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# How to Plant Asparagus Crowns: A Comprehensive Guide

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Planting asparagus crowns is simple and leads to a long-lasting, rewarding gardening venture! Asparagus is a perennial vegetable that offers delicious harvests year after year once properly established. Growing your own asparagus at home starts with planting asparagus crowns, also known as asparagus roots, and with the right care, these plants can produce for 15-20 years.

In this guide, we'll walk you through everything you need to know about how to plant asparagus crowns, how deep to plant asparagus roots, the stages of growing asparagus, and more.

## What Are Asparagus Crowns?

Before getting into the steps of planting asparagus crowns, it's important to understand what crowns are. Asparagus crowns and asparagus roots are interchangeable terms referring to the same thing.

Asparagus crowns are the dormant root systems of often, one or two-year-old asparagus plants. Crowns contain roots, buds, and sometimes stems ready to develop into productive plants. They're sold as bare-root plants, meaning they're dug up and shipped without soil. Planting asparagus crowns gives you a head start over planting from seed, drastically reducing the time it takes to see your first harvest.

## How to Plant Asparagus Crowns and Roots: Step-by-Step Instructions



Whether you call them asparagus crowns or roots, the planting process is the same. Here's how to plant asparagus roots and crowns to ensure a strong and healthy asparagus bed.

### 1. Choose the Right Location

Asparagus is a long-term investment, so selecting the right spot for your asparagus bed is critical. Choose a sunny location where the plants will receive at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight each day. Asparagus plants need well-drained soil with a slightly alkaline pH (6.5 to 7.5). Avoid low-lying areas that may hold water, as asparagus roots are prone to rot in soggy soil.

### 2. Prepare the Soil

Before planting asparagus crowns, prepare the soil by enriching it with organic matter. Asparagus has deep roots that need loose, well-drained soil. Start by loosening the soil to a depth of 12-18 inches. Work in plenty

of compost, aged manure, or other organic material to improve drainage and fertility. A balanced, slow-release fertilizer can also be added to the soil before planting.

### 3. How Deep to Plant Asparagus Crowns

One of the most important factors in planting asparagus crowns is getting the depth right. This allows the roots to grow deep into the soil, giving the plants stability and access to water and nutrients.

Crowns should be planted in a trench that's anywhere from 6-12 inches deep. If you have more compact or clay-based soil, a shallower planting depth is recommended. If you have loose, well-draining soil and/or sandy soil, deeper planting is recommended. In colder climates, planting crowns at the deeper end of this range helps protect them from winter damage as well.

### 4. Planting Asparagus Crowns



**PGF Note:** Here is a picture of one of our crowns that is placed right side up. Note the nodules on the top – these are asparagus spears at their earliest stage.

Once your soil is prepared, it's time to plant the crowns. Here's how to plant asparagus crowns correctly:

- **Dig a Trench:** Create a trench that's 12-18 inches wide and 6-12 inches deep. The length of the trench will depend on how many crowns you're planting.
- **Form Mounds:** In the bottom of the trench, form small mounds of soil, spaced 12-18 inches apart. These mounds will support the crowns and allow the roots to spread out naturally. **Plum Granny Farm note:** *Think of the mound like an "W" – the center of the "W" is the mound in the trench.*
- **Position the Crowns:** Place each asparagus crown on top of a mound with the roots spread out down and around the mound. Make sure the buds of the crown are facing upwards.
- **Cover with Soil:** Cover the crowns with about 2-3 inches of soil. As the plants grow, gradually fill in the rest of the trench with soil until it's level with the ground.

### 5. Watering and Mulching Asparagus Plants

After planting asparagus crowns, water them thoroughly to settle the soil and help the roots establish. Asparagus prefers consistent moisture, especially during the first growing season. Mulching around the plants with straw, leaves, or other organic material can help retain moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.

## Stages of Growing Asparagus



Growing asparagus is a long-term process that requires patience, especially in the first few years.

Understanding the stages of growing asparagus will help you manage expectations and care for your plants effectively.

\*Please bear in mind that asparagus crowns are already 1-year-old at least. In some cases, they are two-years-old if specified by the seller. **PGF Note: The crowns you bought from us are 10+ years old.**

### Year 1: Establishment

During the first year, asparagus plants focus on developing strong roots rather than producing spears. You'll see thin, fern-like foliage, which is vital for capturing sunlight and promoting root growth. Do not harvest any spears during this year, as allowing the plant to grow fully will ensure a stronger crop in the future.

### Year 2: Light Harvest

In the second year, your asparagus plants may produce a few thicker spears. You can harvest lightly for a short period (about 2 weeks in the spring), but the focus should still be on building the plant's strength. After harvesting, allow the remaining spears to grow into ferns to support the root system.

### Year 3: Full Harvest

By the third year, your asparagus plants will be ready for a full harvest. You can harvest spears for 4-6 weeks in the spring. Cut the spears when they're 6-8 inches tall and about as thick as a pencil. After the harvest period, allow the remaining spears to grow into ferns. These ferns will nourish the plant and prepare it for next year's growth.

### Year 4 and Beyond: Continued Production

Once established, your asparagus plants will continue to produce spears each spring for up to 15-20 years or more. A healthy, well-maintained asparagus bed can provide a reliable source of fresh asparagus for many seasons to come.

### Common Mistakes to Avoid When Planting Asparagus Crowns

1. **Planting Too Shallow:** Asparagus crowns planted too close to the surface may dry out and fail to establish strong roots. Always plant them at least 6 inches deep.
2. **Harvesting Too Soon:** Patience is key with asparagus. Harvesting spears in the first year weakens the plant and may result in reduced production in future years.
3. **Overwatering:** While asparagus prefers consistent moisture, it doesn't like to sit in waterlogged soil. Be sure to plant in well-draining soil and avoid overwatering.

4. **Cold Temperatures:** This is not a mistake, as asparagus roots are incredibly winter hardy. However, sometimes gardeners think they're asparagus plants are dead when really, the soil temperature is keeping them dormant for a while longer. Soil temperatures between 40 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit is the tipping point for asparagus to start growing. If you're in this range or below it, be patient and soon enough, as temperatures rise, you will see your asparagus plants emerge and grow!

## **Conclusion**

Planting asparagus crowns and roots correctly is the foundation for a successful asparagus bed that can last for decades. By preparing the soil, planting at the correct depth, and understanding the stages of growth, you can enjoy fresh, homegrown asparagus for many years. Whether you're planting asparagus crowns, roots, or already-established plants, following these steps will help ensure a productive and healthy harvest. Happy planting!