



Guide for Planting Asparagus

Asparagus is a hardy perennial that will last for 10-15 years in a well maintained patch. Choose a location with rich, well-drained soil, in full sun, apart from your annual vegetables so the soil won't be disturbed every year.

Prepare soil — Since you are building a foundation for years of production, take the time to work the soil a foot and half to two feet deep, mixing in **Cotton Burr Compost**, **Bone Meal** and granular **Gardener's Special** to improve the health and condition of your soil before planting, plus Cow Manure or Compost Chicken Manure.

Planting transplants (root crowns) — Asparagus can be planted in early spring (mid March to mid April) or in the fall (early October to mid November).

Dig trenches 8 inches deep and 3 to 4 feet apart (asparagus roots spread wide). Spread some compost or manure in the bottom of the trench and cover with an inch of garden soil.

Set the crowns 12-18 inches apart in the row, spread the roots so they lie flat and cover with 2 inches of soil. As the new shoots come up gradually fill the trench.

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Fertilizing — For high production and thick spears follow a twice-a-year feeding program. Make one application of ferti • lome **Gardener's Special** (11-15-11) before growth starts in the spring and a second as soon as the harvest is finished to encourage heavy top growth.

Don't skimp on water when the top growth is developing. Spear production in the spring depends on vigorous growth the previous season.

Harvesting — When spears are 6 to 8 inches high, snap off at the breaking point $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch above the soil level, or cut slightly below the soil level with a sharp knife.

Do not harvest the first year. In subsequent years, harvest until the spear size decreases to thinner than a pencil, usually 6-7 weeks in a mature planting.

Control weeds with mulching, hoeing, or spot chemical treatment. In the autumn, you can remove dead ferns after they are completely brown or leave them in place through the winter to catch moisture and prevent soil loss.

Asparagus deteriorates rapidly after harvest. Store in a cold, moist location and use quickly. Fresh young asparagus is excellent raw in green salads or on a relish platter with a sour cream dip. This vegetable is delicious boiled or steamed, served with a sauce or by itself.

Here are two popular asparagus varieties we typically offer.

(Varieties available may vary each year.)

Purple Passion

This type of asparagus has many similar characteristics to green asparagus but offers something new for the asparagus connoisseur. The spears produced have several qualities which make it quite different from common green asparagus:

- The deep-burgundy coloration is the most striking difference.
- Because of a 20% higher sugar content, this vegetable is often eaten raw and it makes an attractive garnish for salads. When cooked, the sweetness gives a mild nutty flavor.
- The spears are generally larger and much more tender than its green counterpart. The vascular bundles have less lignin per spear which make the spears less stringy. This allows the cook to use the entire spear with little waste.

Millenium:

This type of asparagus is a non GMO hybrid Male from 1st Generation seed that was produced in screened fields to avoid contamination from pollen from adjoining asparagus fields. Reported to have excellent fusarium tolerance and high resistance to rust. Male plants don't expend energy producing seed and tend to be more vigorous than female plants. This seems to be born out in test gardens as well.

Millenium is known for its high quality spears that remain tight at a greater spear height, even in hotter harvest seasons.

Spears are tender, have outstanding flavor and excellent freezing quality. It performs well in a variety of soil conditions including heavier soils. Developed in Canada, Millenium has excellent cold hardiness and longevity.

Asparagus love rich soil. We recommend planting asparagus along with Johnson's Soil Recipe.

Johnson's Soil Recipe

- Three 2 cu. ft. bags **Cotton Burr Compost**
- 4 lbs. ferti • lome **Gardener's Special**
- 4 lbs. Hi-Yield **Bone Meal**
- 4 lbs. Natural **Guard HuMic**

Till amendments into your soil before planting (covers 100 sq. ft. area)