

# So how does companion planting work?

**It promotes growth:** Some companion plants actually help each other to grow and thrive, giving support, shelter and root space, enhancing the production, improving the taste, or creating better biodiversity.

**It deters pests:** some 'trap plants' attract pests towards them and away from your main crops; others taste bitter or are toxic to pests like aphids, so act as natural pest deterrents, (such as *Artemisia absinthium*, tansy and pyrethrum daisies). Certain companion plants emit masking chemicals that deter detrimental insects, (these include rosemary, lavender and mint).

**It attracts predators:** From birds to insects, all of which will feast on pests, from slugs to aphids, these are the staple of wildlife garden ideas.

**It attracts pollinators:** Many plants for pollinators attract bees and other pollinating insects, which improves the yield of vegetable gardens and is helpful for a balanced garden and eco system.

**It provides shade:** Planting tall plants next to those that need shade is a simple way to adopt companion planting. Think: tall peas sheltering delicate salad leaves beneath.

**It provides space:** Each plant type needs a different amount of space to grow to its full potential. Matching fast-growers with slow-growers (think: speedy radishes next to slower parsnips) will give each the room it needs, rather than putting in plants whose roots will compete for space and nutrients.

**It avoids monocultures:** These aren't a good way to grow, providing pests and diseases a happy breeding ground. Companion planting means bringing a wide variety of plants to your garden.

**It improves soil fertility:** By companion planting, you can ensure the soil isn't depleted of nutrients but boosted.

**It can suppress weeds:** By filling gaps in borders with more planting, you are less likely to have weeds take over.

**It can improve flavor:** Companion planting pairings to improve flavor include basil with tomatoes, borage to sweeten strawberries, and dill near corn.

## What Are The Benefits Of Companion Planting?

'There is an array of benefits to companion planting in an organic garden.

Companion plants help to protect the soil, suppress weeds, fill in any gaps and encourage biodiversity.

The more diverse planting the better. A careful selection of plants and companions allows more variety in a small space, while helping you, the gardener, at the same time. Single crop garden beds can become plagued by insects, while mixing plants together confuses pests.

'We all do better with others in our lives and plants are no different, helping one another out, whether by acting as a lure, attracting beneficial insects or improving the soil.

### Companion Planting Chart

**Beans (French beans, runner beans, broad beans)** – companion plant with carrots, sweet peas, cabbage, beetroot. **AVOID** onion family, fennel, sunflowers

**Broccoli** – plant with onions, chard, radishes, mint, spinach, beetroot, celery, sage, oregano, rosemary. **AVOID** tomatoes, squash, strawberries, pumpkins, asparagus, peppers

**Carrot companion plants** include onions, leeks, beans, brassicas, lettuce, peas, beans, sage, rosemary, tomatoes, alliums. **AVOID** potatoes, dill, parsnips, celery, radish

**Cucumber companion plants** include peas, beans, radishes, onions, carrots, beets, cabbages, peppers, dill, oregano, nasturtiums, marigolds. **AVOID** potatoes, sage

**Tomato companion plants** include basil, mint, beans, lettuce, garlic, thyme, French marigolds, calendula, chives, asparagus, nasturtiums, cosmos, **AVOID** potatoes, brassicas, aubergine, peppers, fennel, kohlrabi, corn, dill

**Potato companion plants** include horseradish, beans, basil, cabbages, chamomile, thyme, petunias, sage, nasturtium, coriander, marigolds. **AVOID** squash, asparagus, nightshade family, fennel, sunflowers, raspberries, strawberries

**Strawberry companion plants** include asparagus, beans, borage, spinach, lettuce, garlic, onion, peas, thyme, horseradish, rhubarb, marigolds, chives. **AVOID** cauliflower, cabbages, broccoli, fennel, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, mint

**Peppers companion plants** include carrots, cucumbers, endive, aubergine, allium family, asparagus, squash, basil, parsley, oregano. **AVOID** beans, brassicas, fennel, strawberries

**Onion companion plant** include the cabbage family, tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, chard, strawberries, dill, parsley, mint, chamomile. **AVOID** beans, peas, sage, asparagus

**Leeks** - companion plant with carrots, onions, garlic, beets, celery, tomatoes, fruit trees, parsley. **AVOID** beans, legumes, swiss chard

**Kale companion plants** include onion, garlic, leeks, peas, cabbage, lemongrass, chives, dill, nasturtiums, marigolds. **AVOID** other brassicas, such as brussels sprouts, broccoli, kohlrabi

**Zucchini companion plants** include dill, lavender, chives, nasturtiums, oregano, borage, spinach, garlic, beans, peas, garlic, radishes. **AVOID** squash, pumpkins and potatoes

### Flowers As Companion Plants

There are easy and attractive choices of flowers for companion planting with vegetables.

Some of the best are marigolds, nasturtiums and calendula. **Nasturtiums** help to deter aphids and are often used as a sacrificial plant so aphids and black fly attack them but stay away from your precious vegetables. **Calendulas** are loved by bees and hoverflies, while the strong scent of **marigolds** confuses pests.

Calendula not only glows orange from early summer to autumn, but is a wonderful edible and medicinal plant that also repels whitefly from tomatoes, distracts aphids from crops and encourages beneficial insects. Calendula is in the Asteraceae family, a group that has a vital protein in its pollen that allows beneficial insects, such as hoverflies and lacewings, to lay viable eggs.

Plant aromatic herbs (**thyme, oregano, rosemary, mint and lavender**) throughout your garden to help repel insects with their aromatic foliage and to attract pollinators