



How to grow... Avalim

Avalim is a 100% male hybrid, supremely suited for early harvesting of white and green asparagus. Avalim combines exceptionally early production with good spear diameter and quality. In earliness, this variety is comparable to Gijnlim, while the spear thickness is almost similar to Backlim. Practical trials have shown that the best results are obtained with a planting distance of approximately 3.5-4 plants per metre (for green asparagus) and a planting depth of 10-17 cm. Planting more shallowly increases the earliness (each centimetre less translates to harvesting about 1 day earlier). However

as the plant ages over the years the head of the plant will come to the surface more quickly.

Its natural earliness makes Avalim highly suitable for forcing methods, such as mini-tunnels, or other thermal mulches.

Avalim has a firm, closed head and can be compared to Gijnlim. The main difference is in appearance; Avalim has a larger and more robust head. Avalim has very good foliage properties; its foliage is very erect, vigorous and dark green. The foliage has a natural tolerance to foliage diseases, stays green until late autumn and is resistant to lodging.

No risk... Gijnlim

No businessman likes taking risks. Risks or decisions with an uncertain outcome can impact seriously on your operating results. Even choosing a particular variety can entail a certain element of risk, for example, if you plant a variety previously unknown to you or if the results only look good on paper. Making the wrong decision here can mean being painfully reminded of the mistake for 7 to 9 years! Gijnlim is a variety that has proven to have excellent qualities in practice. In all multi-year trials, Gijnlim stands out in production and quality. Equally importantly, we know that Gijnlim can easily cope with severe winters and that it has a long financially productive life due to its tolerance to Fusarium. In seed production great attention is paid to

Fusarium. The seeds sent to plant raisers have been inspected by Naktuinbouw (an independent government organisation), for purity, germinating power and Fusarium. The vast majority of plant raisers also test the fields intended for production for the presence of Fusarium and nematodes, in order to try and minimise any disappointing results. Entrepreneurs cannot always eliminate risks, but exercise caution when planning to plant new varieties. Try not to be influenced too much by promising results from abroad (a different climate) or the results of trials over several years of harvesting. Choose for certainty and don't be tempted to take risks by selecting the wrong variety.

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No risk... Gijnlim

Water; Not too much, not too little

Stay alert to Stemphylium

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Water; Not too much, not too little

Fortunately, irrigating asparagus beds is no longer a luxury. Most growers realise the necessity of keeping the moisture in the soil at the right level in times of drought to avoid stagnating plant growth. It's known that the root development in the first three years has a great influence on the production capacity in successive years. This means that all the conditions must be just right, certainly in the first three years of the plants' life. In the first year, good irrigation is mainly important immediately after planting so that the plants can quickly develop root hairs and become well established in their new environment. There mustn't be a shortage of water either when the second and following shoots develop, however try not to over-water in the

first year. At this stage the foliage is still relatively insignificant so there is correspondingly less evaporation. If the plants are watered too much they will fail to develop properly.

The second year is maybe the most important one. The plant has nearly a complete growing season and forms plenty of foliage, the roots are still developing and are not yet entirely in balance with the amount of foliage. If there is a lot of evaporation, very leafy plants may quickly start feeling a shortage of water (including Gijnlim). Drought in this phase can abruptly disrupt plants that are rapidly developing both above and below the ground. In the third year root development has nearly reached its maximum and has been able

to build up a sufficient buffer. There will now be less demand for irrigation than in the first two years. However, don't just leave things to chance; dig down into the soil to a depth of 50-60 cm at various places on the plot and assess the moisture levels of the soil, while not forgetting that an adult asparagus plant on a sunny day, and depending on the wind, can evaporate 8-10 ltr./sq. mtr. When irrigating, also take the growth stage of the plant into account. Try to water flowering plants at night, so the plants can dry up quickly in the daytime. Try to keep the watering frequency low, but when irrigating give copious amounts of water. This will avoid problems with *Stemphylium* or *Botrytis*.

Stay alert to *Stemphylium*

Stemphylium (*Stemphylium botryosum*) is a mould disease that can seriously affect healthy plants in hot conditions. *Stemphylium* can occur all over the world and develops in temperatures between 2-30°C. However this mould flourishes best at a temperature of 22-25°C with wet periods of more than 8 hours. At a temperature of 20°C the first symptoms are visible 2-5 days after infection. This mould doesn't like long dry, periods combined with high temperatures. The mould survives the winter on the remains of the foliage of the plants. From mid May to around mid June infections

can occur by ascospores, often visible on the part of the spears just above the soil. More heavy infection of the foliage can occur from about the end of June when the conditions are often favourable for the pathogen, and sporulation can be very intense. *Stemphylium* can be recognised by small, oval shaped, clearly defined brown patches on all parts of the spears. The core of the blotch is often pale brown. If the conditions are right, the infection can spread rapidly and will result in the foliage dying off. To control the infection, focus on working all the remains of the foliage well into the soil before the winter.

Combined with repeated application of effective chemical agents during the season when the foliage is developing, the disease should stand little chance of survival.

Company information

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Information about varieties developed by us (Avalim, Backlim, Gijnlim, Grolim, Herkolim, Horlim and Thielim) can be obtained from our variety specialists. They can be reached using the telephone and fax number or email address stated above.

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Design: Pit Reclame
Print: Clabbers drukkerij
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