

Companion Planting

Hi.

Great success here.

Partnered carrots with onions and coriander; no carrot fly at all.

Partnered toms with basil, coriander, a few other herbs, a few marigolds interspersed and no greenfly whatsoever [flippin' blight ruined it tho', it would have worked!]. Now have jalapenos where the toms were and they are also greenfly free.

Partnered broccoli and the like with tagetes, and flax; got a few blackfly early in the year [sprayed with garlic and chilli spray], and a few caterpillars but picked them off and threw in the canal; certainly better than last year's infestation. Flax are gorgeous flowers by the way; we are definitely saving seed and having more next year. The insects love them. Incidentally, in the courtyard where we have no tagets or flax, caterpillars were rife...

We also grew 4 separate [but small] beds of the 3 sisters, and this has been really good fun.

Also put coriander and basil around the courgettes, corn, beetroot, lettuce etc; and very little in the way of any infestations; the occasional blackfly but no greenfly at all.

Trick with the carrot fly and coriander which works for me; as the coriander grows trim it every day [or every few days] back to the same height as the carrot tops. Then, I use my secateurs, chop the trimmings off half an inch at a time, to make coriander confetti; and sprinkle over the carrots [and esp if you have another new batch of carrots in - which I usually do have]. This keeps the scent alive and the dropped shreds transfer the smell to patches where the coriander hasn't grown yet. When you harvest the carrots, leave the coriander and it will set seed and you can use it for next year.

Last year's carrots were absolutely inundated with carrot fly, and the OH is really impressed with my carrots this year. I did spend a whole afternoon when we moved here sieving the soil after we rotavated it where I knew carrots were going first, and it has paid me back big style.

Another hint; grow different types. I added purple and yellow to the usual orange, and the straightness and length of both is absolutely fabulous compared with the orange [and I grow several different types]. It's not the soil as I mixed them up when I sowed them. Excellent results.

Another thing I did in a moment of madness was a veg box; which was a plastic storage box filled with compost [obviously], in which I sowed some peas, beans, courgettes, cukes and toms. [the OH raised eyebrows as per usual]. I then just basically staked it and left it; but kept it watered and fertilised occasionally. Some grew and some didn't but out of this I have had veg every week since May. First the peas and beans, then the courgettes [the cukes died but then so did all my others], and now it is has toms on it [and no blight], which are just starting to turn. Bearing in mind that's on a bad summer, I am quite pleased with this approach to be honest. If I added in a few onions [some spring and some others] it would then keep me in veg for about 6 months...which can't be bad. A few of those around [if you haven't got a garden and use pots to grow veg], planted successively [so one every month for 4/5 months] - and some with winter veg with a cloche - could bring you very nearly to year round fresh veg. The only problem I had was a bit of blackfly which went with a spray of garlic/chilli treatment. Now the OH is looking quite lovingly at the only toms to survive this year [that'll teach him to laugh at me!]