

Wallsend Nurseries

95 Lake Rd Wallsend 2287
Ph 49 501066 Fax 49 516960 email gardens1@tpg.com.au



Asparagus Growing

Asparagus is easily grow either from crowns planted in Winter or from seed sown in Spring. Seedlings are ok but will not be able to produce a decent crop for about 3 years therefore most people will settle on planting the crowns. Usually about 12 plants will be sufficient for an average family.

Asparagus is a gross feeder so you will have to pay careful attention to the preparation of the soil for such a long term crop as this. Remember ,the plants often have a productive life of 10 years or more, so a little backache now will be well worth the effort if you appreciate the delicate flavour of fresh Asparagus.

PLANTING:

If possible plant out the crowns in one long row. This will give the foliage room to spread as the plant can be quite large. Indeed plants up to 1.8 m tall are not uncommon.

Prepare the soil by adding generous helpings of well rotted animal manure plus a dressing of complete fertilizer at the rate of 50-100 grams per square metre. A handful of garden lime per metre is a good idea as well. Crowns or seedlings should be planted about 45cm apart for best results.

Dig a trench in the prepared soil about 30 cm deep & place a layer of well rotted animal manure about 100mm deep in the bottom of it. Cover this with 5cm of soil. Row the Asparagus crowns out over this at the recommended spacing. Be sure to spread the roots of the crowns so they will receive all the nutrients they require. Cover the crowns with soil.

CARE & HARVESTING:

In the first year you must allow them to develop without cutting any of the spears. If you cut the spears you will weaken the plant so that crops in future years will be reduced as the spears produce the foliage of the plant which is needed to make the food for the developing plant. Feed the plants regularly with well rotted manure & some complete fertilizer at intervals of 6-8 weeks throughout the growing season.

When the tops yellow in Autumn cut them off at ground level.

In the following Spring hill the plants to 35cm high if you want white asparagus spears or to 20cm if you want the nice green ones. Each Winter these hills should be removed, the beds weeded & cultivated ,and the hills re-formed the following Spring.

In the second year a few spears may be cut early but after several weeks allow growth to continue as in the first year to avoid exhausting the crowns.

In the third year full cutting stage is reached & cutting can continue over a 10-12 week period.

Green asparagus is cut when it is 10-15 cm above ground level. White asparagus is cut as soon as the very tip shows above ground level. This is why the white asparagus growers use a higher mound ; to keep the light from reaching the spears & therefore turning them green.

PESTS & DISEASES:

Asparagus is one of the few vegetables you will grow that is almost pest & disease free. Aphids are really the only problem , and then only rarely. You can spray them with Baythroid® if you must treat them.

Sit back & enjoy the luxury of fresh Asparagus!!