

## ASPARAGUS

**Hawaiian Name:** None known

**Common Name:** Asparagus

**Scientific Name:** *Asparagus officinalis*

**Origin:** Europe, Northern Africa and Western Asia

**Plant Part Eaten:** Stem



### Nutrition Info...

- Rich in folate, which is an important cofactor for DNA synthesis.
- Good source of Vitamins A & C.
- Inulin fiber helps to feed “good” bacteria in our guts.
- Good source of many vitamins and minerals, especially the B vitamins necessary for energy metabolism, and vitamin K, essential for proper functioning of the blood.



### Locally Grown...

- Asparagus grows year-round in Hawai‘i.
- The Hawai‘i Agricultural Research Center began promoting this crop in 1995 to diversify agriculture in the state.
- It is a great crop for Hawai‘i as it can survive agricultural disasters like hurricanes because spears bend in the wind.
- Local asparagus is sweeter than imported asparagus because after the vegetable is harvested, it starts to lose its flavor and becomes tougher.



### Meet a Farmer...

**Farm:** Twin Bridge Farms

**Farmers:** Milton Agader and Al Medrano

**Location:** Waialua, O‘ahu



Twin Bridge Farms was founded in 1998 by former sugar workers Milton Agader and Al Medrano. Twin Bridge grows asparagus, papaya, corn, onion, potato, sweet potato, araimo, and more on 250 acres in Waialua.

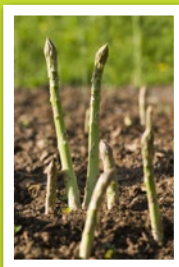
Twin Bridge Farms’ asparagus is sold in supermarkets as well as the Waialua Farmers’ Market and the Agader family-owned The Brown Bottle store in Waialua. Several local restaurants also serve the delicious asparagus.

### Where else it’s grown in the world...

China and Peru are the leading asparagus producers in the world. California grows approximately 80% of all asparagus grown in the US.

### In the Garden...

- Choose a location where your asparagus plant will be allowed to grow for many years to come. Amend planting area with plenty of organic compost.
- Asparagus crowns are usually available at local garden shops in the spring and fall but can be planted any time in Hawai‘i. Ask for male plants, as these are usually more productive. (Growing from seed will delay harvest an additional year.)



- Soak crowns in water overnight and plant 1.5 feet apart, covering with 2 inches of soil.
- In the first year, water deeply and keep the planting area well mulched and free of weeds.
- Don’t harvest any spears during your plants’ first two years in your garden. Let spears die back and cover with 2 inches of compost. After the second year, you can begin harvesting spears.
- The blog <http://hihort.blogspot.com/> has more information on growing asparagus in Hawai‘i. (Type in “asparagus” in the search box.)

## Let's Get Cooking... Mac Nut Asparagus

### Ingredients

- 1 bunch fresh asparagus
- ½ teaspoon Hawaiian salt
- 2 tablespoons garlic macadamia nut oil
- Optional: fresh herbs, garlic



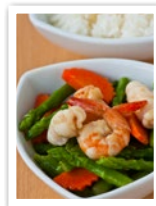
### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Rinse asparagus and snap off the bottoms of the stalks.
3. Place asparagus on a foil-lined baking sheet.
4. Drizzle with macadamia oil and sprinkle with Hawaiian salt and herbs.
5. Roast asparagus for 8 to 10 minutes or until spears are tender when tested with a fork.



Photo and recipe courtesy of Oils of Aloha

Reminder: Please compost your food waste.



## What can you make with asparagus?

While it tastes great simply steamed, or sautéed, try a roasted asparagus salad. Asparagus leek soup is a warm way to enjoy the vegetable. It can also be added to stir-fries or grilled on a barbecue. Too much asparagus in the garden? Try pickling it!

## Did you know?



1. Asparagus was cultivated in Greece 2,500 years ago, where it was considered a food and an herbal medicine.
2. Asparagus has been used as a diuretic, which can help the body to produce urine. This can be helpful for people with high blood pressure.
3. Asparagus comes in 3 colors: white, green and purple. White asparagus is grown by blocking sunlight from the growing stems.
4. White asparagus is very popular in Europe, while green asparagus is popular in the US.
5. 90% is eaten fresh, while 10% is canned.
6. In good growing conditions, asparagus spears can grow 10 inches in a single day!
7. In the 15th century, asparagus was cultivated in French monasteries. In 1850 it became available in the New World.
8. China produces almost 6 million tons of asparagus a year!

Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest celebrates the diverse, nutritious, and delicious bounty grown in Hawai'i, encouraging children and their families to eat more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest Toolkit includes educational resource sheets, family take-home letters, produce preparation sheets, and a poster showcasing Hawai'i-grown crops. For downloads and more information, visit [www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/HawaiianHarvest](http://www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/HawaiianHarvest).

Funding for the Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest program was provided by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant. Photos by Anthony Ching, Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation, and Shutterstock unless noted otherwise.