

Gardening

Interplanting fights pests

By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

Companion planting and interplanting are related gardening techniques.

The purpose of interplanting is to fully utilize space in the garden. For instance, lettuce and broccoli can be interplanted. The lettuce will mature and be harvested by the time the broccoli needs the extra room. Bush beans and beets can also be interplanted, the beans ripening above the ground and the beets below.

Pest control is another reason to interplant. A potato beetle can easily find a neat potato patch and invite all his cousins in for a feast. He will have a harder time if he has to search for the potatoes among the bean plants which hold no interest for him whatsoever.

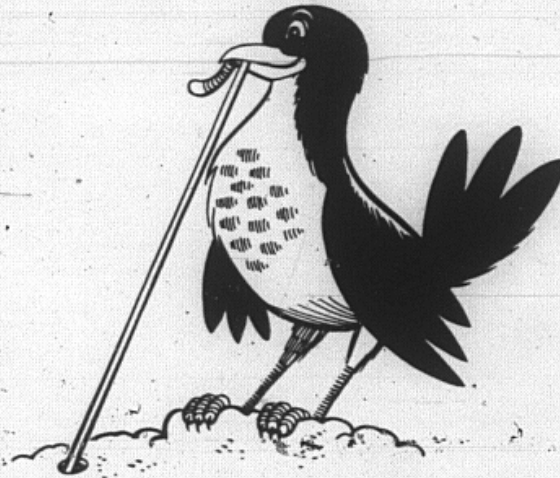
Companion planting means making sure that the vegetables you have interplanted are mutually beneficial to each other. I don't know of any hard evidence that explains why some plants like and thrive in the company of other plants, but there is the testimony of expert gardeners and the traditions of agricultural societies to refer to. American Indians have planted corn, squash and beans together for centuries with excellent results.

We do know why some companion plants are helpful, however. Marigolds kill nematodes, the tiny eel worms which feed and lay their eggs on plant roots. The roots become less able to supply the necessary nourishment to the plant which then becomes stunted or dies. You can be sure I always plant a liberal number of marigolds throughout my garden.

Many herbs are good companion plants, often because of their bug repellent properties, but again, sometimes for no reason that can be identified.

I'm amused to note that vegetables that go together on the table often make good companions in the garden. Corn and lima beans (succotash) grow well together as do peas and carrots and tomatoes and basil.

The following is a partial list of vegetables and their companions. Also their enemies. Sometimes plants are "enemies" only because they appeal to the same pest. For example, corn and tomatoes are attacked by the same worm so they



should not be planted together.

Beets: companion to bush beans, brassicas, lettuce, onions and garlic. Enemy to pole beans.

Brassicas (broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, etc.): companion to beets, celery, chard, cucumber, lettuce, garlic, onions, potatoes, dill and tansy. Enemy to kohlrabi and tomatoes.

Carrots: companion to beans, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, tomatoes, chives. Enemy to dill.

Corn: companion to beans, cucumbers, peas, pumpkin and squash. Enemy to tomatoes.

Cucumber: companion to beans, brassicas, peas, tomatoes, marigolds and nasturtiums. Enemy to sage.

Eggplant: companion to: beans, peppers, marigolds.

Lettuce: companion to beets, brassicas, carrots, onions, radish, chives and garlic.

Peas: companion to beans, carrots, cucumbers and mint. Enemy to garlic and onion.

Squash: companion to corn, melons, pumpkin, marigolds and nasturtiums.

Tomatoes: companion to carrots, celery, cucumber, onion, parsley, basil and marigolds. Enemy to corn.

A more complete list and discussion of companion planting can be found in books like the delightful Peacock Manure and Marigolds by Janet Gillespie and the all-around helpful How to Grow More Vegeta-

bles by John Jeavons. Organic Gardening Magazine will also send a Companion Planting Chart to requests accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope sent to O. G. Readers Service, Rodale Press, Emmaus, Pa. 19049.

By the time this column appears in leisure first planting will be in, but we all have a succession change when we plant our succession crops. And it's still not too late to plant a few marigolds, nasturtiums or herbs here and there.

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A reader asks why her six year old wisteria, planted on the south side of her house, does not bloom even though she prunes it carefully each spring. I checked with Tina Smith, home horticulturist at the Extension Service, and she said that many varieties of wisteria will not bloom for 10 or even 15 years. However, to encourage bloom the plant can be root pruned. That is, a spade can be forced into the ground to its full depth all around the plant about a foot or two away from the stem. They will sever the roots and encourage new root growth. She also recommended a feeding of superphosphate. The Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening advises an annual mulching with rotted manure to keep a wisteria in prime blooming condition.

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