

# COMPANION PLANTING

*BASICS*

with  
Forks in the Dirt

Start Planting  
Biodiversity

Build  
Healthier Soil

Balance  
Diseases +  
Pests

Supress  
Weeds

Welcome  
Beneficial  
Insects



# Welcome to Your Best Garden Yet!

Companion planting is the practice of using plants' natural tendencies to help the whole garden grow better together.

## Gardens are Social!

We can help plants make the best connections and foster deeper relationships by paying attention to and supporting their communication.

Many of these relationships start underground, so we start companion planting practices in the soil too.



By creating a welcoming environment and mimicking nature, we allow our gardens to organically balance themselves, with zero synthetic pesticides or herbicides.

It might take a few days instead of a few hours to see results, but our gardens and the food we grow will be healthier and happier. Congrats, you're growing a resilient garden!



## Biodiversity is Key Diversity = Resiliency

- For a more resilient garden, plant more biodiversity.
- Avoid planting all of one crop together in one location.
- Plant herbs and flowers with vegetables.
- Plant different vegetables together.

# Benefits of Companion Planting Practices

- Building Healthy Soil
- Suppressing Weeds
- Balancing Pests + Diseases
- Welcoming Beneficial Insects

## Building Healthy Soil

Soil is the living, breathing, constantly yet slowly changing foundation of life on this planet. No soil = no food!

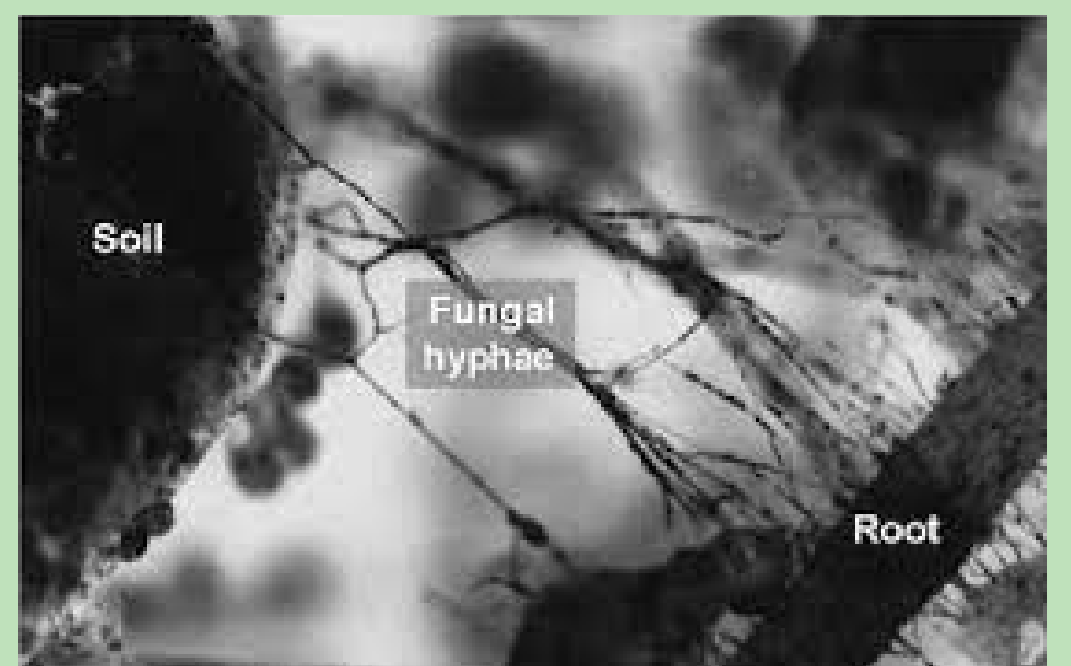
The living organisms, over 1 billion microorganisms in a teaspoon of soil, tend our plants more than man-made chemicals ever could.

## Build Healthy Soil by:

- Continually feeding it a mixture of organic matter. Planting Biodiversity fosters soil health.
- Keeping it covered with a mulch of compost or leaves, or grow a living mulch of clover or other cover crops.
- Minimizing soil disturbance when planting and harvesting. Called “No Dig”. Read more on [No Dig](#) gardening.

## Microorganisms include:

Fungi, aka Mycorrhizae, bacteria, protozoa + nematodes. These each have a role to play in feeding plant roots, decomposing and making nutrients available plus increasing air and water availability in the soil.



# Suppressing Weeds

Keeping the soil covered with mulch or plants keeps weed seeds from germinating. Interplanting and succession planting also keep more of the soil covered.

Cover crops like oats will winter kill and exude a chemical while decomposing the following year that suppresses seed germination (called allelopathy).



## Balancing Pest + Disease Pressure

Best practice is planting your garden with biodiversity!

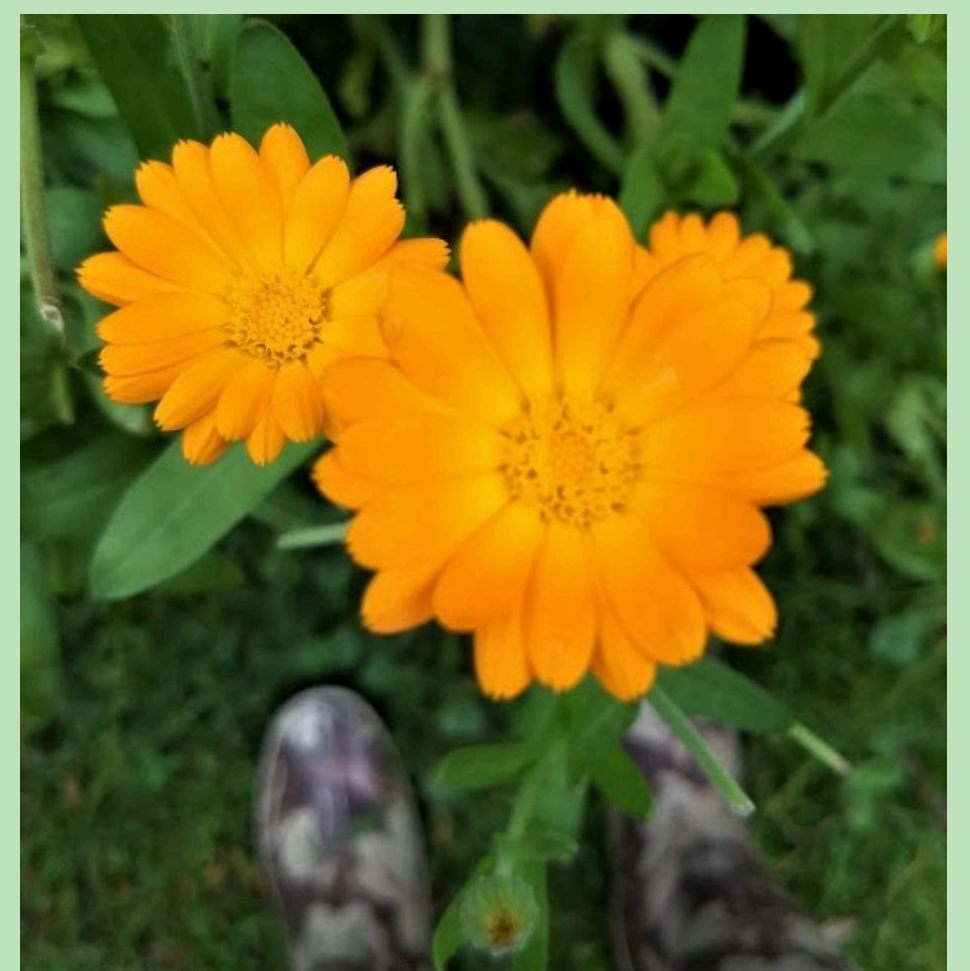
**Trap Cropping:** using certain plants to lure pests away from the plant you're trying to protect, called the host plant.

Examples:

Calendula lures aphids from Brassicas

Radishes + Pak Choi lure flea beetles

Blue Hubbard squash lure squash vine borers



Calendula in Bloom

**Masking:** using plant's natural 'Volatile Organic Chemicals' to mask your host plant's smell.

Examples:

Nasturtium masks zucchini from squash bugs

Onion masks peppers from aphids

Green onion masks Chinese cabbage from flea beetles

Basil masks tomatoes from thrips

### Pro-Tips

You want the trap crop to be more mature than the host plant.

Harvest these companion crops often as they produce best with regular pruning, plus you get bouquets and more food from the garden.



# Welcoming Beneficial Insects

Planting specific plants and flowers that attract specific insects to balance pest insects.

Plants emit Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) to warn other plants of pests and diseases, and to lure in insects that will eat those pests.

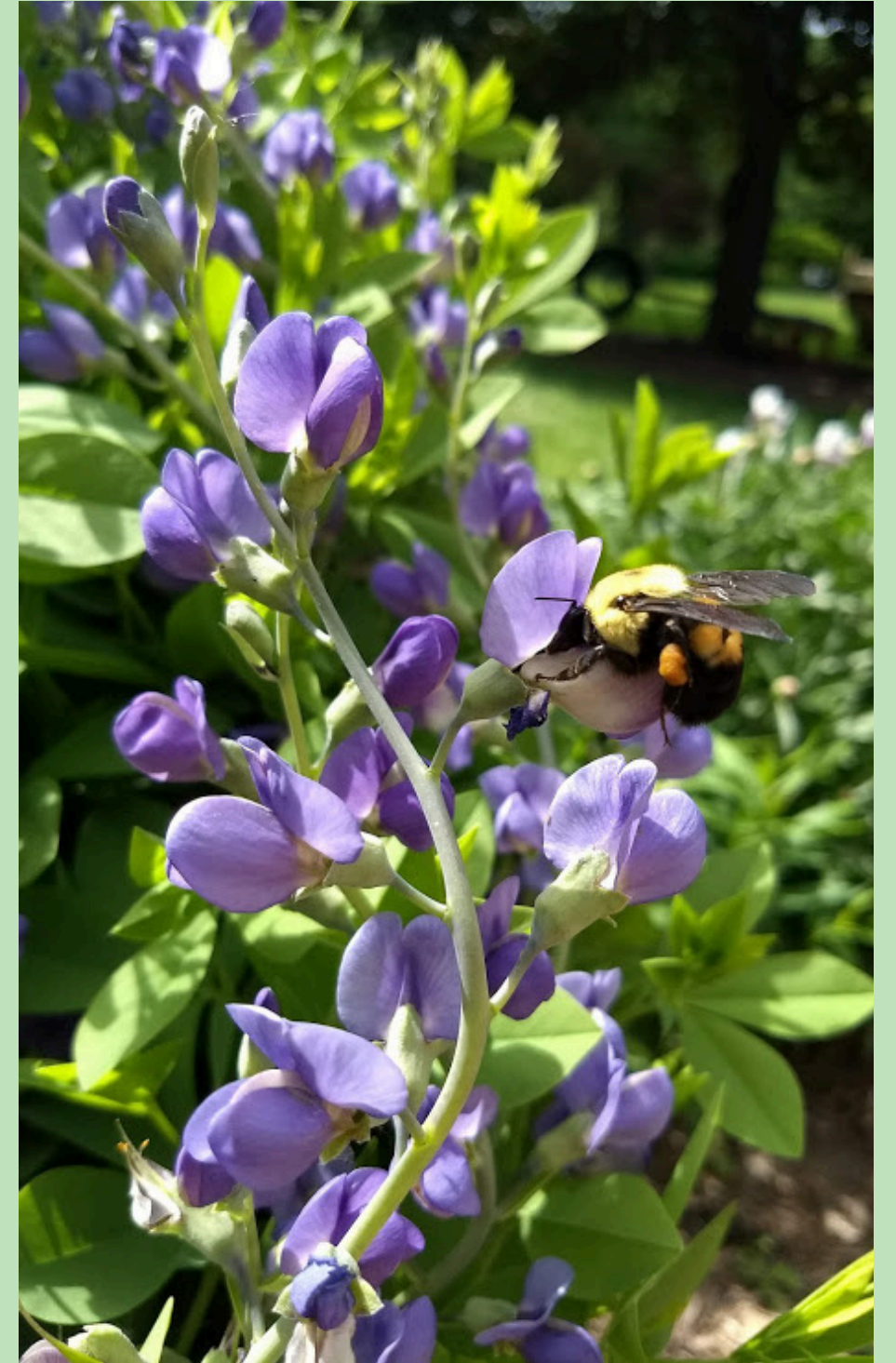
**The most powerful companion flowers:**

## Annuals

Calendula, Marigolds, Nasturtium, Sweet Alyssum, Zinnia

## Perennials

Bee Balm, Giant Blue Hyssop, Meadow Blazing Star



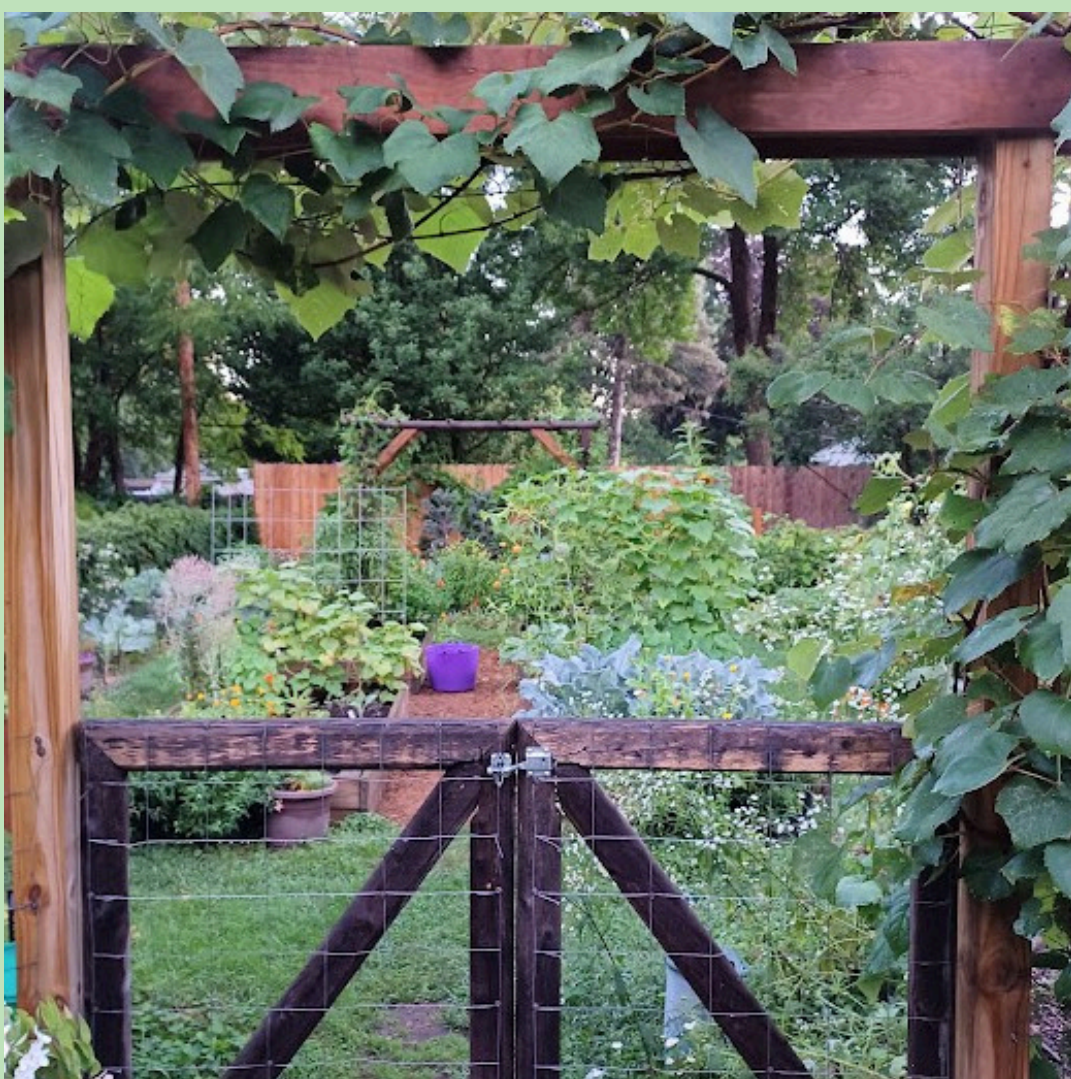
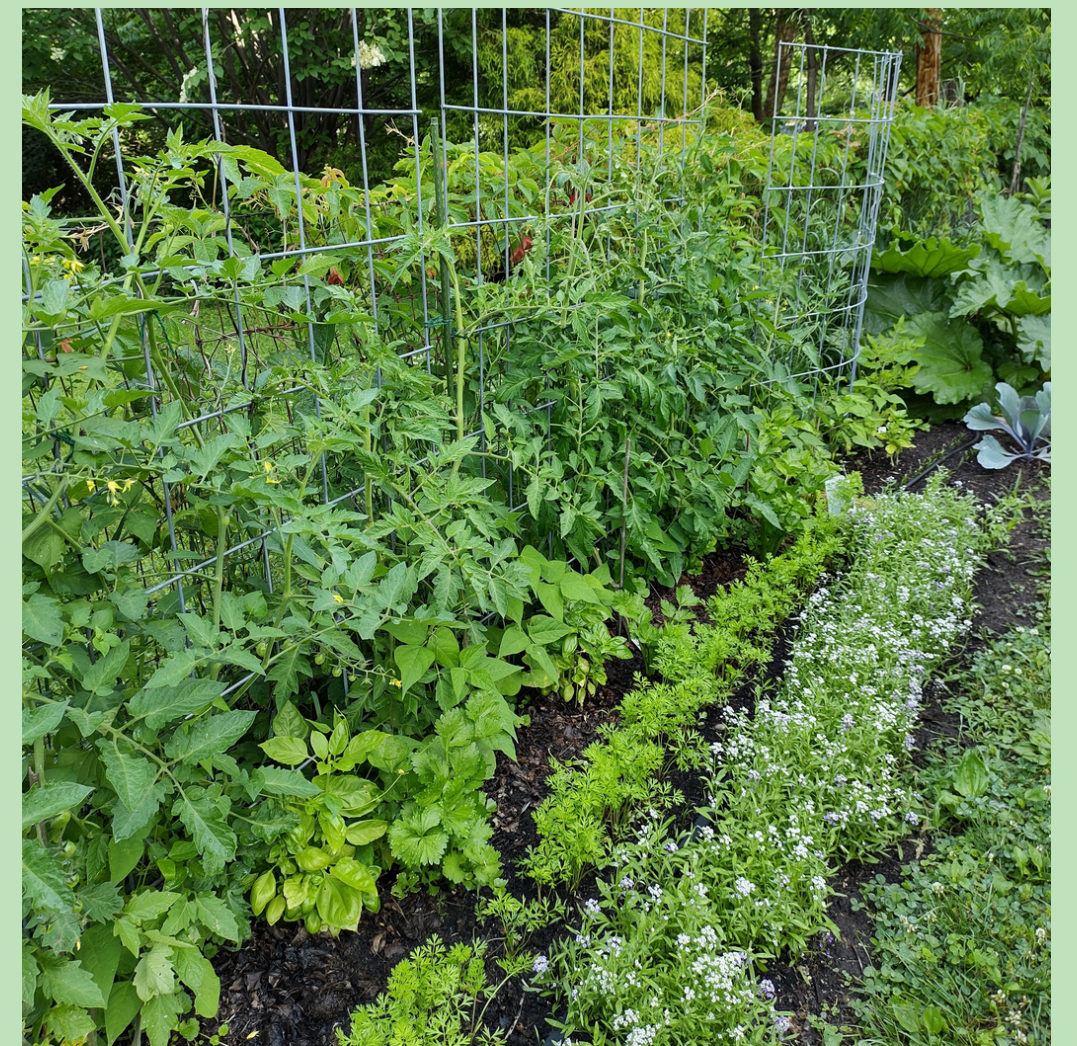
For more information on flower companions visit [this article](#).

## Plant Synergy

Interplanting is one form of companion planting that embraces overall plant synergy.

Plants share resources (sunlight, water, nutrients) instead of competing for them.

Example of interplanted garden: tomatoes, beans, celery, basil, sweet alyssum + carrots.



## Create a Social Garden!

Have FUN + PLAY with these basics and watch your garden grow life!

More Info at [forksinthedirt.com](http://forksinthedirt.com)

~ Dig In, Michelle

