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British Garden Centres guide to companion planting and boosting your garden's growth

Companion planting is a gardening technique that involves planting different types of plants together for their mutual benefit. This method not only helps protect plants from pests and diseases, but also promotes pollination, saves space, enhances productivity, and attracts beneficial insects. Companion planting is an effective and eco-friendly way of gardening as it eliminates the need for chemical sprays to repel insects and other pests.

British Garden Centres has paired certain plants together in this article so you can create a diverse and thriving garden that fosters healthy growth and bumper harvests!

Beans with sweetcorn and squash

A good example of the companion planting method is the "three sisters" method. This technique involves planting three main crops - beans, sweetcorn, and squash - together in the same plot of land.

The beans are nitrogen-fixing plants, which means they can convert nitrogen from the air so it can be used by the soil. This process helps to increase soil fertility and provides the sweetcorn and squash with the necessary nutrients to grow. The sweetcorn acts as a natural trellis for the beans to climb. As the beans grow up the corn stalks, they provide stability, whilst the beans also provide shade to the soil, which helps to keep it moist and cool. The squash acts as a natural mulch, which helps to retain moisture in the soil and suppress weeds. The large leaves of the squash plant provide shade to the soil, which helps to prevent water from evaporating too quickly.

Marigolds with vegetables

If you are looking for a natural and effective way to ward off harmful insects like aphids and whitefly, French marigolds could be the perfect solution and act as a natural repellent for pests that can damage your vegetable patch. We recommend planting French marigolds alongside peas, beans, potatoes, and sweetcorn to improve the productivity of your garden by promoting healthy growth and deterring harmful insects.

Onions with carrots

Did you know that planting onions alongside carrots can be extremely beneficial for both vegetables? Onions have a strong scent that acts as a natural repellent for root flies, which are known to damage carrot growth. By planting



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onions alongside carrots, you can protect your carrot plants from these pests and enjoy fresh summer crop. Not only does this method offer a practical solution for pest control, but it also maximises the use of your vegetable patch by allowing you to grow two crops in the same area.

Clover with vegetables

Clover is an excellent companion plant as it can fix nitrogen in root nodules, which enriches the soil. Additionally, it acts as a living mulch for the plants around it and keeps the ground cool. Clover also serves as a sanctuary for predatory spiders that repel pests that often harm crops. We recommend planting clover with vegetables such as cabbage, kale, shallots, broccoli and Brussels sprouts.

Garlic with roses

Planting garlic bulbs at the foot of roses makes them taste nasty to aphids, ants, snails and flea beetles. The beautiful globe flowers of the garlic also have the added benefit of attracting bees and butterflies. Garlic is also said to help with powdery mildew when sprayed on the plant as well as enhancing the rose's fragrance.

Tomatoes and Basil

Planting basil near tomato plants can be beneficial as the aromatic oils released by basil can enhance the flavour of tomatoes. Basil also has natural pest-repelling properties, which can help protect tomato plants from insects like aphids and whiteflies. This can be especially useful for gardeners who prefer to use natural methods for pest control. Basil can attract bees and other pollinators to your garden too, which can improve the overall health and yield of the tomato plants.

Herbs and Brassicas

Did you know that certain herbs can not only enhance the flavour of cabbage, broccoli, and kale but also keep away unwanted pests like cabbage moths? Thyme, Sage, and Rosemary are some of the most effective herbs when it comes to repelling cabbage moths, thanks to their strong scent.

Sweet pea with courgettes

The cottage favourite will encourage insects that would otherwise attack your courgette plants. Plant amongst them in your plot to provide a fuller crop later in the year. Sweet peas are quick to establish, will flower early lasting until the end of summer when they make beautiful cut flowers to take indoors.



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Lavender and chilli

Planting lavender and chilli together offers multiple benefits for your garden. Lavender's aromatic scent acts as a natural pest repellent, deterring insects like aphids and moths that can harm chilli plants, while also attracting beneficial pollinators like bees and butterflies, enhancing pollination and resulting in a better chilli harvest. Lavender's purple flowers complement the vibrant green foliage of chilli plants, enhancing the overall aesthetic of your garden with a colourful display.

Julian Palphramand, Head of British Garden Centres said: “Companion planting is a valuable technique for enhancing your garden's growth and overall health. By selecting plant combinations that benefit each other, you can naturally deter pests, improve soil quality, and increase harvests. Pop down to your local store and ask about companion planting into your gardening practices and pave the way to a more sustainable garden.”

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Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 62 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 62 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham. The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

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