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*Phelan Gardens offers asparagus crowns for planting in the spring.*

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## How to Grow Asparagus



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## Farm Fresh Begins at Home

Asparagus is a spring crop, preferring cooler temperatures and full sun.

Although green varieties are most commonly grown, there are also many purple varieties.

Asparagus does well in fairly rich soil. So, amend with organic matter before you plant.

### ***Getting Started***

#### **Seed-Grown Method:**

Starting asparagus from seed is difficult and slow. However, if you choose this method, you should start seed about 4 weeks before the last expected frost (*about May 15 for downtown Colorado Springs*).

#### **Crown-Grown Method:**

More commonly asparagus is grown from crowns (*the one-year-old base and roots of the plants*)

- Plant in a 8” deep trench with the roots spread out
- Initially, cover the roots with about 2” of soil
- As the plant grows during the first season, continue to mound the soil up around the new growth until your trench is level

### **Watering**

Plants should be watered regularly, especially while young.

### **Development**

Asparagus is slow to start, but is long-lived. It takes about three years for plants to mature enough for harvesting. Prior to that, plants should be allowed to grow and feed themselves.

### **Harvest**

In the third year, begin harvesting spears that are finger-sized and about 6”-8” long. You can either snap off the spears or cut them with a knife at ground level. A mature plant will send up 15-20 spears.

The first harvest year, cut asparagus for about 4 weeks only. In subsequent years, you can harvest until the weather warms, about 6-8 weeks. At this point, the shoots will become spindly. Allow the fern-like foliage to grow and die back naturally to feed the plants for next year.

### **Leave Some Space**

An established asparagus plant can grow quite large. At maturity, it is approximately 5 foot tall and 3 foot wide. Grow in its own bed for best results.