



Growing Asparagus

Asparagus is a tasty and nutritious food that requires minimal care, is susceptible to few disease or insect problems, and lives for about twenty-five years. If properly planted, maintained, and harvested, it can be grown in the Brazos Valley. Newer varieties, such as UC-157 and Jersey Giant, have proven to be productive in the South. Asparagus spears will provide the first harvest from your spring garden.

Asparagus is a cool season perennial with the following growing preferences:

1. Light: full sun or afternoon shade in this area.
2. Soil: well-drained, deep friable loam
3. Fertility: medium - high nitrogen, high phosphorus, potassium and organic matter.
4. PH: 6.0 to 7.0
5. Moisture: average
6. Wind: protection or support after harvest when the ferns may grow to about 5 feet high.

PLANTING ASPARAGUS

Asparagus has a large root system with feeder roots and rhizomes or buds that develop into spears and storage roots. Roots may grow 5 feet down and out.

The time to plant asparagus in Texas is between January 15 and March 15. Home gardeners will buy one to two year-old asparagus crowns/roots. Ten plants per person is average, but twenty or thirty may be needed for storage or sharing.

The planting area or bed should be at least 4 feet wide and as long as needed for the number of plants to be grown. If crowns/roots are spaced 18 inches apart,

they will develop larger spears than those planted 15 inches apart.

The planting row should be a furrow 12 inches deep and 18 inches wide. If the soil removed was sandy loam, it can be ridged for back filling as the plants grow. If the soil is clay, it should be removed and used elsewhere. Subsoil should be loosened with a spade fork. Several inches of seasoned compost or manure and some complete fertilizer should be mixed in the bottom of the furrow.

Next, make a small mound so the asparagus crown will be on top and the roots spread around it. Plant the crowns/roots 9 inches deep in sandy soils and 5 inches deep in clay soils. Cover them 3 inches with half organic and sandy loam mix, then wet the entire row. Whenever the plants are several inches tall, another layer of the above mix should be added until the furrow is full. Apply water, if rainfall is inadequate for young plants.