



May

Strawberries

Strawberry season in the U.S. is surely a sign of spring! Strawberries are delicate, so a few tips on how to choose and handle them:

- Strawberries are fully ripe at the time they are picked and do not ripen after picking. Look for bright red color and fresh looking green caps.
- Refrigerate your strawberries right away when home from the store.
- Keep berries away from moisture or they will get mushy quickly.
- Wash berries just before use; leave the green caps on and wash with a gentle spray of cool water.
- After washing, remove the green caps from berries with a light twist or with the point of a paring knife.

Looking for a simple but scrumptious, AND healthy dessert? This recipe is simple and brings out the great flavor of strawberries. Try *Balsamic-Macerated Strawberries with Basil*

<http://www.taunton.com/finecooking/recipes/balsamic-macerated-strawberries-basil.aspx>

Asparagus

Asparagus is another sign of spring and re-growth. Asparagus is a member of the lily family. It's nutritious, delicious and versatile; it can be cooked on the stovetop, stir-fried, microwaved, or grilled. Here are some various cooking techniques:

<http://www.asparagus.org/maab/recipes/cooking.html>

If you have never roasted asparagus, you should! Roasting makes asparagus more flavorful and sweet with a tender and medium firm texture. The spears do shrink and become slightly wrinkled. To view a recipe for Roasted Asparagus and other dishes, see

<http://www.asparagus.org/maab/recipes/Asparagus05Brochure.pdf>

Grow Your Own in Containers

Think you don't have enough space to grow your own veggies? Container gardening works where there is not much space for gardening. A patio, balcony, windowsill or step can provide space for growing food. Practically any type of container can be used to grow plants as long as it holds soil, can drain water, and is large enough to accommodate the plants you're growing. Creative city gardeners successfully garden in children's wading pools, feed sacks, and discarded tires. Greens like lettuce, kale, arugula, and spinach do well in containers, as do herbs and tomatoes. Even root vegetables like carrots, onions, beets and radishes can grow in containers! For more information on container gardening:

<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/hgic1251.htm>