



Harvest Objectives

Children will describe different asparagus types.

Children will identify that asparagus are the stems that grow from the ground.

Children will taste a piece of asparagus.

Harvest Vocab

Firm

Stem

Materials & Prep

Various Asparagus (two or more colors—green, white, or purple)

Chalkboard/Whiteboard and chalk/whiteboard markers

Images (included at end of learning plan)

Knife & Cutting Board

Taste Test Chart

Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)



Literature Connections

The Mighty Asparagus by Vladimir Radunsky

Life on a Crop Farm by Judy Wolfman

The Vegetables We Eat by Gail Gibbons

Warm Up

- In order to engage the children and activate prior knowledge, gather in a circle and pass around the different asparagus. Allow everyone to touch and look at them, and ask them to think about how they would describe them (size, shape, color, weight, texture, smell, etc.) Do not tell them what they are. Tell the children to think of the name for the food, but to keep their answer inside their head. Then when everyone has held the asparagus, ask them, “What is this called?” Consider having everyone say the answer aloud on the count of three. This way you’ll know how many children in the group know.
- Then discuss, have ever seen one before? Eaten one before? How was it prepared? Where do they think asparagus comes from? How do they grow? (On trees, bushes?)
- Then take one asparagus of two different colors and draw a Venn diagram on the board. Write the two asparagus types above each circle. Holding up the asparagus, ask the students what they have in common (texture, size, color, etc.) Record their observations in the middle of the Venn diagram. Then hold up just one. Record their descriptions that only fit that asparagus. Repeat with the second asparagus. Note: To make this activity more kinesthetic, in small groups (no more than 8 children), have each child come up with a describing word and write it on a sticky label, or post-it note. Then the child can stick their own word onto the Venn diagram.

Explain



- Explain that botanically they are vegetable (because we eat the stem, and there are no seeds inside). The asparagus stems grow out of the ground and then are harvested before they produce a flower stalk. What other botanical vegetables can they think of? (Carrots, beets, onion, etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and allow the students to think about which ones are vegetables.
- Explain why we should eat asparagus (helps heal cuts, healthy bodies, healthy immune system, and healthy eyes) and for each reason come up with an action to help them remember. For example, they can run in place while saying “healthy bodies.” Also explain and how to pick good asparagus (they should be bright green with closed compact tips). Please see the next pages for images to share with the children.

Taste Test & Wrap-Up

- After rinsing the asparagus, place in microwavable container with water covering the bottom. Vent the container and microwave for 3-6 minutes, or until soft. Stir halfway through the cooking time. Then slice each variety into pieces. Taste the different varieties and have each child share which he/she liked the best.
- Create a chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each child a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of children that like, and don’t like asparagus and write that number in each column.
- Review with the students how asparagus grows and the health benefits.

Taste Test Extension

Rule of 15 “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with children in class using different stations, or ahead of time, and serve it with this lesson, or on a different day to expand the Harvest of the Month experience.

Note: This can be prepared by the students in the morning and then eaten for snack or as part of lunch.

Breaded Asparagus

For 20 students (adapted from: <http://www.parents.com/recipe/appetizers-snacks/breaded-asparagus/>)

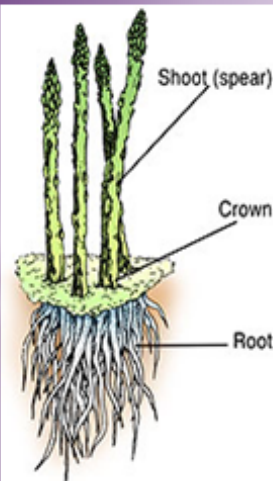
10 ounces trimmed asparagus spears	2 cups all-purpose flour
3 Beaten eggs	2 cups bread crumbs
1 tablespoon olive oil	Mixing bowls
Cookie Sheet	Parchment paper (optional)
Egg beater	Plate (1 per student)



1. Have the flour, bread crumbs, and eggs in separate bowls.
2. Invite the students to wash their hands and then come to the table for a cooking activity.

3. Demonstrate how to dip the asparagus spears first in all-purpose flour, then in beaten egg, and then in bread crumbs. Then put the spear on the cookie sheet.
4. Once the cookie sheet is full, drizzle asparagus with 1 tablespoon olive oil.
5. Bake in a single layer at 450 degrees F. for 10 minutes, or until golden.

How does **Asparagus** grow?



Asparagus grows up out of the ground. We eat the stems of the asparagus plant.

Why should we eat **Asparagus**?

Vit. K



Heals cuts

Antioxidants



Healthy bodies

Vit. C



Healthy immune system (prevents colds)

B Vitamins



Healthy bodies (cell energy)

Fiber



Healthy digestion, cleans your system

Vitamin A



Healthy eyes