

# Shoots to Thrill

Add flavor to your meal for Asparagus Month

BY AMY HIGGINS

Asparagus is a nutritious, versatile vegetable — or perennial lily, as it was once classified — that is an excellent accompaniment to many main dishes or as a delicious side dish. The shoots grow in a wide range of soils and can be found at farms, in the wild or at your local grocery store.

May is Asparagus Month and *Colorado Country Life* collaborated with the University of Colorado Boulder and the Colorado Department of Agriculture to offer readers two outstanding options for asparagus enjoyment. This recipe is simple, scrumptious and an excellent way to recognize this annual national holiday that originated around 1985. Find the second recipe on our website at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop).



## WILD FLOWER?

Whether you call them vegetable or lily, you can pick asparagus by the handful in Colorado's outdoors ... if you know where to look. Survey damp locales in your area, such as along rivers and streams. Several online sources can point you in the right direction.



## Chicken Asparagus Pasta

Recipe provided by University of Colorado Boulder and Alice C. (adapted to CCL format).



- 8–10** boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2** garlic cloves, diced or pressed
- 1** red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2–3** lemons, juiced, divided
- 1** tablespoon olive oil
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1** pound asparagus, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1** pound dried penne pasta
- Red pepper flakes, to taste
- Parmesan cheese, grated, to taste

**Optional Extras:** extra Parmesan, chopped jalapeño, diced fresh tomato, diced scallions, quartered lemons

Place chicken in a bowl. Add garlic, bell pepper, the juice of one lemon, olive oil, salt and pepper. Add more lemon juice, if desired. Heat a wok or other deep pan over medium heat; add chicken mixture and cover pan until chicken is cooked through. Reduce to low heat to keep warm.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add asparagus pieces and boil for one minute; remove with a slotted spoon, and rinse asparagus under cool water to stop cooking.

Cook the pasta according to box instructions in the same water you used to cook the asparagus. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the cooked pasta to pan with chicken. Add cooked asparagus, red pepper flakes and Parmesan; let flavors incorporate for about 5 minutes. Taste and add more lemon or red pepper flakes as needed. Top with optional extras and serve in bowls.

"If you like your pasta saucier, you can always add some of the pasta water," Alice C. says.

Photo by Forrest Mondlane Jr.

## Do you like your asparagus simply grilled?

### Pair it with Colorado Wine for Perfection

Chef Jason K. Morse, C.E.C., 5280 Culinary, LLC and Ace Hardware Grill Expert suggests serving this dish with a glass of white wine from a Colorado vineyard. There are several vineyards to choose from, so you have plenty of options. Check out this list from Colorado Wine: [coloradowine.com](http://coloradowine.com).

Find Chef Morse's Simple Grilled Asparagus recipe on [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop).

