

Here's how to grow asparagus

With a little special care and preparation, you can grow your own asparagus and enjoy it year after year, says Asparagus Research Extension Specialist Shalin Khosla of the University of Guelph's horticultural science department.

"Asparagus is a perennial crop that can grow in the same garden for 20 to 30 years," he says.

Asparagus has a crown consisting of underground stems called rhizomes.

It also has an extensive network of fleshy roots that store food reserves.

Buds - formed on the rhizome - develop into edible spears, which, if not harvested, develop into the green fern foliage that manufacture food reserves for the next season.

A sunny, frost-free site is ideally suited for

asparagus culture.

The soil should be well-drained (sandy, sandy loam) with a pH of 6.0 to 7.0.

Add lime to the soil if the pH is below 6.0.

Then incorporate peat moss and a 10-10-10 fertilizer at a rate of eight kg

per 100 square metres in the top 30 centimetres of soil.

(Applying a 10-10-10 fertilizer at a rate of eight kg per 100 square metres every spring just before the spears emerge, will help maintain plant vigor and ensure a good stand).

Asparagus plants may be started from seed (four years before first harvest) or crowns (three years before first harvest) and both are available from garden centres or nurseries.

The cultivars currently available are the Viking lines derived from Mary Washington.

Newer cultivars, Centennial and Lucullus, should be available soon.

If the planting is started from seed, sow the seed in early May in a nursery bed 2.5 cm to four cm deep and five cm to 10 cm apart in the row. (Sow some radish seed with asparagus to identify the

rows since asparagus germinates slowly.)

Maintain a weed-free seed bed and water frequently throughout the growing season.

Asparagus seedlings will emerge two to four weeks after sowing, depending upon the soil temperature.

Allow the seedlings to grow for the full season.

The following spring, transplant these seedlings (one year old crowns) to a permanent bed.

Place the one year old crowns, buds up with roots spread out, at the bottom of a 15 cm deep trench and cover with two cm to five cm of soil.

"The crowns should be planted in early spring before the buds on the crowns break dormancy," Khosla says.

A spacing of 30 cm in the rows, with the rows 100 cm to 120 cm apart, is optimal for rapid root growth and minimum crowding.

Maintain a good weed control program, together with adequate moisture, throughout the growing period.

As the fern grows, the trenches are filled in gradually. This controls weeds and prevents suffocation of the plants.

Allow the plants to grow for the whole season and permit the fern to overwinter.

In the spring of each year, (before the spears emerge in late April or early May) mow down the fern, apply fertilizer and add manure, if it is available.

Incorporate these lightly into the soil (five cm deep); avoid deep cultivation to prevent crown damage.

Commence harvest in the spring, usually early May, of the third year after the second full season of growth in the permanent bed (for example, if the permanent bed was planted in 1985, you will harvest your first crop in spring 1987).

In the first year of harvest, only a two to three week harvest period is recommended.

A four to six week harvest period is recommended in the second season and a full harvest of five to six weeks can be carried out in subsequent years.

Cut off spears at the soil surface or snap them off when they are 15 cm to 25 cm high.

At harvest, remove all spears that emerge.

After the harvest period, maintain optimal growing conditions and allow spears to develop into full ferns for the remainder of the growing season.

Asparagus beetles can be a major problem in asparagus plantings since the beetles chew the fern - thereby decreasing the food manufacturing ability of the plant.

A recommended insecticide can control this problem.

Two diseases, asparagus rust and Fusarium crown and root rot, are often a problem too.

The incidence of these diseases can be reduced by minimizing plant stress such as weed competition, over cutting, deep tillage, moisture deficit and so on.

Education number one concern - MPP

The hottest issue in Simcoe County has both Earl Rowe and the

Ontario Progressive Conservative Party concerned.

According to Rowe,

his appointment on the Conservative's new Task Force on Education comes at a

time when calls are flooding into his constituency office daily over the educational system in the province.

Rowe said his first priority as a member of the force, which will commence work April 22, is to find out what is wrong with the system that between 40 and 60 per cent of all students who start out in grade one never finish high school.

Next we have to pinpoint how we can correct the system

Woman falls beneath wheel of her own car

A Midland woman was seriously injured in a bizarre and tragic accident at 2:07 p.m. Friday, after being run over by her own motor vehicle.

After her vehicle stalled and began to roll backwards, near her 752 Birchwood Drive home, Annabel Ellery apparently panicked and attempted to jump from the car.

It is understood her coat caught on

the door, throwing her beneath the wheels.

She was rushed to the intensive care unit at Huronia District Hospital. Her injuries were determined to be major, and she was later evacuated to Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital, at 11 p.m. Friday aboard the Ontario Ministry of Health helicopter / ambulance Bandage One.

TOMORROW IS MCHAPPY DAY!



\$1.00 from every Big Mac sold goes to help Ronald McDonald House, and Huronia Big Sisters Association.

McHappy Day. That's the day when everyone pitches in to help.

Local personalities, business people and celebrities put on their aprons and go to work behind the counter selling Big Macs.

So come on in. Have a Big Mac and have a McHappy Day.

Hwy. 93, Midland 526-4631

It's the day we all work together.



JORY'S

Specials of the week
Mon-Sat
March 31-
April 5

Elutra Bounce Shampoo or Conditioner
350 ml
reg. \$4.75
SPECIAL 99¢

Dep Gel
400 ml
reg. \$3.03

SPECIAL \$1.99

Clairol Conditioner II Shampoo or Conditioner
450 ml reg. \$4.81
SPECIAL \$3.99

Jheri Redding Styling Gel
150 ml
reg. \$3.39
SPECIAL \$2.49

Flex Mousse
150 g
reg. \$4.53
SPECIAL \$2.89

Final Net Hair Spray
reg. \$4.01
SPECIAL \$2.89

Your one stop for shopping

QUALITY, SERVICE & DEDICATION



JORY'S I.D.A. PHARMACY
526-2781

264 King St.,
Midland