

2009 Companion Planting Addendum

COMPANION VEGETABLE GARDENING

It's said that vegetables are like people, they thrive on companionship. It is believed that vegetables will yield up to twice as much when they are surrounded with companion plants. So in this article we will discuss the top 12 vegetables and their best friends.

If you're getting ready to plant your vegetable garden you may want to try placing the various vegetable crops so you can take advantage of their natural friends. If you have already planted your vegetable garden you may want to make some changes in subsequent plantings later this summer.

The following are a list of the top 12 vegetables and their ideal planting companions.

Beans--they like celery and cucumbers but dislike onions and fennel.

Beets--Bush beans, lettuce, onions, kohlrabi, and most members of the cabbage family are companion plants. Keep the pole beans and mustard away from them.

Cabbage--Celery, dill, onions and potatoes are good companion plants They dislike strawberries, tomatoes, and pole beans.

Carrots--Leaf lettuce, radish, onions and tomatoes are their friends, Plant dill at the opposite end of the garden.

Corn--Pumpkins, peas, beans, cucumbers and potatoes are nice companion plants, Keep the tomatoes away from them.

Cucumbers--They like corn, peas, radishes, beans and sunflowers. Cucumbers dislike aromatic herbs and potatoes so keep them away.

Lettuce--It grows especially well with onions. Strawberries carrots, radishes and cucumbers also are friends and good companion plants.

Onions--Plant them near lettuce, beets, strawberries and tomatoes but keep them away from peas and beans.

Peas--Carrots, cucumbers, corn, turnips and radishes plus beans, potatoes and aromatic herbs are their friends. Keep the peas away from onions, garlic, leek, and shallots.

Radishes--This is one vegetable that has a lot of friends, they are excellent companion plants with beets, carrots, spinach and parsnips. Radishes grow well with cucumbers and beans. It's said that summer planting near leaf lettuce makes the radishes more tender.

Avoid planting radishes near cabbage, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, kohlrabi or turnips.

Squash--Ice radishes, cucumbers and corn are among their friends.

Tomatoes--Carrots, onions and parsley are good companion plants. Keep the cabbage and cauliflower away from them.

Sometimes plant friendships are one-sided. Carrots are said to help beans, but beans don't reciprocate. Though beans will help nearby cucumbers.

Other plants have bad companions and you'll be doing them a favor to keep them apart. Beans and onions are natural enemies so keep them at opposite sides of the garden.

If you have a patio you might try mint to repel ants, and basil to keep the flies and mosquitoes away. Both herbs have pretty flowers and are fragrant too. Besides, they're nice to harvest and use in the kitchen. In her book, "Carrots Love Tomatoes" Louise Riotte, says getting to know good and bad companions can double the bounty of your garden. The only required work is to plan your garden planting properly.

"Carrots Love Tomatoes", Garden Way is an informative, well-illustrated guide to the subject of companion planting. The book recently reprinted was originally published under the title "Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening".

If you would like more information on the various plants to use for companion planting and natural insect and disease control, you'll find "Carrots Love Tomatoes" is available in bookstores that carry the Garden Way books.

Common Problems in Container Gardening

Symptoms	Cause	Corrective measures
Plants tall, spindly and unproductive	Insufficient light	Move container to area receiving more light
	Excessive nitrogen	Reduce feeding intervals
Plants yellowing from bottom, lack vigor, poor color	Excessive water	Reduce watering intervals; Check for good drainage
	Low fertility	Increase fertility level of base solution
Plants wilt although sufficient water present	Poor drainage and aeration	Use mix containing higher percent organic matter; increase number of holes for drainage
Marginal burning or firing of the leaves	High salts	Leach container with tap water at regular intervals
Plants stunted in growth; sickly, purplish color	Low temperature	Relocate container to warmer area
	Low phosphate	Increase phosphate level in base solution
Holes in leaves, leaves distorted in shape	Insects	Use EPA-recommended insecticide
Plant leaves with spots; dead dried areas, or powdery or rusty areas	Plant diseases	Remove diseased areas where observed and use EPA-recommended fungicide

Bad Influences

Plant	Keep Away From	Reason
Coreopsis	Squash, melons, Canna	Attracts Cucumber Beetle
Nicotiana	Potato, Tomato, Pepper	Susceptible to same diseases
Ornamental Kale	Strawberry, Grape, Sunflower	Inhibits growth
Strawberry	Cabbage Family, Mint, Sunflowers	Inhibits growth
Sweet Pea	Chives, Garlic, Onion, Leek	Inhibits growth
Wormwood(Artemesia)	Most Vegetables	Inhibits growth

Planting Potatoes in a Garbage Bag

You don't need a lot of space to start growing your own potatoes. In fact you don't even need to have a potato tub. The only thing you need to succeed with growing potatoes is a large amount of compost.

First you need to get some seed potatoes. You can use the potatoes you purchase with your grocery shopping but these are not disease resistant, so it is much better to buy proper seed potatoes from your local garden center.

You will need to empty the bag of compost. When you do this make sure that you don't rip the bag, as you will be using it to grow your potatoes. Cut the top open carefully and then empty the bag; try to empty the bag somewhere suitable, as you will need to

use this compost until you need it later.

You then need to roll the top of the compost bag down. This can be tricky as some bags that hold compost are very thick. You don't have to roll it all the way down, about half way is fine. Put a small layer of compost in the bottom of the bag, and place your seed potatoes on top. You won't need a huge amount of these seed potatoes as only 2 or 3 will produce you a healthy crop in your bag, so use your best judgment.

Then cover the seed potatoes with a few inches of compost and seal the bag. That is all you need to do to start growing your potatoes.

After a few days or a week (depending on the weather), you will see shoots coming up out of the compost. When this happens you need to cover them with more compost, and unroll the bag slightly.

You need to keep adding the compost every time you see the shoots, until you have filled the bag back up and you can fit no more compost in the bag. It is then time to leave the potatoes to grow.

The biggest problem you will face with any type of container gardening such as this, is letting the compost dry out. In a plastic bag it will dry out much quicker than if it was in the ground. So try to water your potatoes daily and keep a close eye on them. Potatoes need plenty of water to swell and grow into healthy tubers.

The potato plants will grow and mature out of the top of the bag, sometimes they can get quite big, so make sure you can support them with something, or lean the bag against a wall. When the potato plants have finished flowering you can empty the bag and have lots of new (baby) potatoes for cooking. Or if you prefer larger potatoes you can leave them in the bag for a few weeks longer.

Once you have emptied the bag, you can spread the compost on your vegetable patch or on your flower board. But try to avoid using the same compost for more potatoes as this may cause a potato disease to spread.