



Last month we briefly covered cool season vegetables. This month, I'd like to share more with you about asparagus. It is one of my favorite home-grown vegetables. If you haven't had it fresh and would like to try, let me know and you can come by the office to try some.

Asparagus is a nutritious vegetable favored by many because of its vitamin and mineral content, as well as its taste. Asparagus is native to Europe and Asia.

Asparagus can be grown in your home garden, provided there is plenty of room. A 20-foot row, or 100 square feet of bed, is a great size allotment when producing asparagus for a family of four. A

bed that size will yield around 10 pounds of harvested asparagus per season. Make sure your bed is positioned in full sunlight and has deep, well-drained soil with a sandy or light- texture. Asparagus crowns grown in the right conditions can last for 15-25 years!

Although this plant can take a bit of room in your garden, it is very easy to take care of and does very well in our area. In the fall, you'll cut back the growth and wait until the spears surface above ground in the spring. Lightly fertilize in the spring and you'll have a bounty for years to come.

Whether you bring asparagus home from the store or in from your garden, be sure to wash just before consuming. After being harvested, asparagus loses quality very quickly and becomes more fibrous and tough to eat. A trick to keep the spears fresh and crisp is to store the spear upright - as shown in the picture. Fill the container with enough water to cover about ¼ inch of the bottom of the spear. This trick will keep asparagus fresh and crisp for several days.

Asparagus can be stored for up to three weeks in the refrigerator, or blanched for 3-5 minutes, packaged, and then frozen for longer storage. AgriLife Extension's Dinner Tonight has a great selection of recipes using asparagus, visit dinnertonight.tamu.edu/.

For more information on the process, timeline, and techniques of growing asparagus, visit <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/asparagus/>

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

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