

Support Beneficial Insects with Companion Planting

Incorporating flowering plants into vegetable gardens can help attract pollinator insects and improve pollination.

What are pollinators?

Bees of all types, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, beetles, birds, bats, small mammals, the wind, and you!

Why is this important?

- Many vegetable crops, such as cucurbits (pumpkin, squash, cucumber, etc.), rely on pollination to produce fruit; attracting pollinators improves rates of pollination.
- Beans, peppers, and tomatoes also have increased production and quality if they are visited by pollinator insects.
- Beneficial insects like ladybugs eat huge numbers of harmful bugs, such as aphids; parasitic wasps destroy many plant eating larvae.

What Plants Attract Beneficial Insects?

- Sweet alyssum and nasturtiums attract honeybees, wild bees, and hoverflies.
- Basil – plant near tomatoes – let go to flower to attract pollinators and to trick harmful insects by their strong scent.
- Cosmos, coneflowers, daisies, marigolds, and zinnias attract bees, hoverflies, lacewings.
- Plants with umbel flowers like dill, yarrow, fennel, and carrots, if left to flower, attract helpful hoverflies, ladybugs, tachinid flies, and parasitic wasps.
- Thyme attracts damsel bugs, ground beetles, ladybugs, parasitic wasps, and big-eyed bugs

Adapted from:

- Companion Planting for Beginners by Brian Lowell, 2022
- Herbs as Companions by Lynn Sparks, Erie County Master Gardener