

May 2008

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eat local caledon

Upcoming Events

TRCA Workshop for Rural Landowners, Thurs. May 15, 6:30-9:30pm, Caledon Community Complex, 6215 Old Church Rd, Caledon East. Attend and learn about options and resources available to landowners looking to start a nature-based business for fun or profit. This is a free workshop but space is limited. Register by May 12, 2008 to avoid disappointment. For more information or to register, contact: Julie Hordowick, Toronto and Region Conservation, 416-661-6600 ext. 5644 or jhordowick@trca.on.

Coming to Inglewood... A Weekly Farmers' Market!

Great news! This summer the CCA is partnering with Inglewood General Store to bring a Farmers' Market to Caledon. The market will be held at the Inglewood General Store (15596 McLaughlin Rd) every Wednesday evening from 5 to 7pm. A range of local farmers and producers will be there to sell their local and fresh products. Shopping at the market is sure to be a fulfilling experience, and is yet another way that Caledon residents can support our community's local food system. Don't miss the Inglewood Farmers' Market Opening Day Barbecue on Wednesday, June 11th from 5-7pm, complete with local BBQ food and live musical entertainment. If you are interested in being a market vendor at any point during the season, let us know! Contact Jen at jennifer@caledoncountyside.org or 647-500-6117.

A First Taste of Spring: Asparagus!

Spring has arrived, and we can soon enjoy one of the first local tastes of the season... asparagus! The asparagus season is rather short (usually just over a month), but while it lasts, the supply of freshly-picked asparagus is very plentiful. This is because asparagus grows at a rapid rate (about 8-12 inches per day) and is therefore harvested daily.

The relatively short season means that it is a good idea to freeze some so that you can enjoy local asparagus throughout the summer and at other times in the year. To freeze asparagus, first wash the stalks and snap off the butt end where it breaks easily. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and drop in the asparagus stalks. Once water has returned to a boil, leave the stalks in for one minute. Remove the stalks and immediately immerse them in cold water, leaving them there for two minutes. Drain and pat the stalks dry, place them in freezer bags and into the freezer.

The nutritional qualities of asparagus are impressive. A serving of asparagus (approximately 8 stalks) contains 20 calories, is free of fat and cholesterol, and is a leading source of folacin and glutathione, and a significant source of protein, thiamine and vitamin B6.

The Ontario Asparagus Growers' Marketing Board recommends the following cooking preparations.

- To Steam: Lay asparagus in steamer basket and place over boiling water in saucepan. Cover and steam 5 to 7 minutes until asparagus is tender-crisp.
- To Microwave: Place 1 lb. washed asparagus spears in microwave-safe dish. Add 2 tbsp. water. Cover. Cook at HIGH for 4 to 6 minutes, rearranging spears once so bottom spears are moved to top until tender crisp. Keep covered until ready to serve.
- To Boil: Place asparagus, uncovered, in a skillet or saucepan and cover with boiling water. Boil for 5 to 7 minutes.
- To Oven-roast: Arrange 1 or 2 lbs. of asparagus spears in a single layer in a large shallow baking dish. Drizzle with 1 to 2 tbsp. vegetable oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake, uncovered, at 500 deg. F. (260 C.) for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender but still slightly firm.
- To Stir-fry: Cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces and cook in skillet or wok, using equal amounts of butter or oil, for 5 to 7 minutes.

Although asparagus is great just on its own, or simply with a bit of butter and salt & pepper, we have included a variety of recipe ideas in the Recipes section for you to try. All the recipes are from the Ontario Asparagus Growers' Marketing Board website, www.asparagus.on.ca.

Don't let this asparagus season pass you by! Asparagus will be ready by mid-May or sooner, and you can pick some up from the following Caledon producers.

Berryview Farm, 13707 Heart Lake Rd. (just south of King), 416-819-4189, open daily 10:30-5
Music Farm, 14130 Creditview Rd., Cheltenham, 905-838-1108

Caledon Countryside Alliance Sustainable Caledon



P.O. BOX 69 STN. INGLEWOOD, CALEDON ON, L7C 3L6 Tel: (905) 584-6221 Email: cca@caledoncountyside.org

Website: www.caledoncountyside.org

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Recipes - Asparagus

Creamy Cheddar Asparagus

Blend a small amount of dry mustard with mayonnaise or sour cream, spoon over cooked Ontario asparagus spears. Sprinkle with grated cheddar cheese and place under broiler to melt cheese.

Lemon Asparagus Soup

Servings: 4

1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup butter or margarine
2 tbsp cornstarch
1 cup water
2 chicken bouillon cubes
3/4 lb Ontario asparagus, cut in 1-inch pieces
2 cups milk
1/4 to 1/2 tsp grated lemon peel
1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
dash seasoned salt

In a 2 quart saucepan, saute the onion and celery in butter until tender. Dissolve the cornstarch in water; add to the saucepan with bouillon. Bring to a boil over medium heat; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add asparagus. Reduce heat; cover and simmer until asparagus is crisp tender, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the milk, lemon peel, nutmeg and salt. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Mediterranean Asparagus Tart

Servings: 6

Prep time: 20 minutes, Cooking Time: 1 hour

1 frozen 9-inch deep-dish pie shell
3 eggs, well beaten
1 lb Ontario asparagus
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 cup canned 2% evaporated milk
3 tbsp chopped fresh Ontario dill
1/2 tsp grated lemon rind
1/4 tsp salt

Line pie shell with double layer of foil; bake in 450° F (230° C) oven for 8 minutes. Remove foil and brush with some of the beaten eggs; bake 5 to 7 minutes longer or until lightly browned. Break tough ends from asparagus; steam or cook stalk in large skillet of boiling water for 2 minutes or just until tender-crisp. Rinse under cold running water; drain and pat dry with towel. Cut off 3-inch (8 cm) tips; slice remaining stalks into 1/4-inch pieces and spring 1 cup into baked crust. Sprinkle cheese on top. Arrange asparagus tips pointing outward in spoke-like fashion in shell. Whisk together egg, milk, dill, lemon rind, salt and pepper; pour over asparagus. Bake in 375° F (190° C) oven for 35 to 45 minutes or until puffy and set. Let stand for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Roast Beef Roll Ups

Servings: 6 Prep Time: 15 min

1 lbs fresh Ontario asparagus
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 1/2 tbsp. grated fresh horseradish
1 tbsp. chopped fresh chives
1 tbsp. lemon juice
3/4 lb. deli roast beef, sliced thin

Trim asparagus spears to 6 inches and simmer in enough water to cover for 5 minutes or until tender crisp. Rinse in cold water and pat dry. In a bowl blend butter, mayonnaise, horseradish, chives and lemon juice. Spread mixture on slices of roast beef. Place an asparagus spear on each slice and roll up. Cover and refrigerate. Can be served whole or cut into bite sized pieces.

Ginger Asparagus Salad

Servings: 4 Prep Time: 20 min

1 lb Ontario asparagus, trimmed
1/3 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
1 tbsp granulated sugar
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbsp minced sushi ginger
2 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsp canola oil
1 tbsp soy sauce
3 tbsp finely chopped fresh coriander
2 oz mesclun salad mix
1 small head radicchio, separated
1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

Steam or simmer asparagus until tender-crisp, 3 to 5 minutes. Place in colander and refresh under cold running water; drain well and pat dry with paper towels. (Asparagus may be cooked several hours in advance.) Arrange in shallow dish large enough to hold it in single layer. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar and sugar until sugar dissolves. Add garlic and ginger; combine well. Slowly whisk in sesame and canola oils and soy sauce; whisk in coriander. (Dressing may be made ahead and refrigerated for up to 3 days.) Pour over the asparagus and turn gently to coat well. Line serving platter with mesclun; arrange radicchio leaves round edge. Pile asparagus over top. Drizzle with any dressing left in dish. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Serve within 30 minutes or asparagus will discolour.

Asparagus & Tomato Bake

Servings: 6-8

1 to 1-1/2 lb fresh Ontario asparagus
4 tbsp butter
5 medium Ontario Greenhouse tomatoes, diced
3 tbsp minced Ontario onion
3 tbsp chopped celery
2 tbsp fresh bread crumbs
2 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1-1/2 tsp minced fresh Ontario basil OR 1/2 - 1 tsp dried basil
1 to 3 tbsp granulated sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper

Melt butter in 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Trim and cut asparagus into 2-inch pieces; sprinkle over bottom of pan or leave spears whole and arrange in a single layer in pan. Top with tomatoes, onion, celery, bread crumbs and cheese. Season with basil and sugar (amount used will depend on acidity of tomatoes). Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover and bake 45 minutes at 350° F or until asparagus is tender. Transfer with slotted spoon to serving dish.

Asparagus Omelet

Servings: 4

8 spears tender-crisp cooked Ontario asparagus
3 tbsp oil, margarine or butter
1 small onion minced
salt to taste
5 large eggs beaten
1 tbsp milk
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in omelet pan or skillet; add onion and cook until soft and golden. Place asparagus in spoke formation in pan over the onion. Sprinkle lightly with salt. Combine beaten eggs, salt and milk. Pour half of mixture over asparagus and lift edges as egg cooks so that moist egg can run under. Add remaining egg mixture and continue cooking until lightly browned on bottom. Sprinkle cheese over top and place under broiler just until delicately browned.