

OUT OF THE BOX

ASPARAGUS

Your plants have been shipped to you in a dormant, bare-root state. Once planted they may take 4-6 weeks depending upon the weather and other environmental conditions to wake up and start growing. You can be assured that they will begin setting roots and start growing very soon after planting. Please plant as soon as possible and be patient.

We urge you to plant your new arrivals as soon as possible. In the event that planting must be delayed due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, bare-root plants should be left in the poly bags and kept in a cool, dark location. A refrigerator is ideal, but an unheated garage or a basement is also acceptable. Keep roots moist but not soaking wet. A spray bottle can be used to mist roots.

Asparagus is a hardy perennial vegetable that produces edible purple spears. The spears turn green when cooked. Asparagus can last 15 to 25 years without replanting if it is well cared for and the climate is suitable. It does not do well if summers are extremely hot and winters are mild.

The first year after planting don't harvest any spears: let them all grow into ferns. This will strengthen the crown for higher future production. The second year after planting harvest only those spears that are larger than a pencil's diameter. The third year you can begin harvesting all spears larger than a pencil's diameter for 6 to 8 weeks in spring.

Start harvesting as soon as large enough spears emerge from the soil by snapping off the spears with your hand at the soil line when they are 6 to 8 inches tall.

*\*Image on cover is representative of the type of plant(s) in this offer and not necessarily indicative of actual size or color for the included variety.*

*Thank you for your order*

ASPARAGUS

PLANT WARRANTY

We warrant perennials for 1 year and annuals for 90 days from the time of the original shipment. If for any reason you are dissatisfied, we will replace your plant with a similar or comparable one, at no charge. If your replacement is not available or it is too late in the season to ship, it will reship the following shipping season.

**CAUTION:** Not all plant material is edible.

Though most plants are harmless, some contain toxic substances which can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, or other discomforts. As a general rule, only known food products should be eaten. In case of ingestion, please contact your local poison control center at once and advise them of the plant ingested.

Keep out of reach of children.



## QUICK REFERENCE PLANTING GUIDE

LIGHT/SUN EXPOSURE	Full sun.
USDA HARDINESS ZONES	3 to 8.
PLANT TYPE	Perennial.
PLANTING DISTANCE IN-GROUND	12 to 18 inches apart.
MATURE HEIGHT / SPREAD	4 to 5 tall with a 18 inch spread.
BLOOM TIME	Harvest spears in April-May. <b>Beginning the 3rd year after planting.</b>

### SOIL PREPARATION

Although these plants will perform well in average garden soils of all types, we recommend having your soil tested periodically by your local County Extension Office ([www.csrees.usda.gov/extension](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/extension) or by calling 1-800-333-4636). These tests can determine if the soil needs any amendments to enhance your plants' growth and performance. See below for our recommended practice to improve your soil without any additional testing:

- 1 Spade or till the soil to a depth of 12-18 inches.
- 2 To provide nutrients and improve drainage, add organic matter to your soil by mixing in a 2 to 4-inch layer of dehydrated manure, garden compost, shredded leaves, and/or peat moss.
- 3 After active growth begins, periodically feed with a water soluble fertilizer. Plants in containers need more frequent watering and feeding, especially when in active growth and bloom.

## PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Dig a trench 6 inches deep and wide enough so that the dormant bare roots can be layed out flat. Place the plants 6 to 8 inches apart in the trench. Carefully spread the dormant bare roots out so they are flat on the soil. Cover them completely with 3 inches of soil, gently tamping the soil. Once growth begins, fill in the additional 3 inches of soil. Water thoroughly.

### CONTINUING CARE

Adequate and consistent watering is essential during the plant's first year in your garden. Infrequent, long soakings of water that thoroughly saturate the soil surrounding the root zone are more effective than frequent light applications of water that just wet the top of the soil.

Due to individual plant needs, geographical and environmental conditions, a specific watering schedule is hard to define; however as a rule of thumb you should not allow the soil to completely dry out. During periods of drought and extreme summer heat, you may need to water as often as every day.

Overwatering can be as damaging as under watering. Be sure that the area surrounding your plant does not become a water-holding bog and that there is adequate drainage to move excess water away from the plant.

Apply a 2-4 inch layer of shredded bark, compost or other organic mulch around your plants to promote moisture retention, maintain even soil temperatures, and to discourage weed growth.

## CONTINUING CARE (Continued)

WEEDING

Weed control is very important in successfully growing asparagus, especially in the first couple of years after transplanting when the young crowns are at their most vulnerable. Keep the area around your plants free of weeds. Weeds compete with all plants for food, water and light. Walk around the garden periodically and pull weeds, including the roots, as soon as you see them.

GROOMING

Allow the asparagus tops (ferns) to continue to grow after the last harvest. The top growth (ferns) provides energy to the plant for the next season's growth. Once the tops (ferns) have turned yellow and die you can either remove the the tops at that time or you can leave them until early spring and remove before growth begins.

FEEDING

Feed your plants once every 2-3 weeks during the growing season with a water soluble fertilizer. Discontinue feeding after September 1st so your plants can harden off for winter dormancy. Resume fertilizing when new growth appears in the spring.

WINTERIZING

A thorough watering in late fall will greatly enhance the plant's cold tolerance. The time to protect your plants in the garden is after the ground has frozen. At that time, apply a winter mulch of evergreen boughs, straws or leaves to prevent lifting of the plant's roots during alternating periods of freezing and thawing.