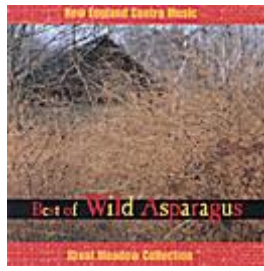


# Mp3 Wild Asparagus - Best Of Wild Asparagus



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Contra music rises from New England traditional roots, but has strong Celtic, Canadian and jazz influences. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Contra Dance, FOLK: Contemporary Celtic Details: Best of Wild Asparagus In the twenty years that Wild Asparagus has thrilled contra dancers nationwide, they have released five recordings. The band has selected their favorite cuts from these recordings. Contrasts distinctive characteristic is stylistic flexibility built on dance rhythm framework. While reflecting a solid Celtic background, Wild Asparagus brings you the best of modern contra. ----- Band Members - Sam Bartlett, David Cantieni, Van Kaynor, Stuart Kenney, Mary Lea, George Marshall, Ann Percival, Sue Steinberg, Becky Tracy. Special Guests - Lee Blackwell, Keith Murphy, Danny Noveck, Dirk Powell. ----- The journey began almost twenty years ago when three friends decided to make playing music for contra dances not just a hobby, but a career. Wild Asparagus caller and concertina player George Marshall remembers his enthusiasm for the oldtime jigs and reels that led him to form the band Swallowtail in the early days of the contra revival. I was a student at Amherst College, and one day I literally ran down the stairs and across two quads, when I heard someone playing accordion. Were going to have a band, I told him, and its going to sound great. When he asked whether I played an instrument I had to admit that all I had was a concertina on mail order. But I was determined: I knew what the music could do and I wanted to be a part of that. Swallowtail went on to be one the first touring bands in the area, playing for enthusiastic dancers all around New England. Historically its been the dance callers who traveled: meeting and working with the local musicians, often only minutes before the first reel. Barnstorming by a whole orchestra had been an exception until the 1970s. Swallowtail changed all that, with their determination to perform as a group, to have their own unique sound and style. In the early 1980s, when raising children and writing PhD theses brought Swallowtails travels to a temporary stop,

two of the members, Marshall and flutist David Cantieni, decided to keep the momentum going. They had recently met pianist Ann Percival, who shared their love of contra dance music. As Percival recalls from her first days with the trio, I went into it blindly: just wanting to make music. We were in our twenties and things like money and the future paled in comparison. The harder we worked, the happier we were: it was a very exciting time. When they found a patch of wild asparagus behind their house it seemed like a good omen. In 1984, Marshall recalls, We did fifty gigs in ten weeks and were still speaking to each other when we got home. I knew then that we were doing something right. In 1985, fiddler Van Kaynor joined the trio for a tour, and to make a recording called *Music From A Little Known Planet*. Kaynor was the first of a succession of guest fiddlers that reads like a whos who of the dance music world: Mary Lea, ( whos featured on the 1990 *Tone Roads*,) Kerry Elkin, and Sue Sternberg, among others. In the late 1980s banjo, mandolin and guitar whiz Sam Bartlett began touring with the band, and joined them for their second CD *Call Of The Wild*. In 1992, Wild Asparagus broadened and deepened their sound with the addition of bassist Stuart Kenney, and at the same time signed on Becky Tracy as full-time fiddler. Kenney and Tracys influences can be heard on the 1997 CD *From The Floor Up*. These days they are often joined on tour by Tracys husband, Keith Murphy, whose powerhouse rhythm guitar adds a new texture to the sound, as can be heard on their 2001 release *Wherever You Go*. In this collection, the listener gets a taste of Wild Asparaguss work from their twenty-year roadtrip. We want to give people a rhythmic good time, says Ann Percival. Its totally about the dancers. Were always thinking and talking about what makes them happy, and particularly, what makes them dance well. Despite traveling to over a hundred gigs a year, Wild Asparagus is rooted in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts. The inclusion of the Norwegian Reinlander is a nod to the tradition of Scandinavian couple dancing that still flourishes at dances like that at the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield, MA. You can hear the strong influence the Irish tradition has had on Wild Asparagus in *Jug Of Punch*, and youll hear the French Canadian groove in many of the reels. The originals penned by band members, like the *Contneys Yard* medley by David Cantieni,; and *Bhagdad Gus* and *The Big Reel* by Keith Murphy show how the music has been passed on and shaped by a new generation of players. Although they love to experiment with the music: trying on different rhythms and melody combinations, (and thrilling the dancers in the process!) Wild Asparagus always comes home to the heart of the tune. And youll hear it here. Mary DesRosiers, Harrisville, NH

----- Mastered by CedarHouse Sound, North Sutton, NH, Cover photograph by Betty Ann Sather,

Westmoreland, NH Graphics by Carolyn Isaak, Keene, NH. For Wild Asparagus bookings and CD information, email [band@wildasparagus.com](mailto:band@wildasparagus.com) or phone 413-323-9604 [wildasparagus.com](http://wildasparagus.com) Great Meadow Music , P.O.Box 4, Westmoreland, NH 03467 U.S.A. (603) 399-8361 [greatmeadowmusic.com](http://greatmeadowmusic.com) (P) 2002 All Rights Reserved ----- People who are interested in Rodney Miller should consider this download.

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