

## Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

February 23, 2009

### **Celeriac (and Celery): Now is the time to start seeds.**

If you haven't been growing root celery, or celeriac, I can only urge you to try it this year. Under the surface of the big ugly knobby root is a creamy white, fine textured vegetable, with a heart-of-celery flavour. It can be eaten raw or cooked. In cream of leek and celeriac soup you have a perfect combination of hardy winter vegetables available any day in the winter. No need to use milk in the soup as a whiz with a blender transforms cooked celeriac into a thick, creamy soup.

Celery transplants are usually available from nurseries, however, celeriac is harder to find. The seeds of both celeriac and celery are very tiny and take a long time to grow to a useful transplant size so I start mine indoors by the end of February. They are slow to germinate and need the best of care to get going: bottom heat is a good idea, plus excellent light levels once they come up.

When planting either both of these vegetables out in the spring, wait until the soil is warm and the weather stable, then set them out in very rich soil. You can set them 8-12 inches apart each way as they have short roots. Celery will not stand heavy frost, but celeriac can be excavated out of a frozen snow bank any time--and I have the roots to prove it!

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Check out my web site: [www.lindagilkeson.ca](http://www.lindagilkeson.ca)

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