



# Growing Guru

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I have always enjoyed telling people about the botany of Thanksgiving, which tends to ensure that they never think of the Thanksgiving meal the same way ever again. I hope that is true for you too. Some questions to consider: Are cranberries botanically berries? Are pumpkin and pecan pies made from fruits? What part of a celery plant are you adding to your stuffing?

## SOME PLANTS WE EAT FOR THANKSGIVING

**CRANBERRY** - This berry is one of the few edible plants that comes directly from North America. Notice how its insides look a bit like a tomato, which is also a berry.



**PUMPKIN** - Did you know pumpkins are modified berries with hard outer rinds? The botanical name for the fruit type is pepo, which is a characteristic of the gourd family.

**CELERY** - If you use a celery stalk to chop into your stuffing, you are actually using the stalk (petiole) of the leaf, not the stem. The stem is that hard chunk at the bottom. Looking at a stalk with leaves from the inside of the plant, makes it easier to realize it is a leaf.



**PECANS** - As a child growing up in Louisiana, we would often spend hours picking up pecans off the ground under the tree. Sometimes this would lead to dreams during the night that I was still collecting them. My favorite nut for sure. And yes, it is a true nut, which is a type of fruit. In the hard shell, the two halves (cotyledons) of the seed are connected at the end where the embryo is.

**WHITE POTATOES** are tubers (underground stems), as are yams. **SWEET POTATOS** are roots. Here is more description of [What's the Difference Between Yams and Sweet Potatoes?](#)

Read these to learn more about the [The Edible Plants of Thanksgiving](#) and [A History of Thanksgiving Plants](#). Have you ever thought about [The Top Thanksgiving Food Grown in Every State](#). Make some guesses and then read the article.