

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing asparagus

Gardeners are often daunted by growing asparagus from seed, a task accompanied by lengthy waiting periods and specific instructions. Yet, growing asparagus from seed is very possible and rewarding.

Not only delicious, hardy and a unique addition to any garden, asparagus is a perennial vegetable, returning year after year. To grow asparagus from seed, a gardener must provide adequate space, nurturing and excessive patience. The first harvest typically occurs three seasons after the original planting.

To plant:

Asparagus seeds are often cheaper than pre-established roots, and producing a robust crop from seed is quite possible under the right conditions. To start, soak the seeds for a few hours. Gardeners are encouraged to begin their asparagus seeds in a greenhouse or somewhere indoors, planting the seeds a half-inch deep in soil temperatures of 70-85 degrees between the months of February and May. Each seed should occupy its own small pot. Sprouting will occur between two and eight weeks of planting.

To grow:

Transplant asparagus seedlings once they reach 10-12 weeks old, and frost dangers have passed. Plant seedlings approximately 18 inches apart in rows spaced 3 and 6 inches apart.

As the asparagus plant grows, cover its crown with soil and keep the soil moist. Fertilize in the spring, with a few cups of fertilizer spread throughout the rows. Allow the asparagus to grow ferns, and during its



Purple Passion Asparagus seeds available at ufseeds.com

first three years, cut the ferns down to a few inches above the soil in the fall. Mulch is encouraged, as asparagus beds can become a feeding site for perennial weeds.

Note: If you grow tomatoes, plant the asparagus nearby. Tomato plants repel asparagus-feeding insects and asparagus plants deter Nematodes, a wormlike organism that feeds on plants and causes damage to a garden.

To harvest:

In the third year of growth, you can reap what you sowed and harvest the spears. Only harvest finger-sized spears. Asparagus season lasts two to three months. Cut the asparagus with a sharp tool, do not snap the spear as it encourages insects and disease. Harvest delivers up to one pound of asparagus per linear foot. Cut back the foliage in the fall. Male plants are more productive. Plants that seed in the fall are females, so remove these for a more robust crop.



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What asparagus craves:

For the best harvest, plant asparagus in full sun, although the plant can tolerate some shade. Soil should be fertile and well drained. Asparagus grows best in a soil pH of 6.5 to 6.8, but it can tolerate slightly more alkaline soils, such as up to a pH of 7.5. Water your asparagus bed regularly to keep it moist.

Where to buy asparagus seeds:

Urban Farmer offers various types of asparagus seed packets and pre-established roots, check out our website at [ufseeds.com!](http://ufseeds.com)



Jersey Giant Asparagus seeds
available at ufseeds.com