

manure or compost or a fertiliser mixture. For beds the ground should be deeply dug and well worked.

Crisp, well-blanched celery is deservedly popular and to produce it in this condition requires rapid growth without checks. A few days before planting, a fertiliser mixture consisting of equal parts of blood and bone and superphosphate plus 5 per cent. of sulphate of potash should be broadcast over the beds at the rate of 1lb. a square yard and worked into the top 3in. of soil. For trenches the same mixture should be well worked into the soil at the rate of 2oz. per foot of trench.

Celery requires an adequate supply of moisture during growth, and as celery is shallow rooting (many of the roots are within 2 or 3in. of the surface), cultivation should be shallow.

Blanching

When the plants have attained a usable size 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. The easiest method of blanching is to surround each bed with 10 or 12in. boards. 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 vertical, bringing up all the outside leaves. The boards are kept in position by short stakes driven in on the outside. Another method is to cut sections of wrapping paper and wrap each plant separately, leaving only the tops of the plants exposed. Blanching by moulding 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 development of leaf spot and injury to the stalks is encouraged.

The following are three types of celery:—

Golden self-blanching: Varieties include White Plume, which has a dwarf habit and is a good early variety, and Gilt-edge Golden, a stocky, very heavy, perfectly solid variety with a

splendid flavour; it is the type most popular with commercial growers.

Late: Solid White is an excellent late variety; it is very hardy and is the best of the English large, white-stemmed sorts.

Pink or red: Examples are Superb Pink and London Prize. Their flavour is nut-like, quite distinct, and pleasant; the pink, red, or purplish colour is distributed over the outer stalks, but occurs mostly at the margins of the inner stalks, which are otherwise white or cream.

The best varieties to plant in the home garden during December and January are White Plume and Gilt-edge Golden. For winter growing Solid White is best.



[Green and Hahn Ltd. photo.]

A bed of self-blanching celery with board moved slightly to show the blanching stems. Celery grows well in beds on the flat if soil moisture can be maintained.

Celeriac

Celeriac is commonly called turnip-rooted celery. The stem develops into a bulb 2 to 4in. in diameter and is the portion of the plant that is eaten. The bulbs are trimmed, washed, and, without salt or other flavouring, boiled until tender. They may be pared, sliced, and served with white sauce or left uncut to be sliced up for salad when cold. Celeriac is often used in soups and stews. The seed may be sown outdoors from September to January; subsequent treatment of the seedlings is similar to that for celery.

For best results celeriac requires a deep, moist soil with a good humus content. The seedlings should be planted on flat beds in rows 18in. apart with 12in. between the plants. Celeriac does not require blanching.

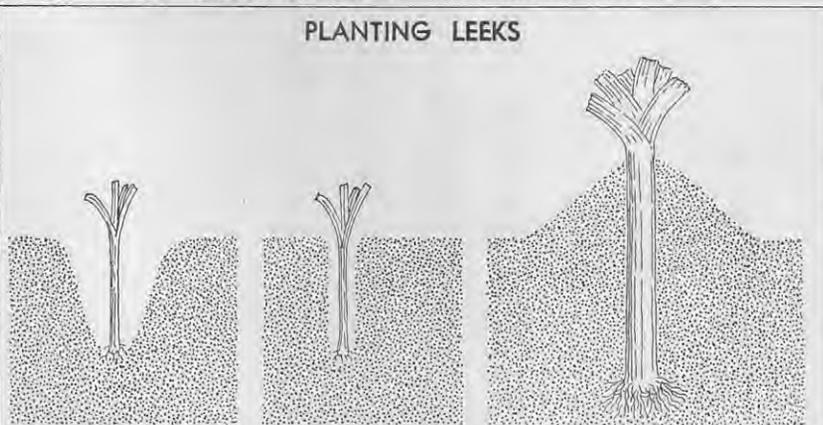
Leeks

The leek is used in a similar way to onions and its cultural requirements are also similar to the latter. It forms a thick, fleshy stem without a bulb. Seed sown in beds in September should be ready for planting out in December or January.

If leeks are not grown in rich soil and kept watered during dry weather, they are liable to become tough. Good results may be obtained on fairly heavy ground providing it has been well prepared. A fertiliser mixture composed of equal parts of blood and bone plus 5 per cent. of sulphate or muriate of potash should be worked into the soil before planting at the rate of 4oz. per square yard.

When the young seedlings are about the thickness of a lead pencil they can be set out 6 to 8in. apart in rows 18in. apart. The usual practice is to make holes with a round dibble to a depth of 5 or 6in. and drop plants into the holes. Watering usually settles

PLANTING LEEKS



Left—Correct method of setting out young leek plants in a trench. Middle—Leek planted in a dibble hole and watered; watering usually settles sufficient earth around the roots. Right—Drawing up earth around the plant as it grows will blanch the stem. Before planting leeks trim back the leaves level with the heart leaf and shorten the roots to within 1½in. of the bulb.