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Theuws et al.

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(54) **ASPARAGUS PLANT NAMED ‘SPARTACUS’**

(50) Latin Name: *Asparagus officinalis*
Varietal Denomination: **Spartacus**

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patent is extended or adjusted under 35
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A01H 5/00 (2018.01)
A01H 6/12 (2018.01)
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USPC **Plt./260**
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CPC ... *A01H 5/04*; *A01H 5/06*; *A01H 5/12*; *A01H*
5/025; *A01H 5/02*; *A01H 5/00*
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

PUBLICATIONS

GTITM UPOVROM Citation for ‘Spartacus’ as per NL ASP85;
Dec. 14, 2015; 1 page.*

* cited by examiner

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct male variety of *asparagus* plant having
thick and uniform spears.

4 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical classification: *Asparagus officinalis*.
Varietal denomination: ‘Spartacus’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a new and distinct
asparagus plant known by the varietal name ‘Spartacus’.
The new variety is the result of a planned breeding program
conducted by the inventors in 2007 in The Netherlands. The
purpose of the breeding program was to develop 100% male
hybrid *asparagus* varieties suitable for green harvesting in
particular warm or cool climate types that exhibit good
disease tolerance and a desirable eating quality. ‘Spartacus’
is the result of the crossing of an *Asparagus officinalis*
variety referred to by the applicant as 08009 (female parent,
unpatented) with an *Asparagus officinalis* variety referred to
by the applicant as 08010 (male parent, unpatented). The
first act of asexual reproduction of ‘Spartacus’ was con-
ducted in 2010 by crown division in The Netherlands.
‘Spartacus’ has been trial and field tested and has been found
to retain its distinctive characteristics and remain true to type
through successive propagations. The present invention has
not been evaluated under all possible environmental condi-
tions. The phenotype may vary with variations in environ-
ment without a change in the genotype of the plant.

‘Spartacus’ is a high-branching fern, similar to its female
parent. ‘Spartacus’ is similar to both of its parental varieties
in having a strong tolerance against foliar diseases and
asparagus root rot (*Fusarium oxysporum*). However,
‘Spartacus’ exhibits more uniform and thicker stems than
both of its parental varieties.

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When compared to *asparagus* variety named ‘Guelph
Millenium’ (unpatented), ‘Spartacus’ is similar to ‘Guelph
Millenium’ in having green spears (stalks) with anthocyanin
coloration on their bracts and tips at the stage of harvesting.
However, ‘Spartacus’ exhibits thicker spears that are more
uniform in size than those of ‘Guelph Millenium’. Further,
the intensity of the color of ‘Spartacus’ is lighter than
‘Guelph Millenium’.

When compared to other *asparagus* varieties known to
the applicant, ‘Spartacus’ exhibits a very uniform spear size
for harvesting. ‘Spartacus’ also exhibits good field tolerance,
as well as tolerance against foliar diseases and *asparagus*
root rot (*Fusarium oxysporum*). Further, the spears of
‘Spartacus’ are tender, with good eating and keeping quali-
ties.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying photographic drawings taken at
approximately one year of age illustrate the new variety,
with the color being as nearly true as is possible with color
illustrations of this type:

FIG. 1 shows a view of a plant of the new variety;

FIG. 2 shows a view of multiple plants of the new variety;

FIG. 3 shows close-up view of a plant of the new variety;

and

FIG. 4 shows cut spears of the new variety.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

The following detailed description sets forth the charac-
teristics of the new variety. Plants of the new variety were

soil grown in the Netherlands under open field conditions under natural light. The emergence of spears occurs fairly early from planting when compared to other *asparagus* varieties known to the applicant and is dependent upon temperature and planting depth. The color readings and measurements were taken outdoors in the Netherlands under natural light on approximately one year old plants. Color references are primarily to The 2015 R.H.S. Colour Chart of The Royal Horticultural Society of London, Sixth Edition.

Stalks:

Number of branches.—56.

Typical and observed branch color.—Approximately 139A.

Number of nodes below the first branch.—13.

Distance from the crown to the first branch.—45 cm.

Number of cladophyll nodes between the first and last branch.—38.

Distance between the first and last branch.—130 cm.

Number of cladophyll nodes beyond the last branch.—22.

Number of centimeters beyond the last branch.—11.1 cm.

Internode length between branches.—2.3 cm.

Internode length beyond the last branch.—5.5 cm.

Average number of stalks.—10.

Largest stalk diameter.—16 mm.

Mean diameter of three largest stalks, wherein the average spear diameter at the base of the apex and the middle of the spear are equal.—15 mm.

Length of highest headed stalk.—175 cm.

Color of stalk below the first branch, bloom removed.—Between 139A and 140B.

Color of stalk between the first and last branch, bloom removed.—Between 139A and 140B.

Color of stalk beyond the last branch, bloom removed.—Between 139A and 140B.

Spear apex shape.—Medium triangular.

Average length of first bracts at base of spear apex.—Short to medium.

Average width of first bracts at base of spear apex.—Small to medium.

Opening of spear bracts.—Weakly open.

Attitude of spear bracts.—Adpressed.

Flowers:

Flowers.—Length: 6 mm. Width at midpoint: 4 mm.

Number of flowers per cluster (flowering node): 13.

Longevity on the plant: Medium. Average time from planting to beginning flowering (when at least 30% of plants have one flower open): Medium earliness and dependent on temperature when the crowns are planted, but generally about three weeks after spear emergence.

Petals.—Not applicable, only tepals are present.

Tepals.—Number of whorls: 1. Number of tepals per whorl: 6. Colors: Lower (abaxial) base: Between 139C and 139D. Lower (abaxial) tip: Approximately 155C. Lower (abaxial) midrib: Between 139C and 139D. Lower (abaxial) margins: Approximately 155C. Upper (adaxial) base: Between 139C and 139D. Upper (adaxial) tip: Approximately 155C. Upper (adaxial) midrib: Between 139C and 139D. Upper (adaxial) margins: Approximately 155C. Outer tepal length: 6 mm. Outer tepal width: 2 mm. Inner tepal length: 6 mm. Inner tepal width: 2 mm. Midrib of outer tepals, width: 0.7 mm. Midrib of inner tepals, width: 0.6 mm.

Flower stalk peduncles.—Length: 19 cm. Diameter: 1 mm. Color: Approximately 139A.

Flower stalk pedicels.—Length: 5 mm. Diameter: 0.3 mm. Color: Upper section: Approximately 160A. Lower section: Approximately 200A.

Fruit: Not applicable, as 'Spartacus' is a male variety and no fruit is developed.

Cladophylls:

Average number per node.—3 to 4.

Length.—9 mm.

Width.—0.3 mm.

Shape.—Overall: Acicular. Apex: Pointed. Base: Pointed.

Margin type.—Entire.

Color.—Between 144A and 144B.

Leaves: Not applicable, only cladophylls are present.

Reproduction organs:

Gynoecium.—Not applicable, as 'Spartacus' is a male variety.

Androecium.—Stamens: Number: 6. Length: 3 mm.

Anthers: Length: 0.7 mm. Color: Approximately 14B.

Pollen: Color: Approximately 14B. Amount:

Minimal. Filaments: Length: 2.3 mm. Color: Approximately 155C.

General:

Use.—Fresh market green *asparagus*.

Shipping quality of spears.—Good.

Storage life.—Spears last up to 15 days, depending on storage conditions.

Spear productivity.—190 g/plant, based on a plant density of 25,000 plants/hectare in full season production.

Temperature tolerance.—Intermediate (Mediterranean) climate is preferable. Plants need cooler temperatures to go into dormancy and can withstand winter frost conditions when dormant.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of *asparagus* plant, as is herein illustrated and described.

* * * * *



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

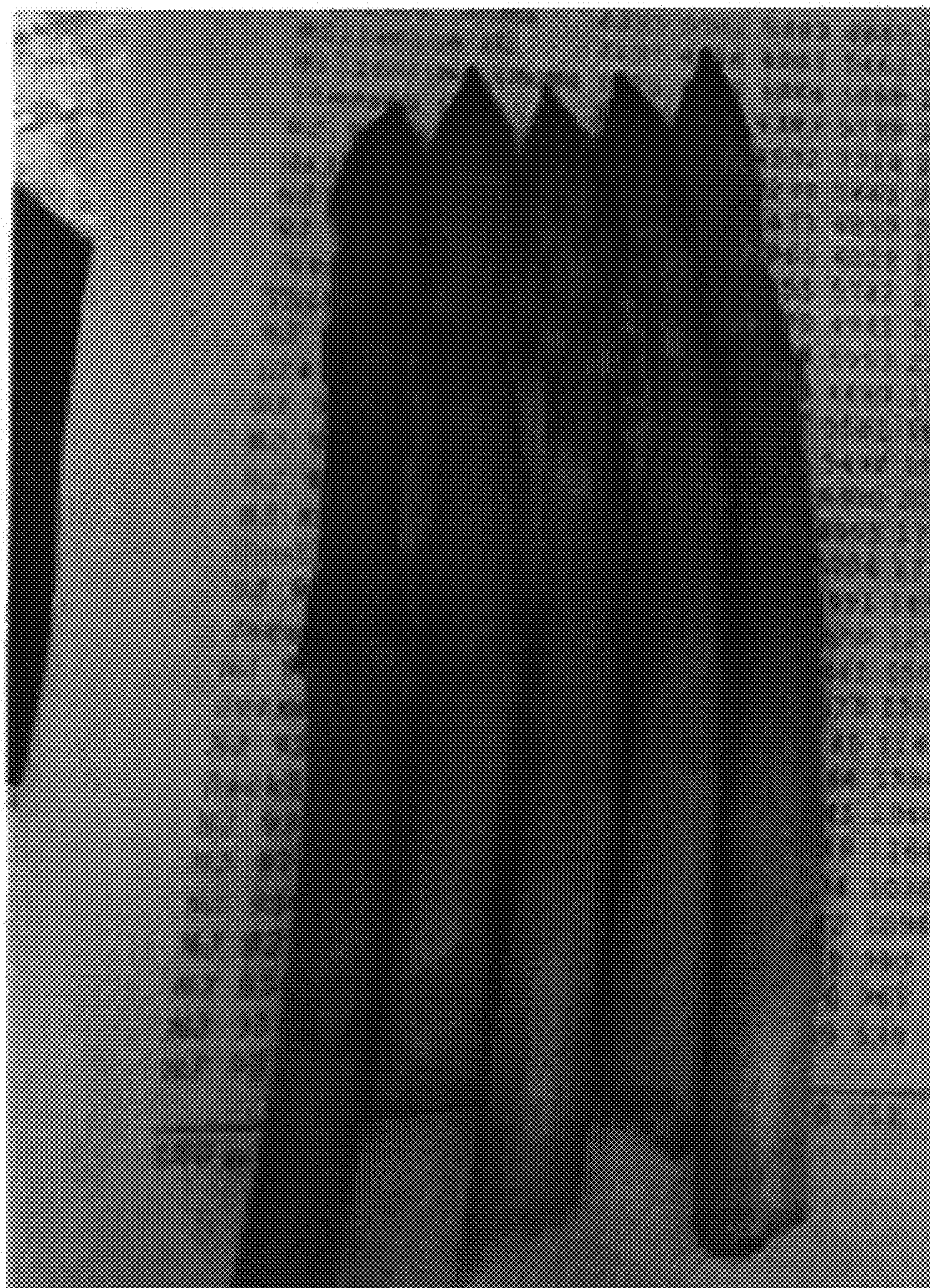


Fig. 4