



# How to grow celery

## Celery/Celeriac (*Apium graveolens*)

Family: Apiaceae (Carrot)

Season: Cool

Ease of growing: Difficult

Nutrient needs: High

Water needs: High

Common propagation: Transplant

### Seed facts

Germination temperature: 40°F to 85°F

Germination time: 14 to 21 days

Viability: 5 years

### Transplants

Weeks to grow transplants: 8 to 10

Start: March

Plant out: May to June

Succession sow: Every 3 weeks

### Planning facts

Typical spacing: 6" x 24"

Plants per square foot: 1

Time to harvest: 80 to 120 days from transplants

## Variety selection

Celery and celeriac (celery root) are both in the carrot family and are closely related to each other. Celery has been selected by breeders for its enlarged leaf petioles, and celeriac for its root. Most seed catalogs have very few celery or celeriac varieties to choose from. Conquistador is a relatively fast maturing celery variety that is easier to grow than some of the longer-season, more productive varieties like Green Bay.

## Preparation and planting

Both crops grow best in high organic matter soil since they are heavy feeders and need abundant and consistent moisture. Incorporate generous amounts of organic matter in the soil and insure adequate calcium to avoid "black heart." Harden off transplants by reducing water, not temperatures, since cool temperatures can induce bolting in these plants.

## Care

Celery is shallow rooted and needs frequent watering. Avoid overhead watering to minimize potential disease problems. Mulching when the plants are about 6 inches tall can help preserve soil moisture. Side-dressing N at monthly intervals is recommended for optimal growth. Use caution when tilling to protect shallow roots.

## Major pests

**Insects:** Aphids, aster leafhoppers, carrot rust flies, carrot weevils, cutworms, root knot nematodes, lesion nematodes.

**Diseases:** Early and late blights, fusarium yellows, celery mosaic virus, black heart, pink rot, aster yellows.

## Harvest and storage

Harvest celery as individual stalks using outside stalks first, or pull the entire plant. Cut off the roots and chill quickly in cold water. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. Celeriac can be stored in deep boxes with moist soil or sand around the roots. Store the boxes in a cool place. Ideal storage conditions are near freezing and high humidity.

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