

Jersey Knight Asparagus

Jersey Knight Asparagus is extremely vigorous, develops large succulent spears and quickly attracted a loyal following. The flavor is excellent, and the plant is resistant to rust, crown rot and fusarium. It also performs equally well in heavy, clay-like soils.

The edible portion of the plant is the immature stem and leaves, known as a spear. After harvest, let the plant grow into their six foot fern-like stems. **Plan on about one dozen plants for each person eating asparagus.**

To start your asparagus bed, buy one to two year old roots at the nursery. They are only available about January through March. Work the bed up with lots of composted manure or compost. This bed can be in rows or solidly planted. Since they are tall and permanent, they need a sunny background area in the garden. Well-drained soil is important so if you don't have it, construct a 6 to 12 inch raised bed containing premium soil to keep the roots from rotting.

Plants should be 12 to 18 inches apart. Plant with no more than 2 inches of soil on top of the root, not 6-8 inches like most literature states. Our soil is wet enough that roots will rot if planted too deep. Established asparagus is not a fan of relocation, so please choose your spot accordingly.

Asparagus like ample water and a high nitrogen fertilizer. Resist temptation: don't harvest any spears the first season. If the bed has grown well, some spears can be harvested the next spring. Cut with a sharp knife when spears are 6 to 10 inches long. The trick is to harvest for only 4 to 6 weeks and not to exhaust the roots. Once new spears become thin stop harvesting.

In following years, harvest time can be extended to 8 to 10 weeks. After harvest, let shoots grow for the rest of the summer. Cut all shoots off to the ground when they turn brown in November or December, and cover with a two inch layer of chicken manure. Enjoy for many years to come.



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