

chester Table, and the so-called "coreless carrot" Nantes, are of excellent quality.

Short, stump rooted: Useful for heavy or for shallow soils. Examples are Oxheart (Guerande), Early Scarlet Horn, and French Forcing.

Recommended varieties for December and January sowings are Chanenay and Earlykrop.

Successional sowings of carrots are best, as the crop can be used before it reaches full maturity. The roots are of a much higher quality when young, and if kept too long after reaching the mature stage, they become pithy and lose their flavour.

In districts where the carrot rust fly is prevalent it is very difficult to produce a crop of good-quality roots if seed is sown before December or January unless special precautions are taken. Carrots sown now will have plenty of time to grow to maturity and will result in better-quality roots for winter use than if sown in spring.

Carrots do well without further manurial applications in a soil that has been heavily manured for a previous crop; if this is not available, the only fertiliser necessary for most soils is a mixture of equal parts of superphosphate and bonedust at the rate of 2oz. per square yard. A dressing of wood ashes will also be beneficial and can be applied with the fertiliser when raking down the soil before seeding. Sow thinly $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in rows 12in. apart and thin out when the plants are 3in. high to 3in. apart. A quarter of an ounce of seed will sow 100ft. of row.

Celery

Celery (*Apium graveolens*) is a native of the marshy places of Europe, being known in its wild state as "smallage." The only apparent references to its early cultivation deal with its use as a medicine. In its wild form it has a spreading habit growth and a bitter, pungent flavour and odour. Originally the cultivated celery differed very little from the wild form and most of the early varieties were more or less hollow stemmed. By careful selection and breeding this tendency has largely been eliminated and the plants having hollow stems throughout are now rare. It is one of the main crops of those eaten raw. It is also used in salads, in soups, and as a relish with cheese.

Celery is moisture loving, and an adequate supply of moisture during growth is essential.

Celery is seldom grown successfully from seed sown directly in the garden. It is best sown under glass and should be sown about 10 weeks before the plants are required for planting out in the garden. If it is desired to grow plants, seed should be sown fairly thickly—about a level teaspoonful to a standard tray (22in. x 12in. x 3in.)—and covered very thinly by a sprinkling of soil, which is firmed with a flat piece of board. The seedlings should appear in from 1 or 2 weeks and during this period the seed-box should be carefully watered.

When the seedlings are large enough to handle—usually about 3 weeks after emergence—they should be pricked out 2in. apart each way in seedling boxes filled with a good



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

Celery grows well in beds on the flat if soil moisture can be maintained. The stalks are blanched by placing boards along the sides of the bed.

compost mixture. Four to 6 weeks from pricking out, the plants will have made sufficient root growth to enable them to hold the attached soil when cut out of the boxes in squares. They may then be set out in the garden, and if they are carefully planted, little check to growth should occur.

With early celery a problem is to prevent the plants getting a check which would cause them to bolt to seed; seed sowing should be so timed that the plants will be ready for planting out after danger of prolonged cold, wet weather is past. For the main and late crop the seed may be sown in an open nursery bed.

Most home gardeners will prefer to purchase plants from seedsmen rather than raise them from seed, as few gardeners, except those in the warmer and more sheltered districts, can sow and raise plants successfully without a cool frame or small glasshouse.

Two methods of planting are used—the bed and the trench systems. Trenches are preferable where conditions are dry, as beds are usually more difficult to water. The plants can be set in double rows in trenches; for early or late planting they can be planted on the level or in slightly raised beds containing four or six rows 12in. apart with 8in. between the plants in the rows. Trenches should be shallow except where it is intended to earth up the plants for blanching later. The soil in the trenches should be enriched with well-rotted farmyard manure or compost. For beds the ground should be deeply dug and well worked.

Celery should be grown rapidly without checks and succeeds best in a very rich soil. Just before planting, a fertiliser mixture consisting of equal

parts of blood and bone and superphosphate plus 5 per cent. of sulphate of potash or muriate of potash should be broadcast over the area at the rate of 1lb. per square yard and worked into the surface 3in. of soil.

Plants should never be permitted to become dry at the roots. As the major portion of the plant roots occupy the upper 6in. of soil, and many of the roots are within 2 to 3in. of the surface, adequate moisture must be maintained and cultivation should be shallow. Raised beds are best when drainage is poor and watering does not present difficulty.

When the crop is about 3 weeks from maturing blanching should be started. This is done by excluding the sun from the stalks of the plants, thus preventing the formation of chlorophyll (the green colouring matter) in the plant cells. A good practice in blanching is to surround each bed with high boards which should be at least 10in. wide. The method of placing the boards is to lay them flat on either edge of the path along plant rows, force the inside edge against the plants, and then raise them to a vertical position, bringing up all the outside leaves. The boards are kept in position by short stakes placed on the outside.

Another method is to cut sections of wrapping paper and wrap each celery plant separately, leaving only the tops of the plants exposed. Blanching by drawing the soil up around the plants is not the best method, although it is commonly practised by home gardeners. In warm weather it may cause the plants to decay and favours development of leaf spot and injury to the stalks.