

Easier Gardening with Companion Planting

Plants are good companions when one plant's natural habit provides benefit to the other plants.

Benefits:

- Chives, onions, and garlic planted near carrots and lettuce can “fool” harmful insects with their strong smell, keeping them from finding the carrots and lettuce that they want to prey upon.
- Radishes planted among cucurbits (squashes, melons, cucumbers) can attract and trap insects that harm the cucurbits.
- Basil planted alongside tomatoes confuses harmful insects with their strong scent, essentially “hiding” the tomatoes from the insects.
- Thyme produces flowers that are very attractive to helpful insects.
- Legumes (peas, beans) actually add usable nitrogen to soil that other plants can use to thrive.
- Flowers such as cosmos, nasturtiums, calendula, zinnias, sweet alyssum, and yarrow attract beneficial insects or trap insects that might otherwise prey upon your vegetables.
- Herbs such as dill or vegetables such as carrots, when allowed to go to flower, attract many beneficial insects that are attracted to their umbel-like shape.

Increasing the biodiversity in your garden is almost always a good thing—the more flowers and herbs among your vegetables, the greater the beauty and productivity.

Adapted from:

- Herbs as Companions by Lynn Sparks, Erie County Master Gardener
- Companion Planting for Beginners by Brian Lowell, 2022
- Companion Planting: A Method for Sustainable Pest Control by Leah Riesselman, Iowa State University, RFR-A9099