Celtuce, Asparagus Lettuce

*Lactuca sativa* var. *augustana* is a member of the Asteraceae (sunflower) family.

Celtuce looks like a cross between celery and lettuce. The outer leaves resemble those of loose-leaved lettuce, but are a lighter green.

### Market Information

**Use.** Young, tender celtuce leaves can be eaten in salads. The soft, translucent green central core can be eaten fresh, sliced or diced in a salad. In China, the fleshy stem is cut into sections and boiled or stewed. Cooked, celtuce tastes like a cross between a mild summer squash and an artichoke.


### Culture

**Climatic requirements.** Celtuce is a cool-season crop. It requires a mean temperature of 50° to 60°F.

**Propagation and care.** Plant celtuce from seed in the fall, winter, or early spring. Space the seeds about 8 inches apart in the row, and treat the new crop like regular lettuce. Soon after the outer leaves develop, a central stalk bearing tiny leaves at the top starts to grow. When the stem is 12 to 18 inches long, cut it down into the leafy part of the plant.

Pick the celtuce stem when it reaches a length of 12 to 18 inches. (Photo: Hunter Johnson)

Peel the stem, since its outer edges contain a bitter, milky sap. The soft, translucent, green central core is the edible part. The leaves may be eaten in salads or as greens when they are young and tender, but as they mature they grow bitter and become inedible.

### Sources

#### Seed

- W. Atlee Burpee & Co., 300 Park Avenue, Warminster, PA 18974
- Nichols Garden Nursery, 1190 North Pacific Highway, Albany, OR 97321
- Seeds Blüm, Idaho City Stage, Boise, ID 83706
- Sunrise Enterprises, P.O. Box 10058, Elmwood, CT 06110-0058
- Tsang and Ma, P.O. Box 5644, Redwood City, CA 94063

#### More information


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