

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for May 17, 2021**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about the versatile vegetable - asparagus - and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Asparagus is one of my favorite vegetables. Though I have very few memories of our family eating it when I was young, my kids would consider it very common, as I prepare it more than green beans.

Two years ago, my husband David built raised garden beds, and we planted rhubarb and strawberries. Last year he built one more for asparagus. We did not pick any last year as it grew, which made me a little sad. But I knew this was best for the plants to conserve energy for strong roots that first year. They were huge and ferny by fall.

This spring we have begun to harvest and enjoy asparagus as a side or added to all kinds of dishes. Our usual way is to toss spears in a little olive oil with Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper and then roast in the oven at 400 degrees for about 10 minutes. A favorite appetizer is sliced ham and asparagus rolled up with chive cream cheese in crescent rolls. We also enjoy it in vegetable stir fry, tossed with pasta, and in soups.

North Carolina State University Extension suggests these Top Ways to Enjoy Asparagus:

1. Cool and Crisp. If you are using asparagus in salads or for other cold dishes, boil or steam for 3-5 minutes, then plunge the cooked asparagus into cold or iced water immediately to stop the cooking process. This will help preserve the color and crispness of the vegetable.
2. Veggie Fettuccine. Toss asparagus with red and yellow peppers for a colorful dish.
3. Creamy Soup. Use leeks, onions, russet potatoes, asparagus, low-sodium chicken broth, lemon juice, and low-fat sour cream to make a lower-sodium soup.
4. Raw. Rinse and dry asparagus and enjoy it as is or in your favorite dip.
5. Steamed. A great snack or side dish, cook fresh or frozen asparagus, garlic, and low-sodium seasoning over a small amount of boiling water for 3 to 8 minutes depending on the thickness of the spears. You can also use a microwave.

6. Gourmet. Dress up your traditional steamed or boiled asparagus with a mustard vinaigrette dressing.
7. Cheese, Crackers, and Asparagus. Spread a soft cheese (for instance, goat cheese or brie) on whole wheat crackers and top with a crisp asparagus tip. Serve as an appetizer or an afternoon snack.
8. Grilled. Place asparagus spears on a grill coated with olive oil spray and preheated to medium-high heat. Cook for 5 to 8 minutes until tender, turning occasionally.

My overall advice when it comes to preparing asparagus is not to overcook it. Like most vegetables, the flavor is not nearly as tasty once the texture reaches the mushy stage.

University of Kentucky Extension shares that asparagus is a good source of vitamin A and folate. One-half cup of fresh, steamed asparagus has only 22 calories, with 2 grams of protein and 4 grams of carbohydrate.

Fresh asparagus will keep 1-2 weeks in the refrigerator. One of the best ways to keep asparagus fresh is to refrigerate it upright with cut ends in water. Strive to add one more fruit or vegetable to a meal or as a snack each day. Asparagus is versatile and abundant right now.

Now let's take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The ServSafe® Manager Food Safety Training series will be offered on Thursdays, July 8, 15, and 22 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with the proctored exam July 29 at 9:00 a.m. A separate ServSafe® Person-in-Charge certification training will be Monday, August 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu).

The final "East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series" webinar will be next Thursday, May 27. I will be presenting "He Said, She Said: Communication Between Men and Women in Agriculture." Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to past recorded programs as well.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!