

# The ABC of Companion Planting in Pots

From attracting insects to creating all-round zing in your garden, this ABC of companion planting gives you the best combinations for growing edibles in containers, and some combinations to avoid.



**ATTRACT** pollinating insects (bees, butterflies, hoverflies), and pest-eating insects (lacewings, ladybirds, parasitic wasps) by planting flowers and herbs among your vegetables. Pests will either stay away or meet their peril!



**BASIL, BEANS** and **BORAGE** are great companions for tomatoes. Basil deters aphids and mosquitoes, beans add nitrogen to the soil, and borage repels tomato hornworms (depending on where prevalent).



**CONFUSE** aphids, ants, and even rabbits by putting the plants they love next to strong-smelling plants that turn them away or throw them off scent. Try:  
\* Garlic & raspberries  
\* Onions & cabbage  
\* Chives & kale  
\* Lavender & carrots



**DILL** triumphs on three counts: it attracts many beneficial insects, repels aphids, spider mites and squash bugs, and is a tasty accompaniment in the kitchen. Just don't plant it with carrots, tomatoes or coriander!



**ENEMIES** compete for space or nutrients. Avoid:  
\* Beans & beets, alliums  
\* Brassicas & strawberries, tomatoes  
\* Cucumber & sage  
\* Mint & parsley  
\* Potatoes & squash, tomatoes



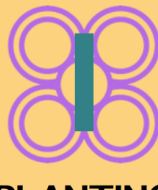
**FIX** nitrogen in your soil by planting beans or peas next to nitrogen-needy edibles, like tomatoes and potatoes.



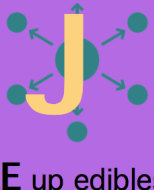
**GARLIC** is a reliable garden crop that repels predators and boosts the soil. It is a friend for peppers, rosemary, spinach and strawberries. Be aware of timings for planting and harvesting, and its foes - beans, cabbages and sunflowers.



**HERBS** can be pest-traps, pest-repellers, and pollination pullers, but they can also be choosy about their companions. Good all-rounders are marjoram, oregano, tansy and tarragon.



**INTERPLANTING** maximises space and yield. Plant flowers and herbs to attract beneficial insects (see 'A'). Combine edibles that have different seasons (early, late), root systems (shallow, medium, deep), and similar needs for light, water and soil.



**JUMBLE** up edibles from the same plant family so they don't lure the same types of pests, compete for nutrients, or all fall victim to the same disease. For example, keep nightshades (aubergines, peppers, potatoes and tomatoes) apart.



**KEEP** soil moist by growing earth-covering plants along with water-hungry ones. Basil, marjoram and nasturtiums are helpful.



**LET LADYBIRDS** do their magic and eat destructive pests like aphids and mites. Entice them with pollen plants that have flat flowers they can use as landing pads. Try coriander, dill, feverfew, marigold, poached egg flower, scented geranium.



**MARIGOLDS** (marigold and pot marigold/calendula) are magical companions. They are colourful, attract pollinators, lure aphids, and repel slugs and other general pests. Plant them wherever you can, except next to beans.



**NASTURTIUMS** aren't only a magnet for bees, butterflies and hoverflies, they also trap black fly and cabbage moth, and repel some types of beetle. Sow them alongside or in a separate pot next to beans, cabbages, courgettes, radishes, salads, tomatoes.



**OBSERVE** the results of which combinations work or don't work. The useful thing about containers is that you can move them around your garden space and change companions almost at any time.



**PLANTING** smaller and climbing plants with tall sun-worshippers can give support or shade. Sunflowers can help beans to climb up. Beans or peas give shade to spinach. See also 'U' about the three sisters.



**QUASH** an onslaught of slugs or snails by planting basil, garlic, parsley, scented geranium, or thyme around the plants they like but you don't want them to touch.



**ROOT** combinations are useful for interplanting ('I').  
**Shallow:** broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, and many annual flowers.  
**Medium:** beans, carrots, peas, summer squash, and many perennial flowers.  
**Deep:** parsnips, tomatoes, winter squash.



**SPACE** is everything in container gardening. Save by interplanting ('I') and combining edibles that suit your container. Some ideas:  
25cm - salad & chives  
35cm - beans & marigold  
40cm - bush cucumber & nasturtium  
45cm - mint & red cabbage



**THOUSANDS** of companion combinations are literally possible, even for a vegetable container garden. They may not all work, so go for it and expect some trial and error!



**USE** a container that's at least 60cm wide x 30cm deep for planting the 'three sisters' combination of corn, beans and squash. Corn offers support for pole beans, beans release nitrogen into the soil, and ground-covering squash offers shade and moisture.



**VARY** planting combinations to see what works best in your area. Companion planting doesn't work the same everywhere, so you may need to experiment.



**WELL-DRAINED** soil is liked by rosemary, thyme, sage, bay and oregano. Avoid mixing with plants that like plenty of water, such as chives, cucumber and mint.



The **X-FACTOR** of companion planting is that you are helping nature to help your harvest. Practice and your pots will generate an abundance of colour, life and produce, while you can step back and enjoy!



**YIELD** depends on many factors, but as an old and organic gardening method, companion planting offers a non-toxic way to protect plants, improve soil and encourage diversity.



**ZING ZING**  
More colour, more life.  
Higher yield, higher diversity.  
Fewer pests, fewer weeds.  
Healthier soil, healthier plants.  
Happy insects, happy you!



## SOURCES

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Writing and design by Sally Johnson  
For queries or information, email [contact@omniawritingservices.com](mailto:contact@omniawritingservices.com)  
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