

## Recipe: Spring Vegetable Sauté

Serving Size: 1/4 of recipe ; Yield: 4 servings; Calories per Serving: 80

### Ingredients:

1 teaspoon olive oil  
1/2 cup sliced sweet onion  
1 finely chopped garlic clove  
3-4 tiny quartered new potatoes  
3/4 cup sliced carrots  
3/4 cup asparagus pieces  
3/4 cup sugar snap peas, or green beans  
1/2 cup quartered radishes  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon dried dill

### Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook the onion 2 minutes, add the garlic and cook another minute
2. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook until almost tender, about 4 minutes.
3. If the vegetables start to brown, add a Tablespoon or 2 of water.
4. Now add the asparagus, peas, radishes, salt, pepper, and dill. Cook, stirring often, until just tender - about 4 minutes more.
5. Serve immediately.

**Source:** 5-A-Day Web site , [www.5aday.gov](http://www.5aday.gov)

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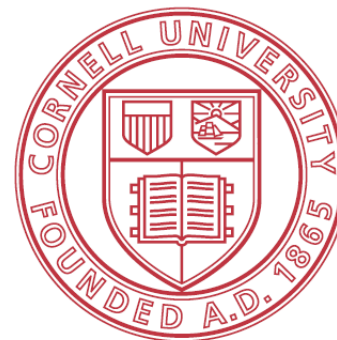
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Text for this publication was written by Master Gardener Volunteer Dana Fast.

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## Vegetable Growing Guide: Asparagus

Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton and Essex Counties

### Asparagus Facts



#### Recommended Varieties:

- Jersey Knight
- Jersey King
- Jersey Giant

Asparagus is one of the few perennial vegetables. *Asparagus officinalis*, family *liliaceae* is a fern like perennial grown for its delicious young shoots. Asparagus is rich in B vitamins, Vitamin C, calcium, iron and many other nutrients. Asparagus thrive in any area that has a cold winter with frozen ground - perfect for our cold north country. It needs a dormant season; it can grow in the southwest where there is a dry dormant season. The only place in the US not suitable for asparagus would be the hot, moist south-east: Florida and the Gulf coast. Beside tasty young shoots the beautiful ferns from the midsummer plants are great for flower arrangements.

## How to Plant

One can plant asparagus from seeds, but the preferred way is to plant one or two year old roots. Asparagus will grow in any well drained soil, however since it has deep roots it prefers loose sandy loam with pH 6.0-6.8. The site should be located to one side of the garden, preferably the north side so the tall ferns won't shade other vegetables. Plant the crowns in early spring in a 12 inch wide trench, and about 10 inches deep with a good layer of composted manure on the bottom. Cover the compost with a thin layer of soil. Make mounds on the bottom of the trench about 12 inches apart and set the crowns on the top of the mounds spreading the roots down just the way you'd drape the wig on the head. Remember those plants will be growing there for a long time, 15 years or more so they should have good loose loam to spread their roots. Cover the crowns with soil, then as the asparagus grow keep covering with more soil up to the ground level.

## Pests and Diseases

The big problem can be the *Asparagus Beetle*. This 1/4 inch long metallic blue-black pest has three white or yellow spots on its back. The beetles feed on spears and on ferns. They lay eggs along the leaves which hatch into grayish larvae. Control by hand picking. In case of big infestation, dust with rotenone. The best remedy is sanitation. By removing old ferns one can destroy the eggs. Lady Beetles and Ground Beetles prey on asparagus beetles.

Another problem is asparagus rust caused by fungus but this can be easily avoided by buying resistant cultivars. All Washington varieties are rust resistant.



## Maintenance and Care

The main chore with growing asparagus is keeping the bed free of weeds. Deep cultivation is not recommended since it can damage the roots. In the spring when the first shoots appear or even before, give the bed a thorough weeding. Do not cut the asparagus the first year, the second year you can harvest one spear per plant then the third year you will be eating asparagus every day. Cut the spears at the ground level when they are about 6-8 inches tall. It can be harvested from mid-May to mid-June during the lean season before anything else is ready. At the end of harvesting season, give the bed one more thorough weeding, fertilize with compost and let the stalks grow into ferns. The ferns make nutrients for the roots during the summer. Water regularly the first two years after planting, after that the plant can grow strong deep roots, too much watering and fertilizing do not encourage the deep root development. Mulch young plants to discourage the weeds. At the end of the summer let the ferns die, they can be cut then or leave over the winter and cut in the early spring. If the ferns are cut in the fall it is good practice to mulch the bed with dry leaves. The new spears will come through the mulch or it can be raked but this has to be done very early before any new shoots are poking through.



## Harvest and Storage

Fresh asparagus spears lose their great taste fairly quickly, this is why they're so much better when home grown and freshly picked. They can survive a few days in the refrigerator. The best way to preserve them is by freezing. Blanch asparagus for 3 minutes, chill in ice water, pack in ziplock bags and freeze. They are not as good as the fresh picked but the second best.

Sources:

Information for the text was taken from the 2003 Cornell Guide to Growing Fruit at Home which can be found at [www.gardening.cornell.edu/fruit/homefruit.html](http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/fruit/homefruit.html)

Recipe was provided by Eat Smart New York. More information on this program can be obtained by calling your county's Cornell Cooperative Extension Office.