



Growing Healthy Food, People
and Communities

Healthy Garden Workshop Series

Maximizing Your Harvest

Companion Planting:

Companion planting is based on the idea that certain plants can benefit when other plants are grown in close proximity. These benefits can include redirection or repellent of pests and supplying needed nutrients. For example, legumes - such as peas, beans, and clover - have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen for their own use as well as for neighboring plants. Corn requires a lot of nitrogen to grow well. Therefore, planting legumes with corn will help the corn grow more efficiently.

Use this chart to help find good companion plants, as well as which plants to keep apart.

| PLANT | Companion Plants | Hindered By |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| Basil | Pepper, tomatoes, marigold | |
| Beans, bush | Cucumbers, strawberries, plant with corn | Onions |
| Beets | Lettuce, onions, cabbage | Pole beans |
| Broccoli | Beets, potatoes, onions, celery | Strawberries, tomatoes |
| Cabbage | Onions, potatoes, celery, mint | Strawberries, tomatoes |
| Carrots | Peas, lettuce, chives, radishes, leeks, onions | Dill |
| Cauliflower | Potatoes, onions, celery | Strawberries, tomatoes |
| Chard | Lettuce, onions, cabbage | Pole beans |
| Corn | Potatoes, peas, beans, cucumber, pumpkins | Tomatoes |
| Cucumber | Legumes, corn, leeks, onions, radishes, sunflowers | Potatoes, strong herbs |
| Eggplant | Redroot pigweed, green beans | |
| Leeks | Carrots, celery, onions | Bush beans, pole beans |
| Lettuce | Radishes, strawberries, cucumbers | Pole beans, tomatoes |
| Melons | Morning glory | Potatoes |
| Onions | Summer savory, chamomile | Peas and beans |
| Parsley | Tomatoes | |
| Peas | Carrots, turnips, radishes, cucumbers, aromatic herbs | |
| Potatoes | Beans, cabbage, corn, eggplant, marigolds, nasturtiums | Tomatoes |
| Radish | Redroot pigweed, nasturtiums, mustards | All pole plants |
| Spinach | Strawberries | |
| Squash | Icicle radishes, nasturtiums | Potatoes |
| Sweet Pepper | Basil, okra | |
| Tomatoes | Asparagus, carrots, celery, chives, garlic, onions, parsley | Potatoes, fennel, cabbage |

Harvesting Your Produce:

Knowing when and how to harvest your produce is an important part of gardening. The closer you can pick the produce to when it will be eaten, the better. Some squash, beans, and lettuce continue to grow more produce when they are picked often. Below are some tips to help harvest your plants for maximum flavor and enjoyment.

Asparagus:

- Harvest when spears reach 6 to 8 inches tall by clipping stalks close to the soil

Broccoli:

- Pick broccoli when heads form into tight, firm clusters
- Cut off the head with 6 inches of stem attached
- Side heads will form after first head is cut.

Chard:

- Cut the outer leaves close to ground when 8-10" tall
- Make sure to leave 4-6 leaves on the plant so it can continue to grow

Eggplant:

- Ripe when shiny and 6-8 inches long
- Clip the stem several inches above the vegetable with scissors or a sharp knife

Herbs:

- Use immediately or freeze in an ice cube tray with water or a vacuum sealed bag
- For leafy herbs, pick the leaves and chop before use
- For seedy herbs, break off a small branch of the herb and swipe off the herbs
- Pick any flowers immediately or the herb may become bitter

Lettuce:

- Leaf lettuce will continue to grow if picked often and properly
- For leaves, cut outer leaf early at the base of the leaves, ~ 2 inches up from the soil
- For heads, ready when firm and tight, cut at the base where the plant meets the soil

Melons:

- Pick when vine starts to dry out
- Clip the vine just above the fruit with scissors or a sharp knife

Peppers:

- Harvest Jalapeno peppers at 3-4 inches, green peppers at the size of a fist
- Clip the stem just above the pepper with scissors or a sharp knife

Peas:

- Harvest when the pod is green and full but still tender, pods are usually ready to be harvested a week after the plant flowers
- Clip the stem just above the pod with scissors or a sharp knife

Squash and Cucumbers:

- Pick often and more will grow
- Pick when ~ 6 inches for a more tender vegetable and better flavor
- Clip the vine/stem just above the fruit with scissors or a sharp knife

Tomatoes:

- When red, clip the stem just above the tomato with scissors or a sharp knife