

## Asparagus Cultivar Trial

### RFR-A12115

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### Introduction

As local food production has increased in Iowa, there is renewed interest in perennial vegetable crops such as asparagus. The purpose of this multi-year study is to compare the performance of modern male hybrid asparagus cultivars with popular older cultivars under soil and environmental conditions at the ISU Northeast Research Farm, Nashua, Iowa.

### Materials and Methods

The asparagus trial consists of five cultivars, including *Martha Washington*, *Purple Passion*, and the male hybrids *Jersey*

*Supreme*, *Jersey Knight*, and *Jersey Giant*.

The trial was initially planted in May 2009.

Additional crowns to fill out the planting were planted in April 2010. There are four randomized replications of each cultivar with two rows of five plants in each rep. Rows are four feet apart and plants within rows are one foot apart.

### Results and Discussion

It generally takes at least five years for an asparagus patch to become fully established. Therefore the data in 2012 may not be representative for potential yield in a mature planting. In 2012, *Purple Passion* had the highest yield at 6,692 lb/acre, and had the largest spear weight at 22.0 grams. *Jersey Knight*, though fourth in yield, had the second largest spear weight at 20.4 grams.

**Table 1. Asparagus cultivar yield for 2012.**

Cultivar	2012 yield (lb/acre)	2012 spear (number)	2012 average spear weight (gm)
Purple Passion	6,692	506	22.0
Jersey Supr.	4,964	522	15.8
Martha Wash.	3,896	438	14.8
Jersey Knight	3,632	297	20.4
Jersey Giant	2,774	286	16.1