



Companions: Plants that help Plants

Plants that help other plants to grow successfully are called 'Companion Plants'. They can do this in a number of different ways – by having a strong smell, by attracting good insects (or bad ones), by repelling other plants that are a nuisance or just by being a good friend. Read on to find out more....



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Plants that smell: Some plants like lavender and rosemary smell very strongly and the smell of them can confuse plant pests. They camouflage the smell of the plants the pests want to eat and prevent them from finding them. They also smell really nice and pollinators love them.



Sacrificial Plants: Other plants lure the pests away from your crops (the fruits and vegetables you're growing) and let the pest eat them instead – that's a very good plant friend! Nasturtiums will protect your brassica crops (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, sprouts) from black fly by drawing them away. Plant some that can grow happily too – the flowers are edible.



Good Friends: Basil is a very good friend – especially in the greenhouse. It acts as an insect repellent to protect tomatoes and peppers from white fly, and helps them to produce more fruit. You can also eat it!



The 'Three Sisters' combination means planting an area with sweetcorn, beans and squash. These 3 plants look after each other: the large leaves of squash provide shade, keep moisture in the soil and prevent weeds from growing. Beans can grow up the stems of the sweetcorn and will also add nitrogen to the soil that all the plants can use to stay healthy and grow well.



Plants to tempt the good insects in:

The bright colours of Calendula (Common Marigold) attract beneficial hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds to the garden. These flies love to eat the aphids that will eat and attack your crops. Grow marigolds amongst all your crops to attract these useful insects in.



Plants that repel: Some plants give off a chemical from their roots that other plants don't like. Bindweed can be a big problem in gardens by climbing over and completely covering other plants. But it hates a chemical released by the roots of *Tagetes minuta* (Mexican Marigold) and will hopefully stay away.

