

Companion Planting

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A Tale of Two Gardens



Companion Planting

- Having a diverse group of plants side by side mimics a natural ecosystem
- Research in area is anecdotal
 - Some scientific studies
 - Combine folklore and fact
 - Experiment to see what works for you!

Companion Planting

- Companion planting focuses on how certain plants interact with one another
 - Attractants
 - Trap crops
 - Repellents
 - Good neighbors
 - Antagonists
- Mostly insect interactions, some disease



Attractant

- Certain plants attract beneficial insects to the area
 - Pollinators
 - Predator/prey
 - Shelter for insects
- Example
 - Many beneficial insects are very small and can not reach food in large blossoms
 - Plants that have a small flower may attract these insects
 - Dill, carrot, yarrow, Queen Anne's lace



Trap Crop

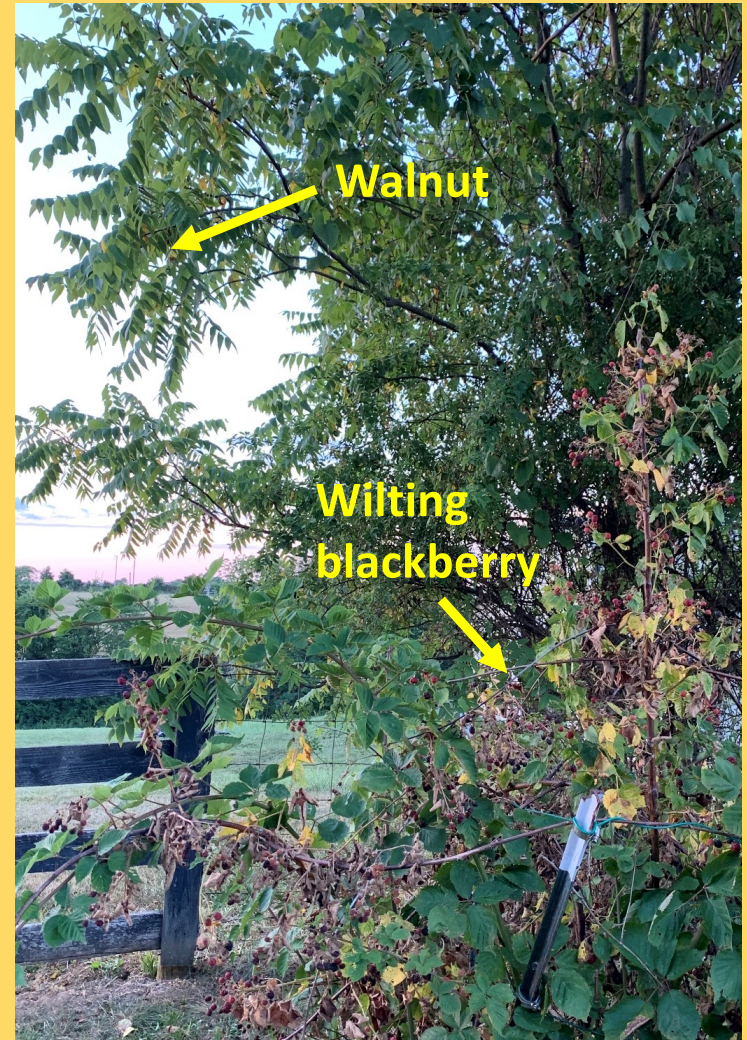
- Insects like some plants more than others
- Planting these favorites can cause a diversion by attracting pests and causing them to leave your crops alone
- Example
 - Blue Hubbard squash is more attractive to some insects than other types of squash
 - Planting Blue Hubbard squash away from your other squash plants may divert pests from your crop



Blue Hubbard Squash
Photo from bonnieplants.com

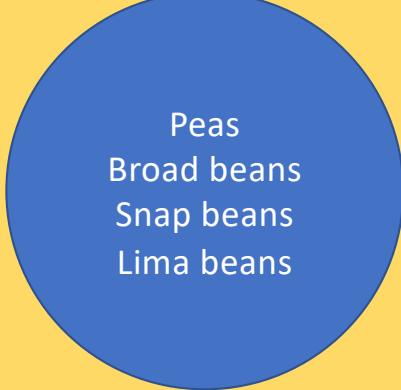
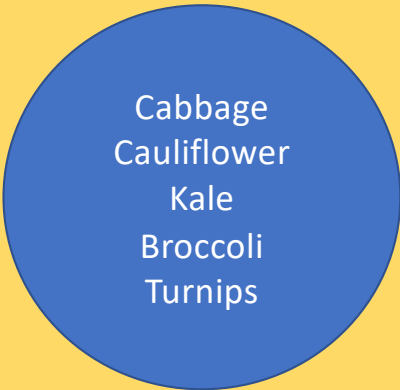
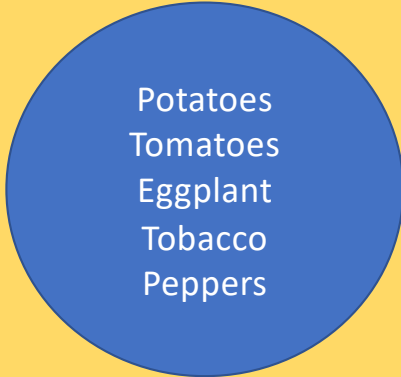
Antagonists

- Some plants naturally emit a chemical that has a negative impact on plants growing nearby
- Example
 - Walnuts emit a chemical called juglone which can cause wilting in some plants



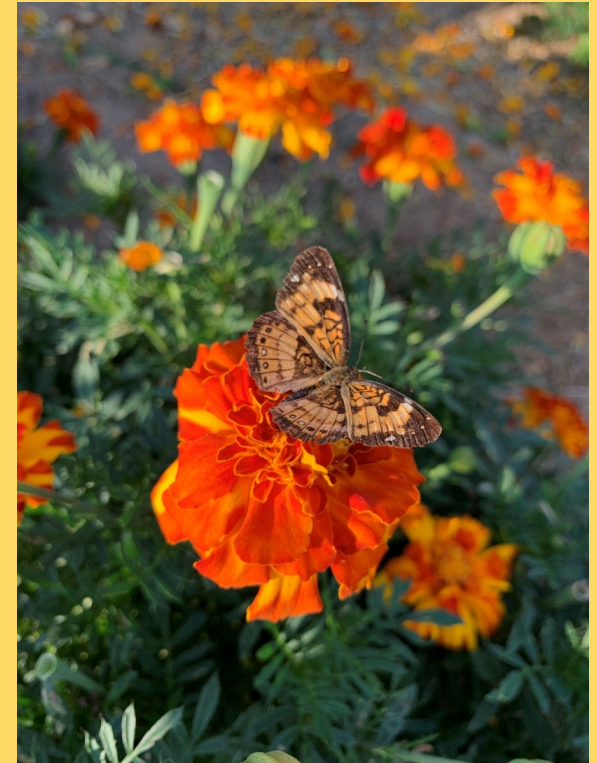
Crop Rotation

- Crop rotation cuts down on diseases in the garden
 - Rotate families!



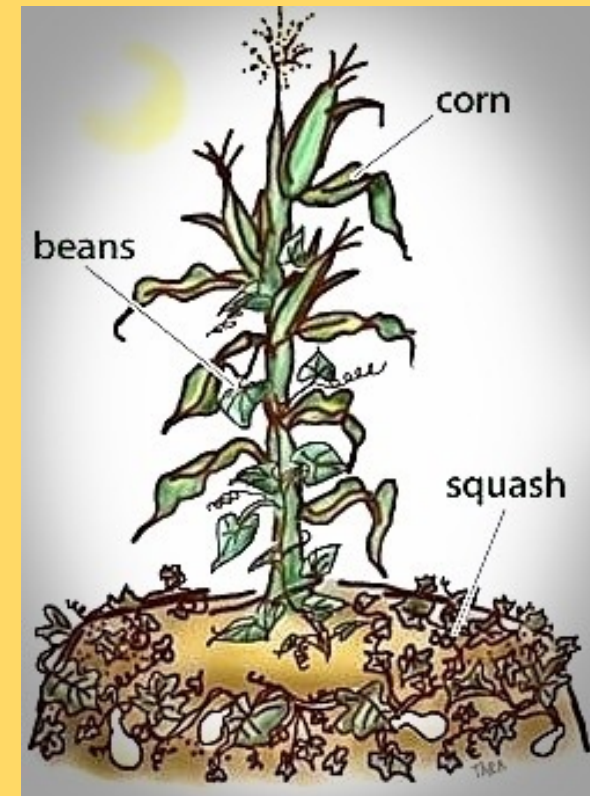
Repellent Crops

- Some plants have a strong smell which discourages pests
 - Causes confusion?
- Example
 - Mints planted next to cabbage have been shown to repel aphids and other pests
 - Radishes repel cucumber beetles
 - Marigolds are a general repellent



Good Neighbors

- Plants support one another in growth
- Example
 - Planting corn, beans and squash together
 - Corn provides trellis, bean gives nitrogen to corn and squash shades soil to keep out weeds
 - Often called “three sisters”



<http://www.ucanr.org/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=25836>

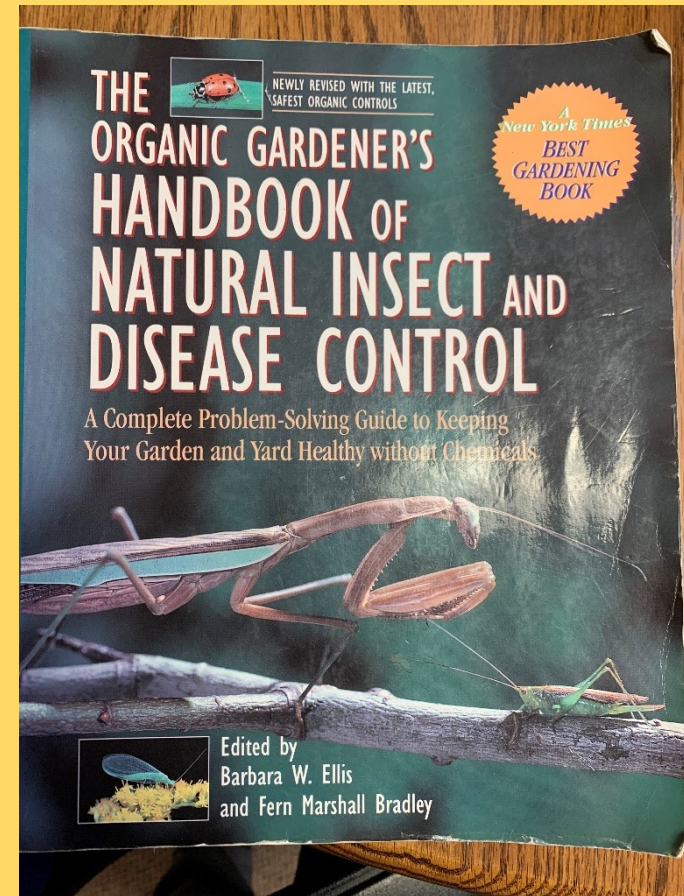
Final Thoughts

- Experiment!
- Plant things you like. Even if they don't have an interaction, you still have things you like!
- An added benefit of companion planting is combining beauty with purpose
- Look at your garden as an ecosystem
- No one plant is best against everything



Sources

- The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control by Rodale
- All New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening by Rodale
- Great Garden Companions by Rodale



Sources

- Specific Examples and Interactions

- Companion Planting

<http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/resources/companion-planting>

- Benefits of companion planting in gardening

<http://www.agriculture.vsu.edu/files/docs/cooperative-extension/companion-planting-in-gardening.pdf>

- Vendors of Beneficial Insects

- <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef125>