



Landscape Design

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We Get by with a Little Help from Our Friends: Garden Pairings Published Spring 2010

Nutrient uptake, pest control, pollination, efficient space utilization and of course beauty: gardeners have long used companion planting for a variety of reasons. **Companion planting** is the practice of planting different crops close together, with the goal that they assist each other.

For example, Native Americans planted maize and pole beans together. The cornstalk would serve as a trellis for the beans to climb, and the beans would fix nitrogen for the corn.

OrganicGardening.com highlights a number of other common pairings, including **roses and chives**: Chives are added to rose beds to repel rose pests. **Tomatoes and cabbage**: Tomatoes deter diamondback moth larvae, which chew holes in cabbage leaves. **Cucumbers and nasturtiums**: Nasturtiums are planted to ward off cucumber beetles, and they also provide habitat for beneficial predatory insects, such as spiders and ground beetles. **Lettuce and tall flowers**: Tall flowers like *Nicotiana* provide the light shade lettuce grows best in. **Cauliflower and dwarf zinnias**: The nectar from the dwarf zinnias lures ladybugs and other beneficial predators that help protect the cauliflower. __

Companion planting for the sheer beauty of the combinations brings us classic garden pairs like clematis and climbing roses, mixing to bring three seasons of blooms.

I like to extend the pairings concept to include non-plant combinations in the garden as well. A trellis pairs with climbing plants to expand your garden space skyward. Birdhouses, bat houses and water features, each attracts wildlife that help to ward off harmful insects and encourage pollination.

Finally, the icing on the garden cake is that Garden Pairings can help create a more diverse, lively, healthy and beautiful garden.