

Buddy System for Plants: Companion Planting

When I planted my garden in rows, it never occurred to me to plant more than one kind of vegetable in any row. That's just not the way it's done. But when I started planting in beds, it seemed reasonable to consider mixing different sorts of plants in a bed. I like the notion in a general way, because it's closer to the way things occur in the natural world. Nature tends to mix things up instead of planting big blocks of just one kind of plant.

Over the years that people have gardened, many gardeners have reported that there appears to be a synergistic relationship among certain plants. One or both of them appear to grow better, yield more, and sometimes even taste better when they grow near one another. These are often called "companion

plants." In other cases, plant partnerships have negative effects — one plant inhibits another's growth.

Very little is known about why some of these relationships exist. It is clear, for instance, why carrots might benefit from having onions, leeks, rosemary, wormwood, or sage nearby: Carrot flies, whose larvae attack young carrot roots, may be repelled by the aromas these plants give off. But why do some gardeners report that carrots grow with tomatoes or lettuce to mutual benefit? Why do celery, parsnips, and dill seem to inhibit carrots? Nobody knows for certain, and most of the "evidence" is anecdotal. Consider all the advice, including the suggestions in this book, as a starting point, not gospel. Keep track of the results and compile your own list of garden companions.

SOME GARDEN FRIENDS AND ADVERSARIES

Plant	Garden Friend(s)	Garden Adversary(ies)
Asparagus	Basil, nasturtium, parsley, tomato	Garlic, onion
Bean, bush	Beet, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chard, corn, cucumber, eggplant, leek, marigold, parsnip, pea, potato, radish, rosemary, strawberry, sunflower	Basil, fennel, kohlrabi, onion family
Bean, pole	Carrot, cauliflower, chard, corn, cucumber, eggplant, marigold, pea, potato, rosemary, strawberry	Basil, beet, cabbage, fennel, kohlrabi, onion family, radish, sunflower
Beet	Bush bean, cabbage family, corn, leek, lettuce, lima bean, onion, radish	Mustard, pole bean
Broccoli	Beet, bush bean, carrot, celery, chard, cucumber, dill, kale, lettuce, mint, nasturtium, onion family, oregano, potato, rosemary, sage, spinach, tomato	Lima, pole, and snap bean, strawberry
Brussels sprout	Beet, bush bean, carrot, celery, cucumber, lettuce, nasturtium, onion family, pea, potato, radish, spinach, tomato	Kohlrabi, pole bean, strawberry
Cabbage	Beet, bush bean, carrot, celery, cucumber, dill, kale, lettuce, mint, nasturtium, onion family, potato, rosemary, sage, spinach, thyme, tomato	Pole bean, strawberry
Cantaloupe	Corn	Potato
Carrot	Bean, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, chive, leaf lettuce, leek, onion, pea, pepper, red radish, rosemary, sage, tomato	Celery, dill, parsnip

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Plant	Garden Friend(s)	Garden Adversary(ies)
Cauliflower	Beet, bush bean, carrot, celery, cucumber, dill, kale, lettuce, mint, nasturtium, onion family, potato, rosemary, sage, spinach, tomato	Pole bean, strawberry
Celery	Bush bean, cabbage family (especially cauliflower), leek, parsley, pea, tomato	Carrot, parsnip
Corn	Beet, bush bean, cabbage, cantaloupe, cucumber, morning glory, parsley, pumpkin, squash	Tomato
Cucumber	Bush bean, cabbage family, corn, dill, eggplant, lettuce, nasturtium, pea, radish, sunflower, tomato	Potato, sage
Eggplant	Bush bean, pea, pepper, potato	None
Kale	Beet, bush bean, cabbage, celery, cucumber, lettuce, nasturtium, onion, potato, spinach, tomato	Pole bean
Kohlrabi	Beet, bush bean, celery, cucumber, lettuce, nasturtium, onion, potato, tomato	Pole bean
Leek	Beet, bush bean, carrot, celeriac, celery, onion, parsley, tomato	Bean, pea
Lettuce	Everything, but especially carrot, garlic, onion family, and radish	None
Lima bean	Beet, radish	None
Onion family	Beet, cabbage family, carrot, kohlrabi, leek, early lettuce, parsnip, pepper, spinach, strawberry, tomato, turnip	Asparagus, bean, pea, sage
Parsley	Asparagus, corn, tomato	None
Parsnip	Bush bean, garlic, onion, pea, pepper, potato, radish	Caraway, carrot, celery
Pea	Bean, carrot, celery, chicory, corn, cucumber, eggplant, parsley, radish, spinach, strawberry, sweet pepper, turnip	Onion family
Pepper	Carrot, eggplant, onion, parsnip, pea, tomato	Fennel, kohlrabi
Potato	Bush bean, cabbage family, corn, eggplant (as trap crop), marigold, parsnip, pea	Cucumber, pumpkin, raspberry, rutabaga, squash family, sunflower, tomato, turnip
Pumpkin	Corn, eggplant, nasturtium, radish	Potato
Radish	Bean, beet, cabbage family, carrot, chervil, corn, cucumber, leaf lettuce, melon, nasturtium, parsnip, pea, spinach, squash family, sweet potato, tomato	Hyssop
Rutabaga	Nasturtium, onion family, pea	Potato
Spinach	Cabbage family, celery, legumes, lettuce, onion, pea, radish, strawberry	Potato
Squash	Celeriac, celery, corn, dill, melon, nasturtium, onion, radish	Potato
Strawberry	Bean, borage, lettuce, onion, pea, spinach	Cabbage family
Tomato	Asparagus, basil, bee balm, bush bean, cabbage family, carrot, celery, chive, cucumber, garlic, head lettuce, marigold, mint, nasturtium, onion, parsley, pepper, pot marigold	Dill, fennel, pole bean, potato
Turnip	Onion family, pea	Potato