



# Guild and Companion Planting Fact Sheet

## Guild

Guild planting reflects the diversity of the bush with its various layers of plants and animals to provide a resilient vegetable garden while maximising some of nature's processes through the use of companion planting.

### **Most ecosystems are diverse and complementary rather than a monoculture;**

- each species uses slightly different resources (the 'ecological niche')
- each species has slightly different outputs, which are used by other elements in the system
- taller plants shelter tender young plants from extremes of weather
- not all species are susceptible to the same pests and diseases
- some species shelter pest predators

**Step 1** Select a site that best suits the variety of trees you want to grow.

**Step 2** Choose the companion plants for your trees, incorporating a range of climbers, ground covers and herbs.

**Step 3** When you have chosen the companions, design and plant your guild, being mindful of the eventual size and shape of each plant and the space and sunlight it will need.





## Companion Planting

Companion planting is the art of growing vegetables, herbs and flowers together in combinations that promote healthy plants. Protection from some insects & diseases can be obtained by planting different combinations of plants together. While some plants can benefit others, there are also some that can have the opposite effect. With a little thought and using clever combinations of plants in the garden, you can develop a successful and chemical free guild.

### **Natural Fertiliser:**

Legumes such as beans, peas and clover fix nitrogen making it available to neighbouring plants. When planted with corn, the corn provides support for the bean, and in turn the bean fixes nitrogen for the corn.

### **Pest Repellents:**

Some plants exude chemicals from roots or leaves that act as natural pesticides that suppress or repel harmful pests. Marigolds release a chemical that repels nematodes, which makes them a useful companion for a number of garden crops.

### **Weed Suppression:**

Some plants release chemicals that can suppress the growth of other plants. Hay from grain rye used as mulch, leaches chemicals that prevent weed seed from germinating, but doesn't harm transplanted vegetable seedlings.

### **Spatial Interactions:**

Tall sun-loving plants can offer shade such as pumpkins or squash grown under corn. The corn can also hide the pumpkins from insect pests. The pumpkins leaves can shade and moderate the soil temperature.

### **Beneficial Habitats:**

Some plants attract and provide a home for predators that then feed on the problems insects. Dill grown with cabbages provides physical support for the dill and the dill attracts the tiny wasp that feeds on cabbage-worms and caterpillars. Other plants can be used to draw insects away from growing crops.





## Good companions

Herbs and flowers make very good companions to vegetables as aromatic herbs help to deter many damaging insects and flowers attract pollinators. Alternatively they could attract beneficial insects that feed on problem insects minimising the need for pesticide sprays.

### **Good combinations include;**

- Apples with chives, nasturtiums and marjoram
- Citrus with aloe vera, lavender and guavas
- Peaches/Nectarines with garlic, chives, marjoram, rosemary, lavender
- Strawberries with borage
- Beans with onions and garlic
- Cabbage with dill, onions and beetroot
- Cauliflower with leeks and celery
- Corn with beans, cucumber, melons and tomatoes
- Eggplant with flowers and capsicum
- Lettuce with corn, beans, celery, beetroot and radish
- Potatoes with peas, beans, cabbage and corn
- Marigolds, Thyme and Chamomile with everything!

## Bad companions

Sometimes, when plants are grown together, only one or none of them will benefit. This can be due to too much competition or chemical reactions.

### **Bad combinations include:**

- Peas with onions and garlic.
- Tomatoes with potato, eggplant, calendula or rosemary
- Potatoes don't like pumpkin, squash, tomato, cucumber and sunflower
- Cucumbers don't like aromatic herbs
- Parsley and Mint

For more information and other topics see Hornsby Council's range of Eco Gardening fact sheets.