

Asparagus Roots

Revised 2008

Storage Conditions

Temperature	30-32°F (-1.1 to 0°C)
Relative Humidity	95-98%
Storage Period	3-4 months

Asparagus roots, called rhizomes or ‘crowns’, are stored for later planting, not for eating. Asparagus roots are like horseradish roots; they respire and heat up during storage. Consequently, they should not be held in large bulk containers such as tote boxes, because the center material can heat up to a damaging level. Trimming the roots to an 8-inch (20 cm) length from the crown will save space and reduce shipping weight. Trimming should be done prior to storage. The cut should be clean and not ragged.

Asparagus roots are quite susceptible to water loss, which results in limp texture and compromised sprouting and growing vigor when re-planted. For best results, asparagus roots should be stored at 30-32°F (-1.1 to 0°C) with a relative humidity as near to saturation as possible to prevent loss of moisture. Holding the roots in rather small, closely woven burlap bags works best, as there is some ventilation to keep them cool and moist. Small perforated polyethylene bags are also satisfactory for storage if the temperature is held at the recommended level. Fungicide dips of the roots have not been effective in controlling mold growth. Mold is best controlled by maintaining commodity temperature at 30-32°F (-1 to 0°C).

Asparagus roots are sensitive to exposure to ethylene, which causes the asparagus buds to remain dormant. Asparagus roots must never be stored with fruits that produce substantial quantities of ethylene, including but not limited to apples, pears and peaches.

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