

Wild Celery

Apium graveolens

Description

The wild form of celery, grows abundantly in the UK, in semi shaded conditions. It can be recognised by its distinctive aroma, that infuses the plant and seeds, especially on wet days. It grows at any time of year with a profusion of serrated mid green leaves held on fine pale stalks. Often confused with coriander. White umbelliferous flowers appear in profusion from June to August. If left to grow will attain a height in excess of 1m. As it matures stems gradually thicken and toughen. Seedheads remain until late autumn. Seeds prolifically.

Cultivation

Sow thinly in seedbeds or open ground, into rich soil in sun or partial shade, in autumn or spring. Cover with a fine layer of soil or vermiculite. Water well. The plant becomes leggy and tough if too dry. Can be grown for its young leaves as a micro vegetable, or allowed to mature. Pull before flowering if you do wish it to seed. However this crop, having seeded, makes an excellent winter ground clover and constant source of salad leaves. It will withstand a light frost, growing back if hit hard.

Container Tips

Wild celery is a tolerant plant, prolific and robust. It is shallow rooted, so excellent for growing in containers of any size. Even a yoghurt pot will produce a spray of fine leaves. Does not require extra feeding, but will benefit from a semi-shaded position and regular watering.

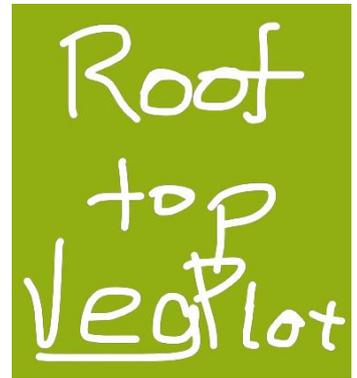
Harvesting

Harvest the leaves when young. Stalks may also be used in the spring or early autumn. A cut plant will re-grow, but will tend to coarsen and run to seed in the summer. Leave a few plants to mature, their flowering heads are exceedingly delicate and long lasting.

Use

Unlike commercial celery, the stalks are the least edible part of the plant, though young stems can be used in stocks or cut up in casseroles. The leaves are spicy in flavour and best mixed into a leaf salad, where they provide bite, flavour and body.

Young leaves and stems may be thrown into a stir-fry. Avoid cooking large clumps of leaves, they matt and become tough. The seeds share the plants delicious perfume and can be used as a flavouring or mixed with salt to make celery salt.



INFORMATION SHEET
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