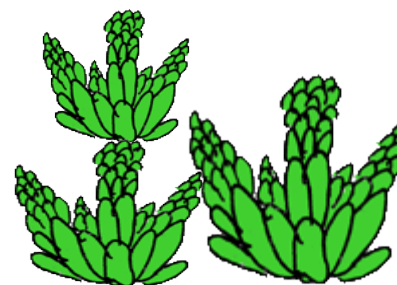


"I'm not a tough guy..."

I'm a dancer."

"I'm going to the Asparagus Farm." They dance the Irish Jig there. And have great asparagus plant/roots for sale.



"I'm a nice guy".

I'm an asparagus plant.

## Thin Asparagus Are The Tough Guys

An asparagus garden is an investment of time and money. Therefore every asparagus gardener wants sweet tender asparagus at harvest time. Their goal is to harvest their asparagus at the right time and height to capture the best possible sweetness and flavor and avoid producing tough asparagus. Is there a secret to producing tender asparagus spears? Are the younger asparagus spears the most tender?

In our world we constantly hear that "thin is best". However this is not so when it comes to asparagus and toughness. Recent research has found that the "notion" that "younger and thinner asparagus spears are the most "tender" is not so.

Young asparagus plants are still maturing and make lots of tough fiber to meet the demands of their continuous growth. For example, one of the most important growth processes for young asparagus plants is "standing upright". Therefore, young spears are busy making crude fiber. This crude fiber provides the asparagus plants with the plant tissue necessary to accomplishing standing up right. Crude fiber is a cellulose—based material found on the outer layers of young asparagus spears.

### Crude Fiber. . . . The Tough Layer

As the asparagus plants mature they make less crude fiber. Actually in fact, the thicker and older asparagus spears don't have the need to constantly make crude fiber like the younger spears. In fact, mature spears produce a soft soluble fiber and nutrients. See for yourself. Follow the next 3 steps and you will be able to find the crude fiber layer in your asparagus spears.

### 3 Steps To Finding The Crude Layer On Asparagus Spears

First, go to your asparagus patch. Find a couple of older and a few younger asparagus spears. All the asparagus spears should be around 9 inches tall. Cut the asparagus spears close to the ground and bring them into your kitchen. Examine the asparagus spears under good light.

Second, cut the ends off all asparagus spears. Look for a thin outer green ring. This outer ring will have very little center mass on young asparagus spears. In other words, very little soft soluble fiber.

Third, take the larger spears and cut them and find the ring. The larger spears will also have the same ring. However, the ring will be filled with soft soluble fiber.

### The Asparagus Taste Test

Now take all the asparagus spears and put them all in the same pan and cook them. Cook the asparagus spears till they are done. Now serve them to someone and ask if there is a taste difference.

You will find that there is no difference in taste just "toughness". The thinner asparagus spears will be tougher and harder to chew. Actually in fact, the toughness begins at the base of the spear and works itself upward. The base of the spear also contains most of its sugars-- the part that we cut off and throw away.

In sum, the "tough guys" are the "skinner" asparagus spears. The fiber that young asparagus spears produce is essential to their growth and development. Older spears do not have the same demand that young spears do for crude fiber. So choose spears from older asparagus plants first when harvesting for tonight's dinner. Be patient the younger asparagus plants will soon have tender spears as they lose their demand for crude fiber.

One way to ensure that your asparagus plants will provide you with years of tender asparagus spears is to feed them composted tea. [Composted tea](http://www.asparagusgardener.com) has all the nutrients necessary for building soft soluble plant tissue. I have found that at <http://www.asparagusgardener.com> The [http://www.asparagusgardener.com/wst\\_page8.html](http://www.asparagusgardener.com/wst_page8.html) has great asparagus plants for sale and brews fresh organic composted tea every month.