

CELERY.

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The large and rapidly increasing demand for celery makes it well worth while for the trucker to give his attention to the growing of this excellent vegetable.

There are two points that especially recommend it to the market gardener—the large cash returns that may be obtained from a small area and its adaptability as a second crop. In our latitude, planting may be delayed as late as the first week in August and still a full crop be harvested; so that land that has been previously occupied with potatoes, strawberries, peas, spinach, carrots and other early vegetables, may be turned to good account by planting to celery. While a muck or deep black loam is preferable for its growth it is not essential and celery of a superior quality may be grown on heavier soils.

Methods of culture vary somewhat. Those which I shall give are those we employ in raising it at Oshkosh. The first thing to be considered is the raising of plants. For early celery, the seed is sown in flats in the hot-bed about the first of March. A soil composed of two-thirds good garden loam, one-sixth well decayed manure and one-sixth sharp sand is used for sowing the seed in. It is run through a half inch mesh sieve so as to thoroughly mix and pulverize the soil. Flats three inches deep are filled two-thirds full. It is pressed firmly and smoothed off with a board. The seed is sown and covered to a depth of one-eighth of an inch with clean sand. The covering of sand lessens the liability to damping off. When the plants have made three or four leaves they are transplanted into flats an eighteen by twenty-two inch flat holding two hundred. Here they grow until ready to set out in the field. Proper attention being given to shading and ventilating in sunny weather. For later use, seed is sown in cold frames with glass or cloth covering and for still later use it is sown out of doors as early as possible in rows one foot apart in finely prepared soil. The seeder is regulated so as to sow the seed shallow, celery being slow to germinate it is sown thickly so as to secure a good stand. A little cabbage or cauliflower is sown with the celery to mark the rows so that they can be wheel hoed before the celery makes its appearance. They are kept weeded and

wheel hoed the same as carrots or onions. They are cut back once or twice to induce a stocky growth, a sythe being used for this purpose.

As most of our celery is a second crop the soil is not plowed, except when following strawberries, but cultivated to a depth of five or six inches. A dressing of well rotted manure is applied in the row before cultivating. A twelve-tooth Planet, Jr. cultivator is used for finishing. This leaves the soil fine and mellow. In setting transplanted plants a trowel or the hand is used, but plants with a straight a-tap root may be more quickly set with a dibble. Blanching with boards is mostly followed. For this method, the plants are set in double rows, that is two rows are planted ten inches apart and a space of three feet between these and the next two is allowed for cultivating.

The plants are set six inches apart in the row. When earth is used for blanching, single rows five feet apart are used so that there may be plenty of soil for hilling.

When planting in hot or dry weather a mulch of marsh hay is placed on the plants. This is removed when the plants have become well established. After setting, the soil about the plants is kept well stirred with a harrow cultivator until the plants have attained considerable size. When a shovel plow is run through the rows hilling the celery slightly. From three to five weeks before the celery is to be marketed the blanching process is begun. For this, ten inch boards are used. Sixteen foot lengths being preferred. These are placed along the rows with a stake at each end to keep them from falling out, the top holding them on the inside. One thousand feet of lumber will blanch about twenty-two hundred stalks in double rows. After the boards are up, a mulch of stable litter is placed between the rows. This keeps the soil moist and does away with further cultivation. Late in the season some of the celery is hilled with earth. After the shovel plow has been run as closely as possible to the celery, without covering the leaves, the stalks are brought into an upright position by bringing the earth about the plant either by hand or with a steel rake. After the first handling, a shovel is used for further hilling. The back of a wooden rake is used to keep the leaves in an upright position while shoveling so as to protect the heart.

It will hardly pay one to attempt to raise celery to any extent without some means of watering in dry weather. An abundant supply of moisture being necessary for a crisp succulent growth.

We use a windmill, tank and piping, applying the water directly to the plants through a garden hose. This is a job the boys delight in doing.

In preparing for market, a sharp stiff knife is used for cutting. The plant is stripped down to the edible portion and the butt end neatly trimmed. It is then tied in one fourth dozen bunches and washed. As all our celery is disposed of in the local market no boxing is necessary.

When storing the celery, the outer stalks are stripped off and the longer leaves trimmed in somewhat. It is then packed closely in pits, which are made by making a frame of ten inch boards fifty inches wide and sixteen feet long with two cross pieces. This is placed on level ground and the dirt within removed to a depth of eight inches and banked about the outside. After the pit is filled, water is run to a depth of four or five inches to thoroughly moisten the roots and prevent wilting. A double covering of boards is then placed over the pits. This will keep out considerable frost and if an extra covering of coarse litter is given, celery may be safely kept here until well after Thanksgiving. In our section it is not considered safe in the ground after the twentieth of October. In cellar storage the plants are not packed so closely, some earth being placed about the roots when setting down.

As to varieties, we use mostly the self-blanching. For the general market we still prefer a good strain of White Plume to any of the various sorts of that variety. Golden Self Blanching is much superior in quality to White Plume but is of slower growth and more susceptible to blight and rust. It also requires a richer soil. For keeping qualities the green celeries excel. Evans Triumph Giant Pascal, Winter Queen, Noll's Magnificent are all good varieties. The green celeries require hilling with earth to blanch properly.

MY EXPERIENCE IN RAISING MUSK MELONS.

WM. NELSON, Oshkosh.

I have had about 14 years experience in raising musk-melons, raising about 6 acres each year. I have tried several varieties, but have dropped all except the Emerald Gem, Osage and Honey Dew, as I raise them only for home market.