

ASPARAGUS



Variety	Type	Harvest	Maturity	Yield	Spears	Flavour	Fresh Eating	Freezing	Cooking	Canning	Disease Resistance	Comments
Eclipse	F1 Hybrid - All Male	May - June	Early-Mid Season	High	Medium to large	Sweet and Juicy	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Huge yield that performs best in cool regions
Equinox	All male hybrid	May - June	Early-Mid Season	High	Medium	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Performs best in cool regions
Mary Washington	Open Pollinated	April - June	Early Season	High	Long, thick, straight, medium green	Full Sweet Flavour	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	A classic heirloom garden variety showing strong vigor.
Millenium	F1 Hybrid - All Male	April - June	Late Season	Excellent	Long spears, tight tips	Full Sweet Flavour	Good	Good	Good	Good	Susceptible to Rust	Adapted to cold winters and cool springs. Good quality for the fresh market.
Purple Passion	F1 Hybrid - All Male	April - June	Mid Season	Excellent	Large, tender, burgundy purple spears	Sweet, Mild Nutty Flavour	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Contains 20% higher sugar content, turns green when cooked. Less stringy than other varieties.

Asparagus is easy to grow and produces tender and delicious stalks. Amend heavy soil by with compost and till for better aeration, as asparagus need well draining soil. Prepare trenches 15 cm (6") deep, 10 cm (4") wide and 90 cm (36") apart. Plant crowns 40 cm (15") apart in the trench, and cover with 5 cm (2") of soil. Don't fill in the entire furrow at once. Water thoroughly. Fill in the furrows with soil as new shoots gradually grow until the furrow is completely filled to ground level. Water frequently and deeply. Asparagus beds come into full production after 3 years. It is best not to harvest until the second year. In the second year, harvest lightly for 2-3 weeks. In the third and following seasons, harvest 6-8 weeks each spring. To harvest stalks, run a knife just below the ground level, above the crown. Stop harvest cuttings in June.

Planting & Harvesting White Asparagus

Asparagus enjoys well-draining soils and full sun. Lay out a 1.5 m (4') wide patch and dig a 50 cm (20") wide row down the middle of the patch. Set crowns with the roots spread out 15 cm (6") deep and 50 cm (18") apart. Fill soil in only 4-5 cm (1.5 - 2") over the crown and water thoroughly. Treat white asparagus the same as green asparagus during the first and second years. In the third year, protect white asparagus from receiving sunlight. Once spears break through the ground, cover them with a 20 cm (8") thick layer of dark mulch and cover with black plastic. This prevents photosynthesis from taking place and the vegetable never gets a chance to turn green. As the spears grow they will remain white as long as they are covered with mulch or black plastic. Harvesting can begin as soon as the tips of the spears can be seen making their way through the surface of the mulch. Take care to remove the mulch from the spears and cut them slightly above the crown of the root. Fill holes immediately with soil, remove the black plastic, and allow the asparagus plant to grow through the soil to replenish nutrients for the next season.

Asparagus grows to approximate 90 cm (36") in height, by 60 cm (24") in spread. All varieties listed are hardy to Zone 3. F1 Hybrid - All male varieties produce two to three times more yield than open pollinated varieties. Store asparagus by wrapping the stem ends in damp paper towels or refrigerate stalks, tips up in a cup of shallow water.

