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Horticulture News

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One of my favorite vegetables is asparagus. Grilled, steamed or baked it's seasonal flavor is outstanding! Asparagus is one of those vegetables where freshness is incredibly important. If you have never eaten asparagus fresh out of the garden, try it. It may convince you to grow some of your own. For those who have an asparagus patch, the new spears should be appearing soon. The first asparagus that comes through the ground always seems to take a long time to reach harvest size. That is because asparagus growth is temperature dependent. The higher the day and nighttime temperatures, the faster it grows. Also, the longer the spear, the quicker the growth. As the season progresses and spears get longer, the growth rate increases.

Harvest asparagus by snapping or cutting. Snapping is quick and easy. Simply bend the stalk near the base until it breaks. Snapped ends dry quickly so refrigerate or use soon after harvest. If you cut asparagus, use a sharp knife to detach the spears slightly below ground level. This base is woodier than snapped asparagus, so it doesn't lose water as quickly. Cut off woody ends before cooking.

So, how long can asparagus be harvested? Do not harvest at all the year of planting. The next season, harvest for 3 to 4 weeks or until the spear size drops off. Every year thereafter, the asparagus can be harvested for 6 to 8 weeks.