

# The East London Garden Society

## Plant Facts

### Asparagus



The English word asparagus derives from classical Latin but the plant was once known in English as *sperage*, from the Medieval Latin *sparagus*.

It is originally from Europe, North Africa, and Asia, where it grows wild along the seashores and riverbanks. It was probably domesticated by the Romans and has been widely cultivated ever since. Wild Asparagus

were seen as early as the 19th century.

The asparagus plant appeared in an Egyptian frieze about five thousand years ago with Queen Nefertiti, allegedly an asparagus fan. Archaeologists found traces of asparagus on dishware when excavating the Pyramid of Sakkara, along with other coveted foods such as figs and melons.

The plants need plenty of time to stock up reserves for the following season. All asparagus growers in Britain stop cutting spears on 21 June (Midsummer's Day) which is the traditional date for the asparagus to end.

Is asparagus good for you? Asparagus is rich in minerals and vitamins A, C and folic acid. It's a fibrous vegetable that may support a healthy gut, as well as helping to lower blood pressure. For these reasons, it can be considered a healthy addition to any diet

**Kidney health:** Asparagus can act as a natural diuretic, helping the body excrete excess salt and fluid, making it especially good for people suffering from edema (swelling) and high blood pressure. It also helps flush out toxins in the kidneys and prevent kidney stones

**An aphrodisiac:** The shape is certainly a factor! An Arabian love manual written in the 16th century provided an asparagus recipe to stimulate erotic desires. Part of the lily family, asparagus contains plenty of vitamin A and C. Consume over three consecutive days for the most potential.