

COMPANION PLANTING



*Photographs: *Clemson Cooperative Extension*. <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/>

“BESTIES”: 5 BENEFICIAL CULINARY HERBS FOR VEGETABLE GARDENS

Although there are some who prefer solitude, most of us enjoy the benefit of hanging out with friends. Social science research has provided plenty of data indicating that cultivating friendships can contribute to a healthier life. You might be surprised to know that the same may hold true for select plants in your vegetable garden.

What is Companion Planting? As defined by the *Permaculture Research Institute*, “Companion planting is a natural way to grow sustainable and healthy gardens while minimizing artificial inputs. It’s the practice of being mindful of how you layout your garden and the plants you choose to place next to each other in it. If you can create symbiotic relationships between plants, you will see all vegetation begin to flourish on their own.” Simply stated, companion planting is growing plants together that “like”, help, or benefit each other. Companion planting is encouraged by its proponents as a sustainable practice that may be applied to small-scale vegetable gardens.

Why should I consider companion planting, what are the benefits?

- Increased Yield and Flavor of Vegetables – Friends bring out the best in each other. There is literally “good chemistry” between well-chosen planting pairs. Properly matched companions generally do better together than individually by complimenting each other’s nutritional intakes and growing conditions.
- Improved Soil Health – Friends share. Some plants work well to accumulate a particular nutrient, while others may bring these nutrients up from the soil. Some can enrich the topsoil to benefit the growth of their neighbors.
- Promotes Biological Pest Control – Friends reduce the impact of stressors. Some plants act to repel parasites and pests, while others may lure pests away from target plants.
- Helps in Pollination – Friends play well together. Many herbs in particular grow flowers which attract pollinators- ensuring better fruiting and yield from their neighbors.
- Creates Beneficial Physical Spatial Interactions – Friends allow for individual differences. Variation in the physical characteristics of plants creates ability to optimize use of space in a garden.
- Suppresses Weeds – Friends help keep the bullies away. More layering and coverage in the garden bed due to beneficial spatial interactions limits weed growth.
- Aesthetics – Friends enrich each other. Specifically adding herbs to the garden adds pleasing smells and visuals!

What plants should I pair together? There are many potentially beneficial pairings in the plant world to be found for vegetables, including many beautiful and delicious culinary herbs. Basil, Dill, Marjoram, Rosemary, and Sage, in particular, are great companions for numerous vegetable partners. Companion Planting Charts typically cite these as their popular “BFFs”:

- Basil - Asparagus, Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Collard, Cucumber, Eggplant, Kale, Peppers, Potato, Radishes, Tomato
- Dill – Beets, Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Cauliflower, Celery, Cucumber, Lettuce, Pumpkin, Squash, Tomato
- Marjoram – Asparagus, All Beans, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chives, Corn, Cucumber, Lettuce, Onion, Peas, Peppers, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Squash, Tomato, Zucchini
- Rosemary – Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Garlic, Onions, Sage
- Sage – Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Lettuce, Peas, Tomato

Are there combinations to avoid? Beware – “Frenemies” do exist in nature. While some herbs and vegetables look beautiful together in a garden, their chemistry literally creates “something wrong under the surface” of the soil. Avoid matchmaking involving these antagonists:

- Aromatic Herbs with Cucumber
- Dill with Cabbage, Carrots, or Parsnips
- Fennel with Beans or Tomato. Caution: Fennel looks like Dill!
- Marjoram with Potato
- Parsley with Carrots
- Sage with Cucumber, Onion

Note: There are scientists that believe that further research is needed to support the effectiveness of companion planting. *University of Florida IFAS Extension* notes: “to popular belief, herbs are sometimes planted among vegetables to repel certain insects and other pests. While pest control with herbs is undocumented in scientific journals, this practice will at least reward the gardener with a steady supply of various herbs.” *University of Georgia Extension* concedes: “Further research is needed to verify claims of the effects of companion plantings.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Appling, Shawn, and Joyce Latimer. “Herb Culture and Use.” *Virginia Cooperative Extension* PUBLICATION 426-420. <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-420/426-420.html>. Accessed 11 February 2018.

“Companion Planting: What Companion Planting is, Why it is Effective, and the Reasoning Behind it.” *Permaculture Research Institute* 2017. www.Worldwidepermaculture.com Accessed 22 February 2018.

“Companion Planting Chart.” *Permaculture Research Institute*. June 20, 2013. https://www.permaculturenews.org/images/Companion-Planting_afriSTAR.jpg

“Companion Planting Information and Chart.” *Permaculture Research Institute*. December 2, 2011. <https://permaculturenews.org/2011/12/02/companion-planting-information-and-chart/>

Githinji, Leonard. “Benefits of Companion Planting in Gardening.” *Virginia State University Cooperative Extension*. <http://www.agriculture.vsu.edu/files/docs/cooperative-extension/companion-planting-in-gardening.pdf> Accessed 11 February 2018.

Kuepper, George, and Mardi Dodson. “Companion Planting & Botanical Pesticides: Concepts and Resources.” *Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas/ National Center for Appropriate Technology* Publication IP125. <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=72> Accessed 22 February 2018.

Staples, Henry. “In the Garden. Companion Planting: Help Your Plants Get By with a Little Help from Their Friends.” *Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia* 9 May 2012 posting. <https://mgnv.org/2012/05/09/in-the-garden-companion-planting-help-your-plants-get-by-with-a-little-help-from-their-friends/> Accessed 24 February 2018.