Asparagus Fern

Asparagus densiflorus



Asparagus Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Emerald Fern; Basket Asparagus

Description:

Feathery and soft, this variety of asparagus native to South Africa creates great visual interest when massed; flowers are short lived and are hidden behind foliage therefore not very noticeable; the showy bright red berries each carry one seed

Ornamental Features

Asparagus Fern is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from mid to late summer. Its attractive tiny needle-like leaves remain light green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Asparagus Fern is a dense herbaceous annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Asparagus Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Asparagus Fern will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Asparagus Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.