

Asparagus

Asparagus is a hardy perennial that will last for 30 years or more in the garden.

Plant: Plant near the side or edge of the garden where it will not interfere with annual tillage. Prepare the soil thoroughly before planting, using generous quantities of organic matter (such as Cotton Boll Compost).

When to Plant: Early Spring (mid-March to mid-April) or in the fall (early October to mid-November).

Space: Space rows 5 to 6 feet apart, with crowns set 18 to 24 inches apart in the row. Dig a trench 8-10 inches deep. Plant crowns or transplants so that the buds of the crown are 7-8" below ground level. Cover with a few inches of soil initially, and add soil as the season progresses. After the trench is filled and the soil settles, crown buds should be about 6" below soil level

Care: It produces a large vigorous root system and is fairly resistant to stress conditions. Well-drained soil and a full sun location are necessary. Soak the area in very dry weather. Spears begin to emerge in early April and may be damaged by a few spring freezes. Cut and destroy frozen spears, and the plant will rapidly send up new spears to replace them. Do not harvest the first year. Fertilize in the spring with Fertilome Gardeners special. Weeds must be controlled because the weeds can invade over time. Remove dead ferns in the autumn or leave them in place to catch moisture and prevent soil loss.

Harvest: Snap spears at the breaking point .5-.75" above the soil level or cut slightly below the soil level with a sharp knife. Heat will cause the tips to open and become loose later in the season unless harvested frequently. Asparagus deteriorates rapidly after harvest; store in a cold moist location and use quickly



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