A FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE FROM GARDENS & GARDENING

Companion *Planting Chart*

What to grow side by side, and what to keep apart, for 14 popular vegetables and fruit — with an honest note on which pairings the evidence actually supports.

14 CROPS · GOOD COMPANIONS · WHAT TO AVOID

BEFORE YOU START

Does companion planting actually work?

THE HONEST ANSWER

Some pairings are backed by real evidence — fewer aphids, better pollination. Others are time-honoured tradition with thinner proof behind them. Either way, mixing plants rarely does any harm and usually helps pollinators, so it's nearly always worth a try.

PEST CONFUSION

Strong-scented plants grown nearby can mask a crop's own scent from pests that hunt by smell, such as carrot fly.

BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Flowers like alyssum, calendula and nasturtiums draw in hoverflies, ladybirds and lacewings that eat aphids — genuinely one of the better-evidenced techniques here.

EFFICIENT USE OF SPACE

Fast crops like radish grown between slow ones like brassicas, or shallow- and deep-rooted crops sharing a bed without competing.

PHYSICAL SUPPORT

One plant literally holds another up, or shades and shelters it — the principle behind the classic “Three Sisters” planting.

THE THREE SISTERS

A classic combination: **sweetcorn, climbing beans and squash**, grown together in one bed. The corn gives the beans something to climb, the beans fix nitrogen in the soil for the other two, and the squash's big leaves shade the soil, hold in moisture and smother weeds. Plant the corn first, add beans once it's about 30cm tall, and plant squash alongside from the start.

A NOTE ON THE EVIDENCE

Research supports some of these pairings more than others — alyssum drawing in aphid predators near lettuce is genuinely well-evidenced, for instance, while borage “improving” strawberry flavour is closer to garden folklore. Where a pairing is more tradition than proven fact, we've said so.

THE COMPANION CHART

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CROP	GROW NEAR	KEEP APART FROM
Tomatoes	Basil, French marigolds, chives — scent may deter whitefly & aphids	Potatoes — same family, shares blight risk. Brassicas — heavy feeders, competes for nutrients
Carrots	Onions, leeks, alliums — scent may confuse carrot fly; different root depths, little competition	Dill — can cross-attract pests, and inhibits carrot growth once it matures
Onions & leeks	Carrots — mutual pest confusion works both ways	Beans & peas — alliums are known to stunt legume growth
Brassicas (cabbage, kale, broccoli)	Clover or another low groundcover underneath — hides plants from cabbage root fly, which hunts by sight	Strawberries & tomatoes — heavy feeders competing for the same nutrients
Beans (French & runner)	Sweetcorn — gives climbing beans a natural support. Squash — shares a bed in the “Three Sisters” method	Onions, garlic & other alliums — can stunt bean growth
Peas	Carrots, turnips, radishes — fast crops benefit from the nitrogen peas fix in the soil	Onions & garlic — alliums can stunt legumes, same as with beans
Lettuce & salad leaves	Sweet alyssum — its nectar draws hoverflies & ladybirds that eat aphids (one of the better-evidenced pairings). Radishes — fast crop grown between slower ones	An easy-going companion — nothing it particularly dislikes growing near

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CROP	GROW NEAR	KEEP APART FROM
Courgettes, squash & pumpkins	Sweetcorn & beans — the “Three Sisters” trio. Nasturtiums — a sacrificial trap crop that can distract aphids & flea beetles	Potatoes — both sprawl and compete hard for space and nutrients
Potatoes	Sweetcorn, beans — different root depths, little competition for space	Tomatoes & other nightshades — share blight and other diseases. Squash — competes for space
Strawberries	Borage — said to improve flavour and loved by bees *(folklore, but harmless to try)*. Garlic — chopped leaves nearby may help repel aphids by scent	Brassicas — heavy feeders that compete hard for nutrients
Beetroot	Onions, lettuce, brassicas — shallow roots, little competition for space	Runner beans — a traditional pairing to avoid; can inhibit beetroot's growth
Sweetcorn	Beans & squash — the “Three Sisters” trio. Grown in blocks, it also draws in more pollinating insects	Tomatoes — traditionally kept apart; compete for the same nutrients
Cucumbers	Beans & peas — light shade and a nitrogen boost from the soil	Aromatic herbs like sage *(traditional advice, thin evidence)* — said to affect flavour and growth
Chillies & peppers	Basil — a classic pairing; may help deter aphids	Fennel — one of the few plants best grown alone; can inhibit the growth of most neighbours

Herbs, as a rule: Most herbs — basil, chives, a little dill, thyme, oregano — make easy, all-round companions: their scent and flowers help confuse pests and draw in pollinators wherever they're tucked in. The one exception is mint, which spreads so aggressively underground that it should always be grown in a buried pot, even inside a border.

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