

**THE ROSEDALE PLANTSMAN'S**  
**GUIDE TO GROWING ASPARAGUS**



Our Asparagus 'Mary Washington' makes a hardy and flavorful addition to any vegetable garden. A gourmet's treat, fresh-picked Asparagus can be enjoyed as early as mid-May, well before many other garden vegetables.

Spring is the best time to plant Asparagus. The instructions below explain how to start an Asparagus bed in your garden using bare-root plants or "crowns," the most common method. Our Asparagus 'Mary Washington' plants consist of #1, 3-year crowns, wrapped 25 to a bundle. You should have at least 1 bundle (25 plants) for each adult.

**PLANTING:** An Asparagus planting is a long-term addition to the garden, so choose the site carefully. In a well-prepared site, an Asparagus bed will thrive for 10-15 years, spreading slowly in size each year. Choose a sunny, well-drained area separate from annual vegetable or flower beds, and away from foot traffic. Handfork or rototill the soil deeply (to at least 12"). Remove large stones, roots, and twigs, and break up soil clods. Next, thoroughly incorporate into the soil: Peat Moss or Compost, Cow Manure, Perlite or Sand \*if the soil is heavy), Agricultural Limestone, and 5-10-5 Fertilizer. Plant Asparagus crowns in rows 18-30" apart. Cover crowns with 2-3" of soil, and mulch lightly with Salt Hay or Buckwheat Hulls.

**FOLLOW-UP CARE:** Thorough, regular watering is important to enable the plants to become established. Weed the bed regularly (every 2-4 weeks). You should not harvest stalks in the first season. For best results, remove the red berries that appear on the fronds in late summer to direct the plants' energy to the production of new shoots for the following year. Mulch in the fall with cow manure. Carefully fork the manure into the top 2-3" of soil the following spring.

**Second Year:** In the second season, top dress the bed in the spring with Bulbtone 4-10-6 Fertilizer and Agricultural Limestone. Cut no more than one-half of the stalks this season, and for no more than one 2-3 week period. Allow the other stalks to develop fronds as in the first season. Continue to keep the bed well watered during dry periods. In the fall, fertilize lightly and mulch as in the first season.

**Third Year:** In the third season, again top dress the soil in the spring with Bulbtone 4-10-6 Fertilizer and Agricultural Limestone. Harvest stalks until about the fourth week of June. Depending on the vigor of the Asparagus bed, harvest one-half or more of the stalks. Continue regular applications of Mulch, Bulbtone 4-10-6 Fertilizer, and Agricultural Limestone each succeeding year. When the plants begin to decline in vigor (after 10-12 years), gradually renew the bed over three years by replacing 1/3 of the total number of rows each year.

**HELPFUL MATERIALS:**

Peat Moss or Composts  
Cow Manure (Bagged and Dehydrated)  
Bulb-tone 4-10-6 Fertilizer or 5-10-5 Fertilizer  
Perlite or Sand  
Agricultural Limestone  
Salt Hay or Buckwheat Hull Mulch

**HELPFUL TOOLS:**

Garden Spade  
Garden Rake  
Hand Fork  
Watering Supplies

**SUGGESTED REFERENCES:**

*ALL ABOUT VEGETABLES* (Ortho Books)

© Rosedale Nurseries, Inc., 2003