

## Storage Tips & Tricks

Asparagus- To store, place the ends in a container of water. If storing for a couple of days leave room for possible growth and check the water level each day or wrap in a damp paper towel and store in plastic. Cleaning asparagus. Run under cold water gently rubbing the stalk and the tip. You may also soak in cold water. **To ensure grit is removed**, bring a pan of water to a boil, add a little salt. Add asparagus for 2-3 minutes to release any sandy soil remove and drop into an ice bath to stop the cooking. Store asparagus for later use. Use it in salad, roast, or sauté in olive oil and serve with lemon. Or try this trending recipe: [This 5-Ingredient Asparagus Pasta Is the Perfect Easy Weeknight Meal | Kitchn \(thekitchn.com\)](#)

Leafy greens- Leafy greens have been washed and they will come to you damp.

They have been watered or washed or iced. You can clean them when you receive them or as you use them. Either way before they are refrigerated, they should be dry, wrapped or layered in paper towel and stored in plastic, bags, or containers. **To clean greens:** Fill a pan **with warm** water, plunge in the leafy greens, you will find that most of the grit, dirt, will just fall away. Swish the greens. Allow to sit. Gently, lift out the greens, check the bottom of the pan for grit/sand/dirt

Repeat cold water until the water is completely clear, Drain and allow to dry. Wrap in paper towel and place in a plastic bag or layer paper towel in a container, Refrigerate Use the most tender greens 1<sup>st</sup> within a couple of days.

Spinach- can be washed and dried before storing. Store spinach wrapped in paper towel or in layers of paper towel. Dried leaves can keep up to one week. Wilted Spinach Salad, Creamed Spinach, Stir Fry, Sautee with Garlic, shallots, onion as a side or as a bed under Chicken, fish, sliced steak, Mix into eggs for omelets or fill the omelet, Wilt spinach into soups, stews, sauces, Greek Spinach Feta Pie, Spanakopita, Quiche, add spinach to smoothies, add to ricotta cheese for Lasagna for Spinach Stem Recipes, take a look at Pantryfun.com

Radishes and Beets- and all root vegetables. When the root vegetable comes to you with the tops attached you should cut the tops from the root and store in two separate containers. These are tender greens, use them within an few days. Roots should keep a week or more.

Leeks – should be tightly wrapped in the refrigerator so that their flavor will not be absorbed by other foods. Do not wash or remove roots before storing. They can keep up to two weeks.

Most recipes will call for the white bottom and the light green. Keep the tops for preparing stock. Be sure to clean leeks in cold water making sure that any soil or grit is removed from between the layers.

### The garden herbs

The herbs this week are Sage and Oregano. Both herbs are perennial, and they can be planted in pots or in the garden. Sage and oregano need similar care so they can be planted together and they could be added to the pot with thyme if you still have space.

Popcorn - Place the ear of corn into a paper lunch bag, Fold the bag closed. Set the bag in the microwave and set the time at 2.5 minutes. **DO NOT LEAVE THE ROOM.** Listen to the corn popping and if it slows, stop. Then remove the bag from the oven, **CAUTION, EVERYTHING IS HOT!** Pour popcorn into a bowl and then top with butter or olive oil, salt, herbs, your choice.

Pinto Bean, Cranberry Bean, French Horticultural Bean - the seeds will come to you dry. Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place or prepare the beans and freeze. To prepare beans to be added to a dish you will first, boil them for a few minutes and simmer about 20 minutes or until tender in a broth with aromatics such as chopped onion and garlic, and other herbs such as basil and oregano, even a bay leaf. The aroma will be fabulous. If you have more beans than you can use this week, they can be frozen and they can also be canned. I often cook dried beans and freeze them in portions to use in pasta dishes, soups, and stews. For those of you who might prefer canning you can find directions at [http://www.pickyourown.org/canning\\_fresh\\_beans.php](http://www.pickyourown.org/canning_fresh_beans.php) 2 of our favorite recipes are on the website. <https://www.alstedefarms.com/recipe-category/cranberry-beans/>

### You will often receive a bunch of cut herbs:

To keep fresh herbs: Remove dead stems and leaves, wash as needed. Snip the stems. Place stems in a container filled with water, do not submerge the leaves. Changing the water daily will help to keep the herbs fresh. They can keep up to a week on the counter.

Or

Cover the container with a plastic bag and refrigerate. If storing basil leave on the counter, **do not refrigerate.** Change water every day or two. Most fresh herbs will last more than a week when stored this way.



## Week 3 2023—May 8th—May 14th

I am writing to you on a sunny day. Yesterday was beautiful and free of rain too. Two days in a row, unheard of in the last week or so. What a pleasant change for all of us, especially the production team. I am sure they want to go in many directions to get as much into the ground as it dries out this week. April showers bring May flowers and of course crops but it is May now and we need to plant and move forward with the season. Rain of course is helpful, but the farmers really need some dry soil to work. It has even been brighter overnight with the full “Flower Moon” on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, “ta da” here comes the awaited arrival of homegrown asparagus. I am sure that there are times that you wonder about the journey of the produce in your box and how exactly does it get there. Asparagus is one of the first homegrown crops of the season. It is a perennial. When you arrive at a field/patch where asparagus is growing it really is like no other crop that I can think of. At first it doesn’t really look like there is much there and then you start to walk through, and you see it. The stalks are all individual and need to be cut with a sharp knife. When it is sunny and hot the farmers are out there every day. Every stalk is an individual cut. They are placed into a create, all facing in the same direction.

Like all crops the next stop is the packing house. Any stalks that are not perfect (even though they taste exactly the same) will be set aside to be sent to the kitchen to become soup or an addition to quiche.

Next the ends are going to be cut but every stem has to be exactly the same length in the bunch. They are banded and then placed in crates that are lined with plastic that has some water at the bottom. Placed in the cooler to be added by the packing team who arrive while we are sleeping to pack our shares. Asparagus is then sent to four farm stores, and now as we approach the season three farmers markets every day. It is only one crop, and it is quite a task. Asparagus should be in shares for the next few weeks however we can never be sure. If you are thinking about saving some for after the season I have included “freezing instructions” in the packet this week.

Posted on the Facebook page the first week of CSA, Maxine was in the high tunnels with the production team as they cut the lettuce for our shares. The more we know about this process, the more you appreciate all that is happening behind the scenes before we pick up that box full of green goodness.

Before I close this week, I want to take a moment to wish all the moms in our CSA family a very happy Mother’s Day from all of us on the team. A shout out to the dads who may be planning to prepare something from the share for mom this coming weekend. If that doesn’t sound like the best idea, brunch is being offered on both Saturday and Sunday here at the farm, check out the website. Tickets must be purchased in advance so that might be the idea for you. Either way we hope it is a great day for all of you!

If at any time, for any reason you need administrative assistance you can reach [Trish@alstedefarms.com](mailto:Trish@alstedefarms.com) or call 908-879-7189. If you have any ideas or recipes to share, contact [jenn@alstedefarms.com](mailto:jenn@alstedefarms.com). I love hearing from you.

***Until next week, enjoy the freshness!***

*Jenn Borealo*



# How to Freeze Asparagus

Prepare the following items:

Bring 1 gallon of water per pound of asparagus to a boil. Prepare an ice bath ice and ice water.

Freezer containers / zip lock bags

Clean the asparagus to remove any grit, soil, and snap or cut off the woody ends

Bring the water to a boil, keep the heat on high and immerse the asparagus, water should come back to a boil in one minute. Boil 1 ½ minutes for thin stems, 2 minutes for medium and 3 for fat.

Immediately remove and submerge into the ice bath. This will stop the cooking process.

When cold, drain, allow to dry on paper towels. Pack in airtight containers or bags

If using bags, close the bag almost to the end. Stick a straw into the bag and draw out as much air as possible from inside the bag. Press down on the straw as you continue to close the bag and pull the straw out. Label and date bags or containers.

## Some ideas for using asparagus

Brunch for Mom: take a look at the website, CSA recipes to include Asparagus Eggs Mornay

Or we have recipes for strata, or frittata, omelet, and quiche, or a brunch tart

Use up some of your lettuce in the share and prepare Salad Niçoise or steamed asparagus can be added to Steak or Cobb Salad too

Prepare Filet or steak Oscar, top the grilled beef with Crab imperial, steamed asparagus, and a drizzle of béarnaise sauce

Top a pizza or check out the website for directions for a pita pizza. There is a crepe recipe there too.

Brush asparagus with olive oil and grill

“Just simply roasted” drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt is a favorite or wrap asparagus in bacon or pancetta and roast

Raw asparagus can be served with a dip

Try a soup recipe

Prepare salsa, steamed pieces of asparagus, chopped. Add minced onion, garlic, cilantro, and jalapeno pepper. Drizzle with a little lime juice. Salt to taste

Serve with chips

## Week 3 Harvest

Asparagus

Spinach

Lettuces

Chives

Cilantro

Bok Choy

Scallions

Leeks

Kale

Radishes

Swiss Chard

Beets

Mint

Oregano & Sage Plants

*\*\*Your actual CSA share contents will be listed on the label inside of your box and may differ from this list. Your share contents are based on your individual preferences and customizations that you make on your Harvie profile, as well as changes in availability.*

## Minted Green Beans with Red Onion

2 pounds green beans, trimmed

1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard

1 tablespoon white or red-wine vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

3-4 tablespoons minced fresh mint leaves

1/2 cup finely chopped red onion

Salt and pepper to taste

Boil the green beans in salted water or steam until they are crisp tender. Immediately transfer the beans to an ice water bath to stop the cooking. Drain well. Allow the beans to dry and chill.

In a large bowl whisk together the mustard, the vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste, add the oil in a stream, whisking, and whisk the dressing until it is emulsified. Add the beans, the mint, and the onion and toss the mixture until it is combined well. Season to taste before serving

from: Adapted from Gourmet Magazine