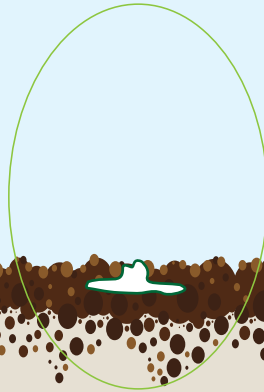


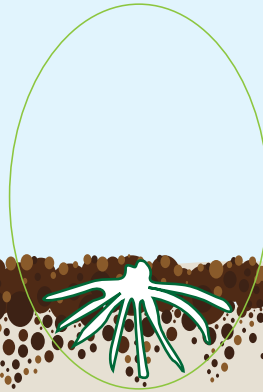
Asparagus Growing Cycle

Stage 1



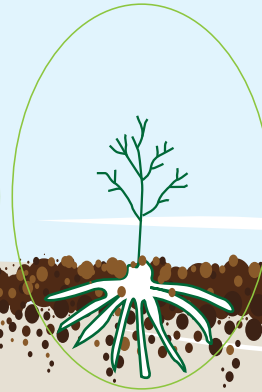
Asparagus seed is sown in nursery beds and young plants develop a "crown" under the ground.

Stage 2



The "crowns" are harvested with a potato digger and transplanted in the field in single row beds with plants about 25-30 cm apart.

Stage 3



In the spring of the first and second years, the crown sends up shoots (asparagus spears), which are cut lightly and allowed to go to fern.

Stage 4



In the third spring, asparagus spears emerge through the soil continuously throughout the season. Once the spears reach the desired length of at least 25 cm of green colouring they are harvested.

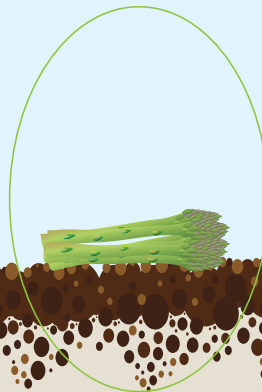
Stages 1 to 4 - From seed to the first commercial crop takes 4 years.

Stage 5



Asparagus is harvested by hand with a long-handled asparagus knife at or below the soil surface.

Stage 6



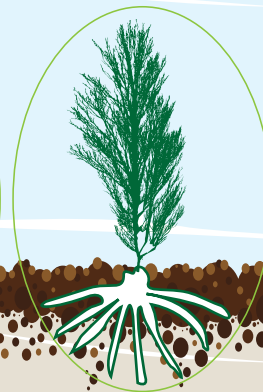
The cut spears are set out in bundles on top of the growing bed, then collected, packed into crates and transferred to the packing shed.

Stage 7



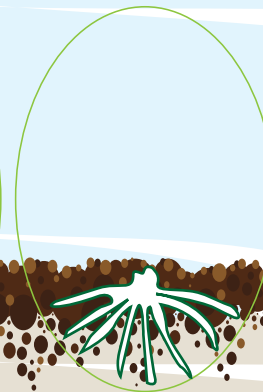
In the packing shed the spears are washed, graded and bunched or packed loose into boxes destined for the domestic or export market.

Stage 8



At the end of the season, the spears are left to grow into ferns, a stage very important to the plant as this is the time the crown regenerates ready for the following growing season.

Stage 9



The asparagus fern dies down between April and May and the debris from the fern is usually slashed and mulched back into the soil. The crown lies dormant until the following spring.

