



Companion planting goes a long way to ensure a beautifully balanced ecosystem that causes as little harm as possible and maintains a natural equilibrium.



by Skye Forrester

# GREEN COMPANIONS

To keep roses red and violets blue your summer plants need companions, too! Prose aside, companion planting helps bring a balanced eco-system to your landscape, allowing nature to do its job. Plants have natural substances in their roots, flowers, leaves and bodies that can either naturally attract, or repel insects - depending on their chemical make-up.

## did you know?

*An old saying goes 'plant fennel near your kennel'. That's because the herb is known to deter fleas. Dried fennel leaves are a fantastic flea repellent, placed in a bowl inside the kennel.*



**By using companion planting tactics, you can gently and naturally discourage harmful plant pests without losing their beneficial allies. There are a plethora of companion plants and just as many ways you can use these little helpers in your garden. Some possibilities include using certain plants as a border, or a backdrop or interspersing companions in your flower or vegetable beds where needed.**

It's important to remember that these pairs are a guide and may not solve all your gardening woes. The plant pairs might work differently in various situations and each garden space will be unique; from the soil composition to the bustling insect life. Experiment and see if you can find the best plant pairs for your garden. It's best to use plants indigenous to your area so the bugs and bees know where to find them! Check with local experts to find out what plants grow best in your area and what harmful insects or diseases you should be on the lookout for.

## DETERRING INSECTS

Many garden plants naturally defend themselves against insects; either by the chemicals they give off, or by the way they're built. Robust hardy stems or prickly thorns make it difficult for pests to feed off a plant. If a plant can't physically defend itself, having the right companion plant that lets off chemicals that deter pests will keep the plant in a bug-free zone and leave it to grow well in peace.

Planting dill with your tomatoes will attract the tomato worm for you, for example. Planting basil in and round your tomatoes will help repel the tomato hornworm. Nasturtiums will take care of cabbage white butterfly caterpillars and are good at repelling white fly. They are also excellent for planting under apple trees to get rid of codling moth. Slow thistle, sting nettles, broad beans and chives are brilliant at repelling aphids. That's great news for roses! The Southernwood herb is good for repelling the cabbage butterfly and tobacco for flea beetles.

lacewings, ladybirds. Ladybird young are black with orange spots and can't fly; but they eat more plant pests than the adults! They are sometimes called aphid lions for their insatiable appetite. They also feed on mites, other small insects and their insect eggs.



## ATTRACTING INSECTS

Just as nature intended, your garden is balanced with 'good bugs' too; a sundry of crawling and flying creatures whose diet consists mainly of the pests that wreak havoc on your garden plants. So many chemical sprays take out the good and bad bugs; that's why companion planting goes a long way to ensure a beautifully balanced ecosystem that causes as little harm as possible and maintains a natural equilibrium.

Mint attracts hover flies and spiders. Young hover flies are predators of garden pests like aphids, thrips and small caterpillars. Fennel attracts braconid wasps, hover flies,

## FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

Pairing plants together offers other practical benefits. Planting lettuce next to corn means the lettuces gets the shade it needs during hot summers.

When you plant cabbages in the late summer, you can plant garlic at the same time – the garlic will help keep the cabbage healthy and because they are harvested at different times, they share their nutrients well.

Chervil benefits from the shade radishes cast, and the result is lovely juicy radishes. Beans are heavy feeders so it's a good idea to pair them with a plant that's a little less greedy - like a mustard seed.

## Fruit, Veg & Herb Companion Cheat Sheet

- **Basil with tomatoes, asparagus, beans, grapes and apricots**
- **Celery with beans, cabbage, leeks, onions, spinach and tomatoes**
- **Onions with beets, cabbage, broccoli, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, peppers, strawberries, passion fruit**
- **Carrots with tomatoes, beans, leeks, lettuce, onions and passion fruit**
- **Radishes with squash, eggplant, cucumber, lettuce, peas and beans**
- **Beans with carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, cabbage, celery, potatoes and sweetcorn**
- **Chives with apples, carrots, grapes, roses, tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli and mustard**
- **Dill with broccoli, cabbage, corn, eggplant, fennel, lettuce, onions, cucumber**
- **Fruit Trees with chives, nasturtiums, nettles, tansy, horseradish, lad's love, and garlic**
- **Strawberries with beans, lettuce, borage and spinach** 🌿

Get all your garden essentials from



**STARKE  
AYRES®**

**GARDEN CENTRE  
& RESTAURANT**

Starke Ayres Garden Centre supply plants, gardening products and landscaping services. They have a range of flowers and seed, and expert advice to help you with growing.

## WIN WIN WIN

Win an organic fertilizer kit for the conscientious gardener worth R250. There is a prize available at each branch. All you need to do is place your till slip into the box provided (slips should reflect purchases of R250 or over) and a winner will be drawn at the end of October. Don't forget to put your details on the back of the slip. Winners will be notified by email or telephone. The organic fertilizer kit consists of 1 liter of Worm Tea; 500ml of Nitrosol; Ferramol – Organic snail Bail; 2,5kg Volcanic Rock dust; and 5kg 3:1:5 Starke Ayres Organic fertilizer.

Starke Ayres Rosebank, 21 Liesbeek Parkway, Rosebank,  
Cape Town Tel: 021 685 4120  
Starke Ayres West Coast Garden Centre, West Coast Village Shopping Centre,  
Sunningdale, Cape Town Tel: 021 554 8450

**WIN**