



Companion planting has been around since the beginning of gardening. But what is it, really? The theory of companion planting centers around the creation of a diverse ecosystem within a gardening environment – be it large or small in size. This diversity helps to minimize and often repel insects as well as lessening disease pressures while maximizing production, yield, and taste. Plant species, proximity, and planting density play important roles in the level of success enjoyed. But to get started - what goes with what? Let's look over the short list of common garden vegetables and who they enjoy living near.

*Asparagus* does well with tomatoes, basil and parsley.

*Beans* like cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, leeks, lettuce, marigolds, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radishes, rosemary, savory, and strawberries, but do not like basil or onions.

*Beets* go well with the cabbage family, lettuce, onions, radishes, and sage but do not like anything in the mustard family.

*Broccoli* likes to be near beets, chamomile, dill, onions, peppermint, potatoes, rosemary, and sage. Locating broccoli near tomatoes or strawberries will not bring out the best in any of them.

*Cabbage* does well when placed in proximity to bush beans, carrots, chamomile, cucumbers, dill, lettuce, marigolds, nasturtiums, onions, peppermint, potatoes, rosemary, sage, thyme but not when near strawberries or tomatoes.

*Carrots* like leeks, onions, peas, radishes, rosemary, sage and tomatoes but do not like dill or parsnips.

*Corn* is happy when near beans, beets, cucumbers, melons, peas, early potatoes, pumpkins, soybeans, squash, and sunflowers – no tomatoes, please.

*Cucumbers* flourish near beans, corn, lettuce, marigolds, nasturtiums, peas, radishes, and sunflowers but not when planted with potatoes.

*Eggplant* is happy with green beans, peas, peppers, potatoes and spinach.

*Lettuce* likes to be planted with everything, but is especially happy with carrots, cucumbers, garlic, onions, radishes and strawberries.

*Melons* do well with corn, nasturtiums, radishes, and sunflowers – just don't put them near potatoes.

*Onions* like beets, everything in the cabbage family, carrots, chamomile, lettuce, peppers, spinach, strawberries, and tomatoes but not asparagus, beans, peas, or sage.

*Peas* planted with beans, carrots, chicory, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, parsley, early potatoes, radishes, spinach, strawberries, peppers, or turnips will do well but do not plant garlic or onions near peas.

*Peppers* and basil is a match made in heaven.

*Potatoes* like beans, the cabbage family, carrots, corn, horseradish, marigolds, onions, peas, and tansy but do not like cucumbers, fennel, the squash family, sunflowers or turnips.

*Pumpkins* are orange and happy near corn but not potatoes.

*Radishes* do well with beets, beans, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, melons, mustard, nasturtiums, parsnips, peas, spinach, squash, and tomatoes. Do not rotate with anything in the cabbage family or hyssop.

*Spinach* likes cauliflower, corn, eggplant and strawberries.

*Squash* lives nicely with beans, corn, nasturtiums, onions, and radishes

*Tomatoes* should be planted with asparagus, basil, beans, borage, carrots, chives, cucumbers, garlic, lettuce, marigolds, peppermint, nasturtiums, onions, parsley, and peppers, but not with anything in the cabbage family, corn, or potatoes.

*Turnips* live contentedly with peas and radishes but keep them away from the mustard and cabbage families.

*Watermelon* and potatoes do very well together.

In general, calendula, marigolds, and nasturtiums will help to repel aphids. Cosmos and garlic tend to repel most insects, nasturtiums will also repel whiteflies. Wormwood seems to be offensive to slugs, while chamomile, savory and thyme appear to attract a huge number of beneficial insects to the garden. As with most of the things we deal with in nature, everything is dependent on the soil, environmental conditions, quality and health of the seeds or plants used and general skill care level. Some scientific research has been involved in confirming the benefits of some of the companion planting suggestions – in other cases, success is purely anecdotal. Environmental factors can make a site perfect for a plant combination that usually doesn't work or vice versa. Why not give it a go, though – it will be fun to put the garden planting puzzle together in a new and interesting way.