

VARIETIES

The main varieties grown are 500W, 309, 711, 66, and 72.

SOILS

Well-drained sandy loams and loams are best for asparagus.

IRRIGATION

Timing and method of application are very important during harvest season. Every other row irrigation will tend to maintain even production by keeping the beds warm. Eighteen irrigations per year will not be unusual.

FERTILIZERS

From 50-100 pounds of phosphate and 200-500 pounds of N are used. All of the phosphate and at least half of the nitrogen are applied in winter before the cutting season. The remaining nitrogen is applied after the harvest season.

PESTS & DISEASES

Asparagus has been relatively free of insect and disease problems. Consult the University of California Vegetable Crop Pest and Disease Control Guide for latest recommendations.

HARVESTING

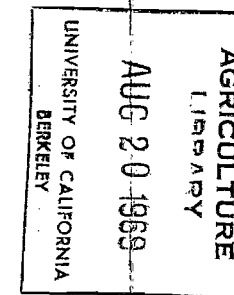
Spears are cut from mid-January through March. Only the most vigorous plants should be cut during the second season for a 2-4 week period. Overcutting often leads to a decline in production and small spears. During the third year of growth, cutting may be continued the full season. Spears are cut at an angle just below the soil surface with an asparagus knife. They are cut every two or three days early in the season, but during warm weather the field may be cut twice a day. The harvested spears are hauled to shed for grading, trimming, washing and packing in crates.

CUTTING FERN

Ferns which have grown through the summer are cut, raked and burned. Never burn the fern growth while it is standing because heat may cause injury to the crown. The cutting is normally done in December or early January.

asparagus

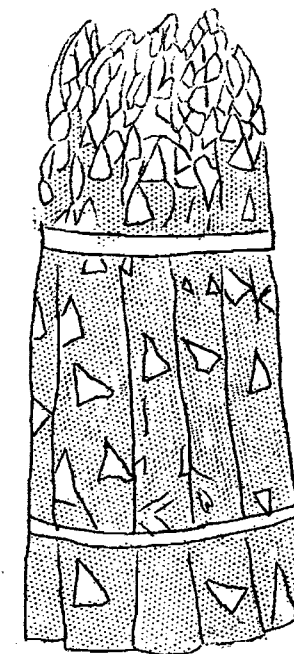
sample costs
and
production



Prepared by
Imperial County
Agricultural Extension Service
Staff

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University of California
Agricultural Extension Service
Imperial County
Court House, El Centro

Cost Data Sheet No. 10

ASPARAGUS--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS

Mechanical operations at custom rates. Hand labor at \$2.00 per hour (\$1.50 plus Social Security, unemployment insurance, transportation, supervision and fringe benefits). The cutting operation in harvest is charged at \$1.00 per field crate.

Yield - 125 thirty-one pound boxes from an established field.

OPERATION	Custom Rate	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
LAND PREPARATION				
Plow or Subsoil	8.00	8.00		
Disc 2x	2.00	4.00		
Landplane 2x	2.75	5.50		
List	3.00	3.00		
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION		20.50		

GROWING PERIOD				
Rent		65.00	65.00	65.00
Crowns - 20,000 @	13.00/M	260.00		
Transplant Crowns		28.00		
Cultivate 3x & 2x	3.00	9.00	6.00	6.00
Fertilize 200-500#		60.00	36.00	36.00
Irrigate 17-19x		48.00	48.00	48.00
Cut & Burn Fern 1x		3.00	4.00	4.00
Border disc 1x	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Rototill Bed 2x	6.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Furrow Out 1x	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Pest Control		21.00	21.00	21.00
Weed Control		40.00	25.00	25.00
Amortization*		0.00	62.98	62.98
Overhead Costs 10% of growing excluding amortization cost		57.25	22.30	22.30
TOTAL PREHARVEST COSTS		629.75	308.28	308.28

HARVEST COSTS				
Cut, haul to shed, pack in 31# boxes. cool			1/	367.00
TOTAL HARVEST COSTS			1/	367.00
Cash overhead, 10% of harvest costs			1/	36.70
TOTAL COSTS		629.75	308.28	711.98

* Amortize first year's establishment costs over 10-year period. Begin amortization in second year.

1/ A small amount of spears will be cut the second year. Harvest costs for the second year have not been included.

Cost per box = \$5.69

YIELDS

Production is quite variable. Yields from stands three or more years old will range from 75 to 150 thirty-one pound crates per acre.

PLANTING

To establish nurseries, 5-15 lbs. of seed per acre are planted when the soil warms up (about the first of February). Seed is drilled in 40-inch beds, 2 rows per bed and then thinned to 3 inches. The nursery will then yield about 80,000 to 100,000 crowns per acre. Planting of crowns is done during January and February. Planting depth is about 9 to 12 inches depending upon beds and spacing. Crowns are planted in the furrow and covered with about 3-4 inches of soil. Crown spacing varies from 8-12 inches.