

Steamed Asparagus with Raspberry Walnut Vinaigrette

One of my favorite spring salads is steamed asparagus with a raspberry walnut vinaigrette. I have taken this dish to "pot lucks" as well as served it for dinner parties, when things are always a little more fancy. If you are using large asparagus, trim and peel them before steaming. The thin ones do not require peeling. Steam until just crisp tender and plunge into ice water to stop the cooking. Drain and pat dry. Toss with just enough vinaigrette to coat no more than 30 minutes before serving. Pile the dressed asparagus on to a platter and garnish with fresh raspberries, toasted or candied walnuts, edible flowers, pea shoots or radish sprouts tossed with a bit of the vinaigrette, torn chive blossoms or chives snipped into a half inch length.

Raspberry Walnut Vinaigrette

½ c. Raspberry vinegar (black raspberry if you can find it)

Juice of ½ a lemon

1 tsp. Honey (a generous teaspoon to help emulsify but remember the vinegar is sweet)

2/3 c. Walnut oil

1/3 c. Safflower oil (or canola or sunflower)

Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Whisk together the vinegar, lemon juice and honey. While whisking continuously, add the oil in a steady stream until incorporated. Season to taste. You may also make this in a blender, blending the vinegar, lemon and honey together first and then slowly adding the oil.