

## Pickled Asparagus Spears

*Yield: 1 quart or 6 servings.*

- 2 pounds fresh asparagus spears, tips firm and intact**
- 2 cups water**
- $\frac{3}{8}$  cup rice vinegar**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon honey**
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled**
- 2 to 3 lemon slices, seeds removed**
- 2 sprigs fresh dill**
- 1 teaspoon whole mustard seeds**

Wash and trim the asparagus, cutting off 2 to 3 inches from the base. Discard lower stems.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Meanwhile, prepare a large bowl of ice water. When the pot of water is at a full rolling boil, drop in the asparagus spears and boil for 15 seconds. Drain the asparagus in a colander and immediately transfer it to the bowl of ice water.

In a small saucepan, combine 2 cups of water, vinegar, salt, and honey. Bring to a boil, stirring once or twice to dissolve the salt and honey. Remove from heat and let the brine cool slightly.

Place the garlic cloves and lemon slices into the bottom of a clean glass quart jar. Place asparagus spears in jar, tips facing upward, and pack tightly. Add the dill and mustard seeds as you do so.

Pour the cooled brine into the jar over the other ingredients, completely covering the asparagus with the liquid. Secure the lid and store in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

Slowly pour the milk into the sausage mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Whisk in the seasonings. Taste the gravy and adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve over biscuits.

