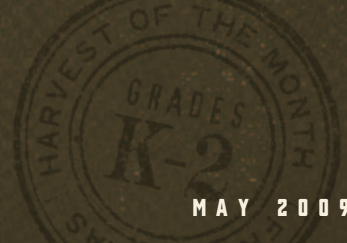


FARM FRESH HARVEST OF THE MONTH



GEOGRAPHIC LOCATOR

The Harvest of the Month asparagus comes to us from John Walchli of Walchli Farms in Hermiston, Oregon.

ASPARAGUS FACTS

When do we plant it? Asparagus may be planted from seed in mid-spring in deep beds or from "crowns" (one year old roots) in deep trenches.

When do we harvest it? It takes 2-3 years for a new asparagus plant to be ready for full harvest. Then it will produce yearly in April, May and June.

How does it grow? Stalks come up from underground stems. They grow at different rates and must be harvested by hand. Asparagus is a perennial plant, meaning that it produces year after year without having to replant it.

How do we eat it? Asparagus can be steamed, grilled, roasted, blanched and sautéed. It is commonly used in soups, salads and is most popular as a side dish.

What part of the plant do you eat?
The stem.

Why do we need it?
Asparagus is full of folate, which is a vitamin that helps us make new cells. It also is a great source of Vitamin C and antioxidants, which fight cancer.

More interesting facts:

- The Greeks and Romans, who considered asparagus a delicacy, first grew it 2,500 years ago. They also used it for medicinal purposes by crushing the tips of asparagus and using it to reduce pain from insect stings and infections.
- Asparagus can grow as fast as one inch per hour up to 12 inches in a single day! You can actually watch it grow!
- Their stalks can be white, purple or green.

ACTIVITY

Eating Our Colors

FOR GRADES K-2

Materials:

Chalkboard or dry-erase board

Color wheel: make your own with a cut-out circle of cardboard divided into sections of each color group. Cut a cardboard spinner that goes on top of the circle. Punch a brad through both the circle and the spinner, keeping it loose enough that the spinner can spin.

Procedure:

- 1) Make a list of the students' favorite fruits and vegetables.
- 2) Make a list of all the colors of the fruits and vegetables that the students have listed.
- 3) Draw columns for these color categories: red, orange/yellow, green, blue/purple, white/brown.
- 4) Point out that it is important to eat a variety of colors because different colored fruits and vegetables help our bodies in different ways. Write down what each color does for our body:

RED - For a healthy heart and good memory function.

Watermelon
Blood oranges
Cherries
Red apples
Red beets
Cranberries
Tomatoes
Radishes
Red onion
Strawberries
Rhubarb

YELLOW/ORANGE - For healthy vision and a strong immune system.

Apricot
Mango
Nectarines
Carrots
Peaches
Lemons
Gold beets
Sweet potatoes
Corn
Yellow peppers

GREEN - For strong bones and healthy teeth.

Spinach
Lettuce
Asparagus
Kiwi
Cucumber
Peas
Green beans
Pears
Green cabbage
Zucchini
Broccoli

BLUE/PURPLE - Prevents cancer and helps with healthy aging.

Blackberries
Blueberries
Plums
Prunes
Raisins
Purple carrots
Purple asparagus
Grapes
Purple cabbage
Purple peppers

WHITE/BROWN - Healthy heart and strong immune system

Banana
Brown pears
Garlic
Ginger
Turnips
Potatoes
Onions
White corn
White peaches
Cauliflower
Parsnips

- 5) Spin the color wheel and when it lands on a color have a student say a fruit or vegetable that is that color and what that color does for our bodies. Repeat with several students.