

# Asparagus

Can you name a vegetable that's delicious, versatile, nutritious, and perennial? If you said "Asparagus," you're right. With proper planting bed preparation, you can harvest asparagus for years and years. It's easy to grow, chock full of nutrients like antioxidants, fiber, and vitamins, and it pairs beautifully with everything from pasta to fish. Since it is a perennial plant that shouldn't be moved once it's in the ground, you'll want to select your site carefully, but a small patch of ground can provide asparagus galore for your family.

## Growing: When/Where to Plant

Asparagus is one of the very few perennial vegetables we can grow in this area. Once established, an asparagus bed can produce for years. Asparagus is best planted in winter as a dormant plant, between mid-January and mid-March while the plants are dormant. Plants will be most productive when grown in full sun.

Asparagus grows best in deep soils that have been well amended with compost and organic matter. Good drainage is a must. Raised beds are excellent for asparagus because they can provide increased drainage.

## Soil Requirements

Do a soil test before planting. Acidic soils will require lime applications to raise the pH to 6.0-7.0.

## How to Plant

Plant all male crowns, one to two years old. Jersey varieties grow well in our area: Jersey Giant, Jersey Knight, and Jersey Gem. Use the trench method, digging 6-7 inches deep and 12-18 inches wide. Set crowns 5-8 inches apart and cover with 2 inches of soil. As the plants grow, continue to cover with 2 inches of soil as needed until crowns are 8 inches deep. If planted in rows, space rows at least five feet apart to reduce disease and increase yield. Keep well watered during the first year.

## Harvesting

No spears are harvested in the first year to allow plants to establish strong root systems. Begin lightly harvesting the second year and work up to a six to eight week harvest window by the fourth year.

## MORE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION:

### Central NC Planting Calendar for Annual Vegetables, Fruits and Herbs

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/central-north-carolina-planting-calendar-for-annual-vegetables-fruits-and-herbs>

### NC Extension Gardener Handbook – chapter 16, Vegetable Gardening

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/16-vegetable-gardening>

### Vegetable Gardening: A Beginner's Guide

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-a-quick-reference-guide>

NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/asparagus-officinalis>

**LIST COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY NC STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER<sup>SM</sup> VOLUNTEERS, GUILFORD COUNTY  
In Guilford County, contact us with questions: email [guilfordmg@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordmg@gmail.com), or leave a message at 336-641-2404**