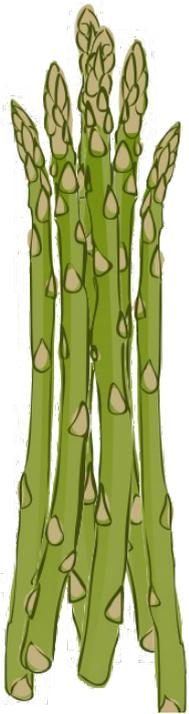


ASPARAGUS

Asparagus is a vegetable that belongs to the allium family, this includes leeks, onions, chives, and shallots. It is native to the Mediterranean and Asia Minor areas but has been cultivated in most countries around the world. Contrary to many peoples beliefs, asparagus is a hardy plant and adaptable to most climate conditions and being a perennial that overwinters in the ground, it will grow in places that have winter ground which freezes.

Super healthy vegetable, providing good levels of a wide range of nutrients including potassium, B vitamins, and calcium. And with no fat and virtually no calories, asparagus delivers all these positive benefits without any downside.

1. Digging deep is only necessary where the soil has been compacted or where lots of soil enrichment is required because of lack of humus, minerals, and drainage.
2. In a sandy loam type of soil, you only need to dig a trench about a foot deep to plant crowns then cover with soil, as the plant grows just slowly fill in the trench.
3. Asparagus does not tolerate weed competition for at least three years, once the plants are well established the weeds do not seem to bother them as much, but it is a good idea to keep broadleaf weeds out of the bed.



4. composted manures (mixed animal species) work the best if they are slightly worked into the top few inches in winter, this doesn't seem to harm the asparagus plants but it does wonders for them in the spring.

5. Mulch is good but only a thin (2-3 inch) layer works better since you will not need to remove any of it, and this mulch should be lightweight for getting the best spear production.

6. Using all male plants (which is what you get when you buy crowns) helps production rates but does not allow for reproduction by seed. This isn't a problem for most folks growing asparagus since they most likely will not want to build more beds.

If you are growing asparagus for sale then you might want to plant one bed from seeds so you can expand your growing area without having to wait for crowns to reproduce underground from the rhizome nature of asparagus roots.

Note: Crowns allow for full harvest after three years in the ground, seeds should be ready for full harvest after four years.

The wait time is so the roots (crowns) can grow enough that a six week harvest period will still leave enough root energy for later spears to appear and turn into the fronds for root energy replenishment.

Failure to allow this establishment time period will result in a shortened lifespan of asparagus crowns.