



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Asparagus densiflorus 'Myers'¹

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Introduction

'Myers' Asparagus Fern is a spreading perennial herb that has a fine texture with a stiff, upright habit (Fig. 1). The habit is quite unlike that of the more common 'Sprengerii' Fern. This plant grows fairly rapidly and may attain a height of about 2 feet. The true leaves of this fern are scale-like and inconspicuous. The structures that most consider to be the leaves of this plant are actually narrow, light green, leaf-like branchlets called cladophylls. The stems of the Asparagus Fern emerge directly from the ground and are stiffly erect and have very short branches. These stems are a bit woody and are often armed with sharp spines. The flowers are white or pale pink and occur in axillary racemes that are 1/4 inch long; they are not showy. The bright red berries of this herb, however, are quite showy.

General Information

Scientific name: *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myers'
Pronunciation: ass-SPAR-uh-gus den-sif-FLOR-us
Common name(s): 'Myers' Asparagus Fern
Family: *Liliaceae*
Plant type: herbaceous; perennial
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; ground cover; border; cascading down a wall; suitable for growing indoors; accent

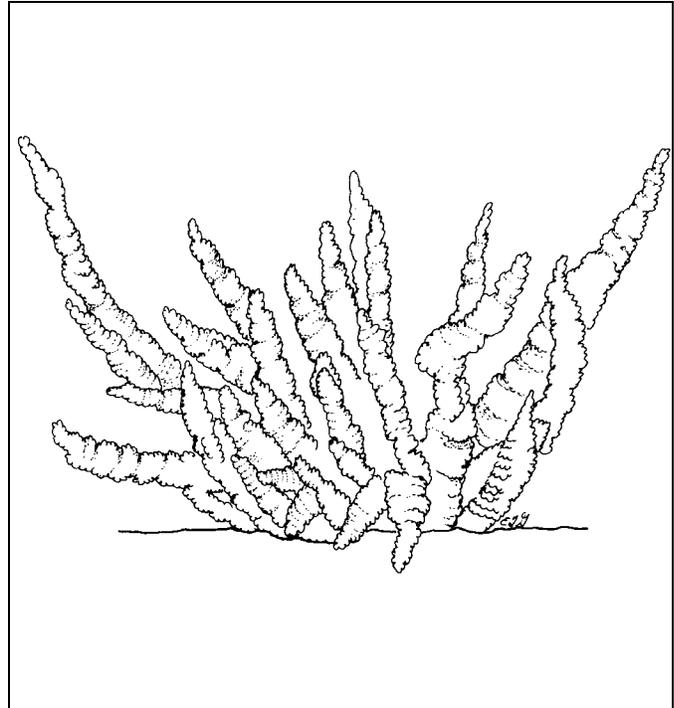


Figure 1. 'Myers' Asparagus Fern.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet
Spread: 2 to 4 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: moderate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

The Asparagus Fern may be used as a specimen, border, ground cover, bedding plant, or container plant. It will not cascade over a wall like the 'Sprengeri' cultivar because the habit is upright, but could be used as a small, low-growing unclipped hedge or border. It will make a nice accent plant in a small residential landscape or rock garden. In a sunny location indoors it maintains a fairly nice plant for several years.

Grow this plant in full sun or partial shade, and plant it in well-drained soil. Keep it irrigated regularly, especially in a container.

Asparagus Fern may be propagated by seeds and by division of the tubers.

Pests and Diseases

Other than mites, none of major concern.