

# *How To Plant and Grow Asparagus*

Asparagus thrive in full sun and prefer a light, well-drained soil. They are heavy feeders and prefer a fairly neutral pH.

1. Loosen the soil 16" deep and amend with compost, composted manure, and lime.
2. Soak crowns in a bucket of water for one hour. Plant the crowns about eight inches deep and 18" apart.
3. Cover with 2" of soil. As plants grow, add soil to cover the tops until they have reached the top of the bed. Then, mulch with compost.
4. Keep the bed moist, but not wet. Raised beds are preferable to ensure that weeds and grass cannot encroach and compete with the asparagus plants.
5. Do not harvest the first year. Roots need to establish and grow stronger. The more established the roots are, the larger your harvest will be. Allow the plants to grow and form ferns. Cut back ferns in fall.
6. The second year, harvest lightly by choosing two or three of the heavier spears per plant. Allow the wispy spears to grow into ferns once again. The third year, you can keep harvesting until the spears are less than 3/8" in diameter. At that point, stop harvesting and allow the plants to form ferns.
7. Fertilize with blood meal or an organic fertilizer with a high phosphorus ratio (the middle number of the N-P-K ratio) in spring and after harvest. After the third year, continue to apply fertilizer spring and fall.
8. To harvest, look for spears that are 6" tall. With a sharp knife, cut diagonally through the spear just below ground level in order to prevent the emergence of a clump of woody stumps above ground.