis or at least save the guide for your holidays. It will make your planning and ordering process a whole lot easier and a lot less stressful.

Large well-stocked floral displays should be in place two weeks before Easter. Decorate your department and make it a fun place to work in and enjoyable for your customers to shop. Remember the old saying, "plan your work and work your plan."

CROSSET NEW ITEM & DELETION SHEET

W/B: 3/18/18

ITEM #	NEW ITEMS	SIZE
9610	OG Belgium Endive	10#
69510	OG White Seedless Grapes	9.9#
46115	Star Ruby Grapefruit	27ct
770129	EBF Riced Cauliflower	6/14oz
770130	EBF Riced Cauliflower Medley	6/14oz
770131	EBF Riced Cauliflower Broccoli	6/14oz
55080	OG Gold Nugget Mandarin	25#
DELETIONS		
34273	OG Jonagold Apples	40#/80ct.
34230	Jonathan Apple	12/3#
38218	OG Asian Pears	18ct.
28615	OG Crab Apple	12/1#
69204	OG White Grapes	18#
72060	Chilean T/R Nectarines	16#
87210	Russet 50ct	50#
96005	Seed Potato Cobbler	50#
58555	Lemonade Lemon	10#
46110	Grapefruit Red	32ct
89078	Chef Blend Fingerlings	16/1.5#
87555	Carb Smart Potato	10/5#
46110	Grapefruit Red	32ct
58795	OG Lemon	18/2#
3135	OG Garnet Yam	40#