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Seeds for Africa

Tarragon

Start the seeds off in pots. Sow four or five seeds per pot in moist potting compost covering them with compost to exclude light. Keep them indoors at room temperature. When the seedlings begin to show, move them outside, out of direct sunlight. Thin them to one seedling per pot. They are ready for planting in their final position outside when the seedlings are 10cm (4in) high.

PLANTING AND CARE OF TARRAGON:

Dig the soil well before planting and add a handful of bonemeal per square metre (yard) at the same time. If the soil is not well-drained dig in as much well-rotted organic material as possible to open up the soil - alternatively obtain a small amount of sharp sand from your garden centre and dig that well into the soil.

Plant as normal, ensuring that they are watered if the conditions are dry. Choose a position where they can remain undisturbed for two or three years. Tarragon is not a particularly attractive plant, so consider this when choosing a position.

Tarragon has a very vigorous root system and the plants will begin to decline after three years or so as the roots begin to 'strangle themselves'. In the autumn of the third year it is possible to dig up the plants, divide them and replant, however they do not really appreciate this treatment. It is best to throw them on the compost heap and start with new seeds next Spring.

CONTAINER GROWING TARRAGON:

Tarragon can be grown in containers for two or three years with no special care - water and liquid feed a little less than normal. They can also be over-wintered indoors if you have a sunny windowsill, but as mentioned above they are not attractive plants. One plant should be enough for a normal household's requirements.

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