season. Every other row irrigation will tend to maintain even production by keeping the beds warm. Eighteen irrigations per year will not be unusual.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Asparagus has been comparatively free of insect and disease problems. Consult the University of California Vegetable Crop Pest and Disease Control Guide for latest recommendations. Copies are available at your Farm Advisors' office.

HARVEST

Spears are cut by using an asparagus cutting knife. Spears are cut every two or three days early in the season, but during warm weather the field may be cut twice a day. Asparagus spears are cut when 10 to 12 inches high, later they are trimmed in the shed.

OVERCUTTING

Overcutting asparagus often leads to decline in production, and a yield of small spears. This condition can be corrected by shortening cutting season, and special attention to fertilizing and care when plants are making growth. When fields grow older they tend to produce small spears even though they are well cared for fields.

CUTTING FERN

After first frost, has killed the fern it is cut, raked, and burned. Some growers use a cotton chopper to cut fern. Never burn asparagus fern while it is standing, because heat may cause injury to the crown.

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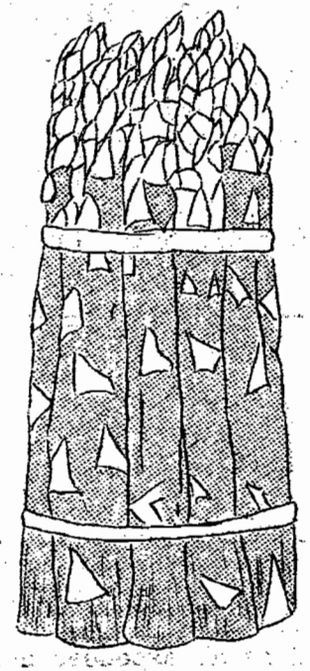
Co-operative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, College of Agriculture, University of Californis, and United States Department of Agriculture co-operating.

asparagus

sample costs and production



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

Fact Sheet No. 29

ASPARAGUS--SAMPLE PRODUCTION COSTS*

ITEMS		SAMPLE COSTS 1st/year	2nd/uear	3rd/year
LAND PREPARATION				
Plow 1x		$ 8.00		
Disc 2x		3.50		
Land plane 2x		5.00		
List 1x		3.00		
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION		$ 19.50		
CULTURAL LABOR & FIELD POWER				
Planting		25.00		
Weed control		17.50	$ 12.50	$ 15.00
Cultivate	4x	8.00	2x 4.00	2x 5.00
Fertilizer application cost-- manure & nitrogen	30T	32.00	LOT 14.00	LOT 14.00
I rrigate	18x	12.00	15.00	15.00
Cut and burn fern		2.75	3.50	3.50
Rototill & work bed		6.00		
Furrow out		2.50		
TOTAL CULTURAL LABOR & POWER		$105.75	$ 49.00	$ 42.50
MATERIALS				
Fertilizer--manure & nitrogen		$ 64.00	$ 40.00	$ 40.00
Plants--13,000 @ $8/M		104.00		
Water	4'	8.00	5' 10.00	5' 10.00
Weed control		10.00	15.00	18.00
TOTAL MATERIALS		$ 186.00	$ 65.00	$ 68.00
CASH OVERHEAD				
General expenses and insurance		$ 40.00	$ 18.75	$ 19.50
LAND RENTAL		65.00	65.00	65.00
TOTAL COST FOR GROWING		$ 416.25	$197.75	$205.00

* Labor costs are based on 90¢ per hour.

CLIMATE

Earliness is the most important factor for successful asparagus production in Imperial County. An area which warms up early after the first of the year is important. Cutting begins about January 20 and ends about March 25.

SOILS

For best yields of asparagus a rich, deep, uniform soil which has good drainage and which is free of salt is important. Heavy clays or coarse sands should be avoided.

PLANTING

Planting of crowns may be done at any time during the winter months. January and February may be the best months.

Planting depth is about 9 to 12 inches depending up beds and spacing. Crowns are planted in furrow and covered with about 3 to 4 inches of soil. Plant spacing varies. Many growers prefer 8 inches but 10"-12" has given equally good yields.

Established plantings from direct seeding does not appear to be advantagious. Crowns must be carefully placed.

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.

VARIETIES

The standard variety in California is 500. New strains are being tested and some are being grown in Imperial Valley. These varieties are 500W, 309, 711, and 873.

FERRILIZATION

At least 30 tons of steer manure is desirable as a preplant application. Many growers like to add at least 10 tons of manure per acre per year. Manure should be well composted to reduce weed seeds.

Nitrogen at the rate of 100 lbs. per acre per season sidedressed is considered sufficient. Nitrogen is applied at the end of harvest period. Phosphate or potassium have not been found to be necessary. Manure can supply Phosphate and ample potassium is available in the soil.

IRRIGATION

Timing and method of application are very important during harvest