

# Asparagus in the Classroom

## Asparagus Haikus: Descriptive Writing Exercise

### What is a haiku?

A haiku is an unrhymed three-line poem. It is based on a traditional Japanese poetic form. Though there are different ways to write haiku, the traditional pattern in English is to write the first and last lines with five syllables each, and the middle line with seven syllables. In other words, the pattern of syllables looks like this:



Line 1: So tender and sweet (5 syllables)  
Line 2: green spears jutting from the earth (7 syllables)  
Line 3: spring time has arrived! (5 syllables)

Most often, haiku poems are about seasons or nature, though you can write a haiku about anything you like. The last line of a haiku usually makes an observation- pointing out something about the subject you've chosen to write about.

### Did You Know?

- The scientific name for carrots is *Asparagus officinalis*.
- Formerly of the lily family, asparagus is now in a family of its own, *Asparagaceae*.

Interested in volunteering with farm to school activities?  
Sign up for our volunteer newsletter at:  
[www.groundworkcenter.org/farmtoschoolvolunteer](http://www.groundworkcenter.org/farmtoschoolvolunteer)

## June Harvest of the Month

# Asparagus



Asparagus recipes and fun facts inside!



groundwork  
CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



FARM to  
SCHOOL  
NORTHWEST MICHIGAN



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Extension

# Crispy Roasted Asparagus Recipe

**Prep time:** 5 min  
**Cook time:** 20-25 minutes  
**Estimated Cost:** \$2- 3  
**Serves four as a side dish.**

## Ingredients:

1 bunch asparagus  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
3/4 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp pepper

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°F.



Break off the tough ends of the asparagus- each spear should have a natural breaking point that can be found by gently bending the spear from the tough end until it breaks.

In a medium mixing bowl, toss asparagus with olive oil, salt and pepper.

Spread coated asparagus on a rimmed baking sheet, and place in oven. Roast for 20-25 minutes\*, until the stalk is tender and heads are crisp.

\*If using a convection oven, your cooking time may be cut down to 12-15 minutes.

## Asparagus Buyer's Tips

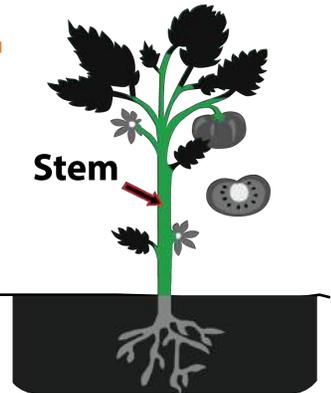
Look for asparagus spears that have tight, compact heads and are thin or very thin. Thicker spears tend to have a more tough, woody texture. Check for firm, unwrinkled stalks.



# All About Asparagus

## Plant Parts

- Asparagus spears are one of the few plant stems we eat!
- Stems transport water and nutrients from the plant's roots to the rest of the plant. Try placing a stalk of freshly cut celery in colored water and watch this edible stem do its magic- you may be surprised by what happens to your celery stalk!



## Origins

- The word 'asparagus' comes from the Greek word 'asparagos' meaning sprout or shoot.
- Michigan was one of the first states to begin growing asparagus. Other early growing sites included New Jersey, California and Washington.



## How Does it Grow?

- Asparagus stems shoot straight up from the ground, which is part of the reason it's important to rinse or soak them before cooking.
- In ideal conditions, an asparagus spear can grow up to 10 inches in 24 hours!
- Asparagus patches can take as long as three years to become established, but because they are perennial vegetables they can continue to be harvested each season for 10-12 years after planting.



## Looking for local asparagus?

Visit [localdifference.org](http://localdifference.org) to search for local food, farms, and retailers.