CELERY

Celery is a crop grown in the Yuma area which has increased in acreage each year since 2005. It is grown exclusively for the fresh market and can take up to 16 weeks to reach maturity.

Celery has negative calories! It takes more calories to digest a piece of celery than the celery has in it to begin with.

Celery is a member of the *Umbelliferae* family, a cousin of carrots, parsley, anise, parsnips, fennel, caraway and celeriac (celery root).

In 2007, Yuma County growers had about 1000 acres of celery in production with a value of over $1.2 million.

There are about 71,000 seeds per ounce or 1,120,000 seeds per pound depending on the variety of celery.

Growers plant 32-42,000 plants per acre depending on variety, time of the year and grower preference.

Celery plants are raised from seeds in greenhouses; it takes 6-8 weeks to produce a transplant ready for the field. It then takes 75-90 days to produce a marketable plant in the field depending on the weather and variety.

Celery production and harvest are very labor intensive. A person handles each individual plant at least three times, once when it is transplanted in the field, once when it is trimmed and then when it is sized and placed in a carton. Celery is packed by size; the number on a carton refers to the number of uniform plants in the carton by count or in dozens. A carton should weigh a minimum of 55 pounds each and usually more.

Celery is a popular vegetable because it's tasty and versatile. But smart cooks also know that it's a great source of vitamins and minerals. Just two medium stems of celery pack a real nutritional punch, and qualify as one of your family's 5 A-Day servings for a well-balanced diet.

Keep raw celery on hand for a quick snack that's delicious and nutritious. Kids enjoy the texture and sweetness of celery, and you can add to the nutrition value by spreading celery pieces with peanut butter, cream cheese, or a zesty yogurt dip. If you keep celery in ice water, it will stay nice and crunchy.

Celery is a great, all purpose vegetable that's just as tasty and nutritious raw as cooked. Kids love its crunchy sweetness; adults love the zesty flavor it adds to almost any recipe.

It only takes one ounce of celery seeds to grow one acre of celery.
There are 1,000,000 seeds in one pound of celery seeds.

Most celery growers plant from 32,000 to 42,000 plants per acre.

There is a Celery Museum in Portage, Michigan.

Celery is from the same plant family as carrots, parsley, fennel and caraway.

The name 'celery' is from the French word 'celeri'.

Originally a bitter, wild marsh plant ranging from Sweden south throughout Europe, celery was used over centuries for medicinal purposes "to purify the blood." The winner of an athletic event in ancient Greece was given a bunch of celery, much like flowers are given today.

Celery, a household staple to some, an appetizer or snack to others, either way, this beloved vegetable has made its way into millions of households over the years. Celery has its roots in sixteenth century northern European history.

Celery is often sold in loose stalks and also pre-packaged celery hearts. Celery hearts are the inner ribs of the celery.

Celery should be refrigerated in a plastic bag and placed in the crisper for up to two weeks. If the ribs are wilted, separate the ribs and place them in a bowl of ice water for several minutes before use.

Celery is native to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as a flavoring.

Using a celery stick to garnish a Bloody Mary originated in the 1960s at Chicago's Ambassador East Hotel. An unnamed celebrity got a Bloody Mary, but no swizzle stick. He grabbed a stalk of celery from the relish tray to stir his Bloody Mary and history was made.

Two billion pounds of celery are grown each year in the U.S.

Celery stalks, celery seed and celeriac (celery root) are each grown commercially from different varieties of the plant.

Per capita U.S. consumption of celery is about 9 to 10 pounds per person annually.

In North America, commercial production of celery is dominated by a variety called Pascal celery. Gardeners can grow a range of cultivars, many of which differ little from the wild species, mainly in having stouter leaf stems. They are ranged under two classes, white and red; the white cultivars being generally the best flavored, and the most crisp and tender.

The wild form of celery is known as smallage. It has a furrowed stalk with wedge-shaped leaves, the whole plant having a coarse, rank taste, and a peculiar smell. With cultivation and
blanching, the stalks lose their acrid qualities and assume the mild, sweetish, aromatic taste peculiar to celery as a salad plant.

Rabbits eat a lot of celery. One may wonder if this means rabbits lose a lot of weight. However, a rabbit's natural flora of bacteria in their appendix includes micro-organisms which break down the cellulose in the celery into a form which the rabbit can absorb.

The edible celery stalk is not a plant stem as often claimed. It is a petiole, which is part of a leaf.

Many sound artists break stalks of celery into a microphone to simulate the sound of breaking bones.

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