

Companion Planting Cheat Sheet

What actually works — and the myths you can skip

PAIRS THAT WORK

Tomatoes + Basil

Same water/sun needs; dense basil can confuse some pests. (Flavor boost = myth, but they garden well together.)

Carrots + Onions or Leeks

Onion scent helps mask carrots from carrot fly - one of the better-supported pairings.

Cabbage family + Dill or Cilantro

Their flowers feed the tiny wasps that hunt cabbage worms. Let some bolt.

Corn + Beans + Squash

The Three Sisters: corn is the trellis, beans fix nitrogen, squash shades out weeds. Centuries of field-testing.

Lettuce + Any tall crop

Real summer benefit: afternoon shade keeps lettuce from bolting as fast.

Cucumbers + Nasturtiums

Nasturtiums pull aphids to themselves - a sacrificial trap crop you can rip out.

Everything + Flowering herbs

The strongest principle of all: small flowers (alyssum, dill, thyme) feed the beneficial insects that patrol your garden.

SKIP THE MYTHS

'Marigolds repel everything'

They suppress soil nematodes (specific types, when tilled in) - they do NOT force-field your garden from all pests.

'Basil makes tomatoes tastier'

No evidence. Flavor comes from variety, sun, water and soil - not the neighbor plant.

Rigid enemy charts

Most 'X hates Y' grids are folklore copied between books. Very few pairings are proven harmful.

Pairing fixes bad basics

No companion saves a plant with wrong sun, water or spacing. Companions are a bonus layer, not a foundation.

What matters MORE than pairing:

Sun hours - consistent water - airflow/spacing - healthy soil. Get these four right first; then companions add the edge.