



Asparagus Growing Information & Varieties

(subject to availability)

Asparagus

Asparagus will produce the best when planted in full sun. Asparagus will grow in most types of soil, but since it must have dry feet, it does best in soil that drains well. Place the plants about 1 to 2 feet apart with 5 feet between rows. Twenty-five to thirty crowns will produce enough asparagus for a family of four once the bed is established, which takes three seasons.

Planting

Dig a trench 12 to 18 inches deep, the length of your row, and add 6 to 7 inches of compost and a little peat moss. Sprinkle on a little fertilizer, such as Lilly Miller Morcrop Tomato and Vegetable Food (5-10-10) or Espoma Organic Garden-tone (5-10-10). Finally, add a couple of inches of soil and mix. With this mixture, build up mounds at the bottom of the trench about 1-2 feet apart. Set each crown on the soil surface. Fill up the trench to cover them with a couple of inches of soil. This puts the soil level of the row a little below the rest of the garden. When the shoots grow up, fill in the trench with a little more soil to give the stalks support.

Harvesting

Don't harvest spears during the first two years that the plants are in their permanent bed. This allows the plants to put all of their energy into establishing deep roots. During the third season, pick the spears over a 4-week period, and by the fourth year, extend your harvest to 8 weeks. In early spring, harvest spears every third day or so; as the weather warms, you might have to pick twice a day to keep up with production. Cut asparagus spears with a sharp knife or snap off the spears at, or right below, ground level with your fingers.

Varieties

Mary Washington: The standard commercial strain and the most popular U.S. variety is resistant to some rust and blight, has a 60 day cutting season. Produces long straight spears with tight tips.

Jersey Knight: Male hybrids with fewer female seed plants than are found in open pollinated varieties. These varieties are high yielding, have excellent fusarium tolerance and high resistance to rust. They have a large attractive spear. Due to greater disease resistance and less expenditure of photosynthetic forming seed, they live longer than male-female varieties.



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Jersey Knight has fewer than 6% female plant.