

Companion Planting



History:

- Ancient Chinese farmers used nitrogen fixing Azolla ferns with their rice crops to block competing weeds
- The three sisters plant guild: 8,000-10,000 years ago (corn, beans, squash) Beans add nitrogen, squash smothers weeds, corn acts as bean trellis.
- English cottage gardens have used the practice for centuries

Why Companion Plant?

- Utilize biodiversity to enhance your garden's vitality
- Pest deterrence, pollinator attraction
- Shading/trellising
- Maximize efficiency in a smaller space
- Visual interest
- Break down traditional ideas of a “flower bed” and “vegetable bed”

All-rounders

- Basil (repels whiteflies, aphids, and others.)
- Borage (plant with tomatoes and strawberries, attracts beneficial bees and wasps)
- Parsley (black swallowtail butterfly host plant, distracts pests)
- Onions (repels borers, maggots, cutworms, slugs)
- Chives/Garlic (deters aphids, and pests by masking plant scents, garlic does well with peach trees to repel green peach aphids)
- Sage/Rosemary (repels carrot fly)
- Mint(in a pot), and Thyme to deter aphids and cabbage moths on cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts.
- Nasturtium (attracts aphids and caterpillars away from veggies, repels some beetles)

Great flowers to companion plant

- Cosmos (attracts beneficial wasps, hoverflies, pollinators)
- Crimson clover (nitrogen fixer, weed suppression, beneficial insect habitat, attracts pollinators)
- Daisies (pollinator food source, pest deterrent)
- Calendula/Marigold (repel nematodes, potato beetle)
- Milkweed (aphids live it, attracts ladybugs to hunt them, hosts Monarchs)
- Sunflower/Tithonia (windbreak, trellis for nasturtium, pole beans; shade for cool crops)

Companions to avoid

- Fennel (growth inhibitive)
- Black Walnut (growth inhibitive)
- Peas with garlic/onions (stunts growth)
- Potatoes with corn/other root crops (competition for space/nutrients)
- Carrots with dill (coriander, parsley, celery too; reduces yield, cross pollination)

Reminder:

Companion planting is not the only thing you should be doing

- Practice crop rotation
- Build good soil
- Provide good spacing for your plants

Companion Planting

Links:

Old Farmers Almanac - Recently Updated Guide with New Research

<https://www.almanac.com/companion-planting-chart-vegetables>

Concise Planting Chart from WVU Extension

<https://extension.wvu.edu/files/d/0b887573-5fcf-4d17-a47f-6de7465ad0a8/berkeley-horticulture-companion-planting-chart.pdf>