



Garden Talk

Asparagus Grown Deep

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Asparagus is an early crop providing tasty asparagus from spring through early summer. It is an easy-to-grow perennial which, once established, will produce vegetables year after year. One mature asparagus plant will produce 1 1/2 pounds of spears. A family of four will require an asparagus bed of 20-30 plants to yield enough asparagus throughout the season.

STEP 1: Preparing the Bed

Asparagus prefer a sunny location and deep, well-drained soil. Large amounts of organic material such as compost, mulch, and manure should be worked into the soil to a depth of 14-16" inches.

STEP 2: Planted Deep

Dig a trench 10" inches deep and 10" inches wide. Spread a 1" inch layer of Watters 'Barnyard Manure' along the trench bottom then covered with a 1-inch layer of garden soil mixed with an equal amount of Watters 'Mulch'. Place the asparagus roots in the trench with the crown (bud) side up and the roots spread out widely. Space the plants 12" inches apart. Cover the roots with a 2-inch layer of your garden soil mixed with the equal amount of 'Mulch'. Pack the soil firmly around the plant and water in with a solution of 'Root Stimulator'. When the new sprouts grow to 2-3"

inches, cover with 2 more inches of garden soil mixed with Watters 'Mulch' being careful not to cover the shoot tips. Repeat this process as the shoots continue to grow until the trench is filled to the surrounding ground level. Deep water regularly.



STEP 3: Asparagus Care

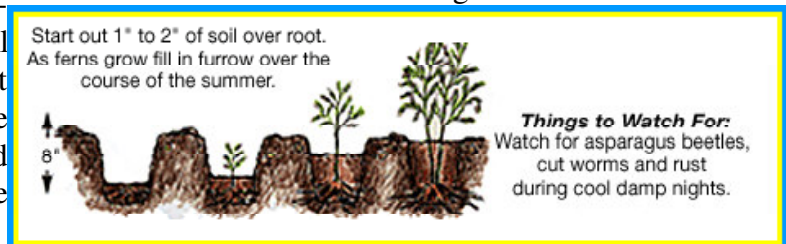
Each spring, before the spears emerge, lightly cultivate the top 1/2" inch of soil and fertilize with Watters 'All Purpose Plant Food'. Asparagus does not compete well with weeds. A 3 inch top dressing each spring is needed. Watters 'Mulch' will prevent weeds and conserve moisture. A second application of 'All Purpose Plant Food' should be made at the end of the

harvesting season in late June to early July.

STEP 4: The Harvest

Do not harvest asparagus the first two seasons after planting. In the spring of the third year harvest asparagus for a 4-5 week period until late June or early July. Asparagus spears are most delicious when young, so harvest when they reach 6-inches. Pick, cut or snap off spears at the white area near the soils surface. Cutting lower may injure new spears. Do not cut any stems that are branching into foliage.

Discontinue harvesting by midsummer so plants can develop foliage and store food for next years crop. The tops should be left to grow until after the first deep freeze in November before cutting back.



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