



## PROMOTING OREGON ASPARAGUS

**Promote Oregon asparagus in your cafeteria this month. Fresh Oregon asparagus is available from mid-April through June. Frozen is available year round. Promote asparagus using one or more of the fun cafeteria activities below and help your students make better food choices.**

### **Easy Marketing with Harvest For Schools**

Surround students with colorful visual images of fruits and vegetables to remind them of these healthy, tasty eating options. When you serve local asparagus display this poster near the serving line. As students come through the serving line, point out the Oregon asparagus dishes. Or ask each child, “Do you want to try some Oregon Asparagus?”

### **Sneak Preview**

Offer tasting samples of your Oregon Asparagus to students the week before you serve it on the line or on the salad bar. You can offer the sample at the end of the line or pass samples around the lunchroom while students eat. Promote these as “free samples.”

### **Oregon Asparagus Week**

Found a good buy on Oregon asparagus? Try offering a new asparagus item each day of your Oregon Asparagus Week. For USDA standardized or tested recipes, go to: <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/school-meals/Recipes/recipefinder.php> and type “asparagus” in the search box. You will find two dozen recipes including yummy cream of asparagus soup, always popular grilled veggie and cheese sandwich and for something different, Asian chicken with asparagus and pineapple. Or roast a big batch and use it in different ways – to top a sandwich, on the salad bar, or mixed in a tuna pasta salad. Roasted asparagus is great on pizza too. Check out the roast asparagus recipe at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/school-meals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>

## Stamp Student Passports

Create an Oregon fruit and vegetable “tasting passport.” Stamp the passport in the lunchroom whenever a student tries the featured local fruit or vegetable. Contact your Oregon Farm To School and School Garden Coordinator for information on starting an Oregon Harvest for Schools Passport in your school. Another option is to have students track the number of times they eat Oregon asparagus at school. At the end of the month recognize students who tried the Oregon grown asparagus each time it was offered in the school cafeteria.

## Asparagus Trivia Contest in the Cafeterias

Some ideas to get started on your Asparagus Trivia Contest are:

- Create table tents with trivia using asparagus facts.
- Place tents on cafeteria tables.
- Create trivia questions and distribute questionnaire to students in the lunch line or as they enter the cafeteria.
- Students find answers while eating meal (from facts on table tents) and enter their completed questionnaire into a drawing. Be sure to post the winners names.

Helpful Hints (adapted from: Team Nutrition, “*Food Works*,” 1995)

- Work with older students, an academic club or science class to gather and create the trivia information.
- Use facts from the front of this poster to create tent information or visit <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/asparagus.html>
- Ask an art class to help you design the table tents.

## Find Out More

Visit the Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs webpage at [www.ode.state.or.us/services/nutrition](http://www.ode.state.or.us/services/nutrition)

Find the link to Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program under Associated Topics.

# OREGON HARVEST FOR SCHOOLS CLASSROOM ELEMENTS

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### **Stand Strong with Stems**

See *Stand Strong with Stems*, Lesson 5, in the Growing Healthy Kids curriculum. The lesson works well with asparagus since it is a plant stem. Students learn about different stem vegetables that we eat - like asparagus; demonstrate how stem vegetables enable garden plants to grow upright and move water and nutrients throughout the plant; increase their exposure to stem vegetables by contributing to the garden mural, or participating in an indoor/outdoor gardening activity.

Find this lesson and more information about Growing Healthy Kids curriculum at

[http://extension.oregonstate.edu/nep/garden\\_nutrition/](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/nep/garden_nutrition/)

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### **History Exploration Prompts**

Asparagus has been cultivated for more than 2,500 years by people worldwide. It continues today to be a universal vegetable, grown and consumed in Asia, Europe, South America and North America. Have students research a historical topic of interest and then write an essay or deliver a living history presentation.

Topics may include:

- Researching the early beginnings of the U.S. asparagus industry. Who were the first people to start growing asparagus? Why did growers produce more green asparagus? When and why did fresh asparagus become more common than canned or frozen asparagus?
- Choosing a culture, group of people or country and researching the role asparagus has played in its society or agricultural economy. Include significant recipes, holidays, medicinal uses, literature and/or economical impact.

## HIGH SCHOOL

### **Nutrition Exploration Prompts**

- Asparagus is a source of many water-soluble and fat-soluble vitamins. Make a list of water-soluble and fat-soluble vitamins found in asparagus. Identify the Recommended Daily Intakes (RDI) of these vitamins. How does each vitamin function in your body? What happens when your body is deficient in a certain vitamin?
- Make a list of foods in addition to asparagus that are main sources for each vitamin. Record your food intake for one day. Determine if you are eating enough fat-soluble and water-soluble vitamins. (Hint: Use the MyPyramid Tracker an online dietary and physical activity assessment tool available at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/tools.html>)