

Choose varieties carefully

This year's season is over and thoughts are already turning to next year. As well as caring for the plants currently used for production, it's time to think about next year's new crops. As well as choosing the field, fertilizing and preparing the soil, choosing which variety to plant is a matter that requires careful consideration. The choice of a variety is determined

by a number of factors, including; the possibilities offered by the soil and what the farmer wants to achieve. In this respect, the most important aspect is usually the highest possible profitability. In order to make the right choice for each specific situation, it's essential to be fully familiar with the properties of the various varieties.

Variety table Limseeds

	Rel. yield	Diameter	Earliness	Head	Pink	Climate	green/ white
Backlim	7	7	6	7	7	cool	green/white
Grolim	8	9	7	7	8	cool/warm	white
Thielim	8	8	7	8	7	cool	white
Gijnlim	9	6	9	9	6	cool	green/white
Horlim	7	7	7	7	7	cool	white
Herkolim	8	9	7	6	8	cool	white
Avalim	7	7	9	8	6	cool	green/white

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The early starters; Gijnlim and Avalim

Bumper harvest; Grolim and Herkolim

Late and reliable; Backlim

Watch out for ... Stemphylium

For maximum results, try to match the properties of the field as well as possible to variety specific properties. A number of

varieties will be reviewed below, in order of earliness.

The early starters; Gijnlim and Avalim

Avalim and Gijnlim are highly suited to unheated early harvesting. Their naturally early emergence from the soil will be intensified by planting in "early" soil, a relatively shallow planting distance and the use of forcing techniques such as plastic mulches or mini tunnels. Avalim has a lower kilo yield than Gijnlim but the average spear thickness of the asparagus harvested is approx. 15% more. Avalim is also particularly resistant to hollowness

and rust. Both varieties have an excellent, well-closed head, which makes them also especially suitable for growing green asparagus. To obtain the maximum profit from the spear thickness of these varieties, we advise a planting distance of 3-3.5 plants per metre. Avalim and Gijnlim are premium quality varieties with excellent flavour, and very well suited to growing using forcing techniques.

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Bumper harvest; Grolim and Herkolim

Both varieties are known for their excellence in spear thickness and yield. High kilo yields can be obtained with relatively few stems (less labour intensive). Herkolim and Grolim improve in quality and uniformity if planted at a higher density. A plant density of 5-6 plants per metre is optimal, in the South of France very good results are obtained using a plant density of as

high as 8-9 plants per metre. Compared to Grolim, Herkolim's advantage is that it also copes very well with heavier or colder soils Herkolim is slightly more sensitive to rust, comparable to Backlim. The varieties produce highly uniform grades, the spears are white and straight and have hardly any susceptibility to hollowness. Good mulch management is important with Herkolim, turning

the plastic sheeting in time will avoid loose heads. Herkolim is not suitable for growing in greenhouses, tunnels or mini tunnels. Repeated, independent research has shown that Herkolim has an excellent flavour. Grolim performs best in rather warmer soils. As Grolim emerges a few days earlier than Herkolim this variety can still be forced to a certain extent.

Late and reliable; Backlim

The Backlim variety is ideally suited for companies that force Avalim or Gijnlim and aim for a smooth transition to harvesting a different variety until the end of the season. By planting Backlim a little deeper (20-24 cm) and using white plastic mulch, the large peak in

production at the beginning of May can be levelled out to a certain extent. In the second half of May and in June Backlim is a strong performer with good quality spears. In the first year of harvesting Backlim may sometimes be a bit 'youthful' and produce ridged

spears, however this will quickly pass. The best results are obtained using a planting distance of 4-4.5 plants per metre. Backlim is the standard variety in systems that use heated greenhouses or tunnels or in open fields.

Watch out for ... 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 a wet period 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 the 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.



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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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