



Bucks Country Gardens

Asparagus Step By Step Planting Instructions

Your two-year old asparagus roots will give at least a dozen years of asparagus cuttings. There are, however, some important preparations into achieving the highest yield from your asparagus crop. Asparagus must not be disturbed in its garden bed over the years, so before planting locate an area that will be unaffected by your annual vegetable garden.

Asparagus roots require full sun, soil with good drainage, protection from harsh winds and will thrive in cooler temperatures. If you are planting asparagus roots for the first time follow these basic guidelines (or if you already have asparagus plants, use this as a guide for improved crop yields)

Starting Your Asparagus Bed

- Dig a trench 18" deep and 2-3 ft. wide; space rows to a 4-ft. on center.
- Work in a large amount of dry or well-rotted cow manure, compost or other organic matter. Add 1 lb. of 5 10-10 fertilizer for every bushel of soil mixture. Mix well into the bottom 12" of the trench.
- Allow this soil mixture to settle, filling in as necessary to reach a 6" planting depth from ground level.
- Set asparagus crowns 18-20" apart in the trench. Spread the roots out so they lie flat; cover with 2-3" of loosened garden soil.
- As soon as new shoots appear through this sub-soil, cover again with 2-3" of loosened soil. Repeat this procedure until you have filled the trench thus finishing the bed rows slightly higher than ground level.
- Side-dress with a well-balanced fertilizer (like 10-10-10) or a manure tea (manure mixed with a little water). Keep your asparagus beds mulched and weeded at all times.
- DO NOT HARVEST your asparagus spears in the first year. Let them grow into tall, feathery ferns. (This process allows your asparagus to develop further and then go to seed to enhance your next year's crop).
- In the fall, do not cut the feathery stalks down. Allow them to die down naturally (you may later trim them down). These stalks store important nutrients for next year's growth.
- Next spring, remove old mulch and excess debris from the beds. Top dress with dry or well-rotted cow manure or fertilizer. Again, through the summer, side-dress with a well-balanced fertilizer or manure tea.

Harvesting Your Asparagus

You may harvest a small quantity of spears the first spring season after planting. When harvesting, choose spears that are 4-8" long and 3/8 to 3/4" thick, cutting them as close to the ground as possible, over a two-week period. Allow the remaining stalks to grow into the feathery ferns (repeat procedures as mentioned above).

In the second spring season after planting, extend your harvest period to 4-6 weeks; the next year to 8 weeks – retain this 8-week harvesting period from then on. Allow the remaining stalks to grow into feathery ferns (as mentioned above) for a greater yield the following year.