

Crop Recommendations

7

ASPARAGUS

Varieties

Interior and Coast: Jersey Knight, Millenium (Trial).

See your seed dealer for the latest variety recommendations.

Seedlings

Growers may purchase well-graded, 1-year-old crowns from reliable sources or nurserymen, or grow their own crowns from seed provided irrigation is available. Seed should be sown in the late spring in well-prepared fertile soil which is around 21°C at depth of seeding. Seed 2.5 to 4 cm deep and 10 to 12.5 cm apart in rows 60 to 90 cm apart. About 5.5 kg of seed will be sufficient to sow a hectare of nursery (2.2 kg of seed per acre) and each kg of seed will produce 22,000 usable crowns.

Planting

Crowns

Plant only into fertile well-drained loams, sandy loams and muck soils which are free of perennial weeds.

Use only the largest and best crowns. Discard any weak crowns. Under dryland farming conditions, 13,500 crowns per hectare (5460/acre) are required. Plant in furrows 120 cm apart, 20 to 25 cm deep, and with the crowns 60 cm apart. On irrigated land, 27,500 crowns per hectare (11,100/ acre) or more are required. Plant in furrows 120 cm apart, 20 to 25 cm deep, and with the crowns 30 cm apart.

Crowns should be treated before planting as described under *Fusarium* Wilt and Root Rot.

Spread out the roots and cover with not more than 4 cm of soil. Fill in furrow gradually by cultivating

as plants grow. Do not harvest until the second year, and then only for 2 weeks if the fern growth was strong the previous season.

Transplants

The use of greenhouse grown transplants may be feasible especially when using expensive hybrid seed. Seeds are planted individually in blocks, modules or flats in February. Transplants are planted to the field in mid-May.

Fertilizer

Establishment Year

A soil test is necessary to determine phosphate and potash requirements.

See “Fertilizers”, Chapter 3 for phosphate and potash recommendations based on soil test results.

Broadcast 60 kg/ha (24 kg/acre) of the nitrogen before planting and work into the soil. In June and July side-dress the emerged spears with 10 kg/ha (4 kg/acre) applications of nitrogen. All of the required phosphate and potash should be banded below the crowns prior to planting.

Established plantings

Apply up to 120 kg/ha (48 kg/acre) nitrogen yearly unless soil analysis suggests differently. Apply half the nitrogen and other required nutrients in early spring, prior to harvesting. Broadcast the remainder of nitrogen immediately after harvest.

Weed Control

See Table 7.1. See also the fold-out chart inside the back cover.