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## Asparagus — Specification and test methods

*Asperges — Spécifications et méthodes d'essai*

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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Fruits, vegetables and their derived products*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

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## Introduction

Asparagus is an ancient crop, native to the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, and first cultivated by the Romans. Popular in sixteenth century France and England, it made its way to America through the colonists. A member of the lily family, it has great nutritional value. It is low in calories and very low in sodium. Asparagus is a particularly good source of vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin K, thiamin, riboflavin, rutin, niacin, folic acid, iron, phosphorus, potassium, copper, manganese, selenium, chromium, dietary fibre and protein. Asparagus spears can be eaten raw or cooked.

Asparagus, *Asparagus officinalis*, is an herbaceous perennial plant in the family Asparagaceae, which is grown for its young shoots, or spears, which are eaten as a vegetable. The asparagus plant is tall with scale-like leaves emerging from the underground stem (rhizome) and has stout stems and feathery foliage. The flowers are bell-shaped and occur alone or in pairs. They are green-white to yellow in colour. After flowering, a round red berry is formed with one to six black seeds. Asparagus can live for 20 or more years and can attain a height of between 100 cm to 150 cm. Asparagus originates from Europe, northern Africa and western Asia.

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