

Wow! What a response I have had from my series of companion planting articles. It really does seem to have struck a cord with many readers, and is certainly a popular area of interest. This is the final in the series, but we will almost certainly revisit the subject in the future.



So, what should we cover this time? Well, it is known that some plants compete with, or can directly harm other plants and can aid weed control. This is certainly true in the fight against clover, where it has been shown that oil from the roots of buttercups can inhibit the growth of clover.

Tall plants are good at competing with some unwanted weeds as they shade them out. At the other extreme, tiny plants like *Tagetes minuta*, if grown well, can help smother the vigorous growth of bindweed.

Some plants also actively improve the soil, especially those considered to be humus/texture improvers and mineral builders. *Valerian* planted in small groups is a valuable way of encouraging worms, which in turn help break down heavy soils.

The *Legume* family is well known to help release nitrogen into the soil, which is ideal for cabbages etc. Legumes include beans, peas, seat peas and even Laburnum trees. They excrete nitrogen from their roots that benefit surrounding plants or those that are planted after.

Iron deficiencies are a common problem in many gardeners' soils, and cause a type of plant anaemia. Iron can be gained by growing and digging in comfrey, groundsel or foxgloves.

Phosphorus, which plants need for setting down roots can be incorporated by digging in well rotted oak tree leaves or maybe even comfrey again.

Potassium that is required for fruiting plants like apples and tomatoes, can be increased in the soil by mixing apple and maple tree leaves into your compost heap. Digging it in at a later date.

Well, there you have it. In the last few articles, I have given a good basic overview of companion planting/gardening. More could be said and written, and I will do if readers have areas they would like me to cover.

In essence, companion gardening is about encouraging a wide and varied range of plants and inhabitants. From insects to plants, habitats to materials. In addition, a healthy soil structure is essential, which has a regular dose of compost mixed in that contains as many traces of all the materials in a varied and healthy garden as is possible.

Good Gardening.

STUART MABBUTT

MARCHAM GARDENING CLUB

Please contact Malcom Skinner for details of the club's meetings

07765 387275 which take place in Marcham Baptist Hall

Anyone is welcome to meet with us and there's no charge.

MALCOLM SKINNER

MARCHAM SOCIETY BLACKBERRY WALK

Thursday September 8th.

The next walk will be on Thursday September 8th. We will be meeting at the Abingdon Arms in Beckley (Map Ref: SP 565113) at 12.30pm for lunch or 1.30 for the 4 mile walk. As usual on this walk, we hope to be able to pick blackberries from the abundant bushes on Otmoor.

The October walk will be on Thursday Oct 13th. See the next issue for details.

As always, new walkers are very welcome. Members free, non-members £1. Ring Eric Dunford 391439 for lifts & further details.

To get a notice or small advert included please contact the editor 01865 391725
September 2005

MARCHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CLUB

It was a lovely day for our tea outing to Weston on the Green, we were made very welcome and it was nice to walk away and not have to do the washing up.

Our July meeting was a Mad Hatters Tea Party, it was a shame a few of our members were unable to attend owing to a tiring trip to Bournemouth the day before, however, those who came enjoyed themselves. A competition was held for best decorated hat, it was a difficult choice to pick a winner with so many good ones, so everyone voted for their choice, Kath Norton's hat was chosen. Joyce gave us one of her quizzes to solve it was quite a teaser but a good laugh.

Eve is poorly in Marcham Rd Hospital, Dolly visited and took some fruit. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

Our sea trip this year will be to Bognor on Sept 8th leaving Duffield Place at 9.15 am, 9.20 at the Post Office.

Thanks to all the committee and those who helped for all their hard work which made the afternoon run smoothly.

Last but not least, we would like to take this opportunity to wish Joyce Parry a **Very Happy Birthday** (it is a special one). Thank you Joyce, for all your hard work over the years. Dolly presented Joyce with a book of poems and a nice card signed by all the members. I'm sure Joyce will be reading some of the poems to us in the forthcoming months.

Our next meeting September 29th, 2.30pm start.

EDNA CADLE & BETTY REED

SUNSHINE CLUB

JULY: Our social table this month we had anything and lots we had. Our thanks to have been given some nice things to add. For the social part, Kath Norton brought photos of her many trips abroad, which were very interesting. This was followed by a buffet meal thanks to committee for preparation. The evening ended with a raffle.

We had 3 people with birthdays this month, 2 specials. One of these being on of our gentlemen members – congratulations on his 91st. Well Done. Cards and boxes of biscuits were given to all and we hope each enjoyed their day. I did say would reports on the outing we had later in July. So too late for MADNews, unfortunately weather was not very kind after all the lovely sunshine we were having. Everyone said had enjoyed the day and made the most of it, on return back to coach. We had the raffle which is looked forward to and then homeward bound, lets hope for better luck next time. Our thanks for raffle prizes given. Eve has now moved to Marcham Rd been to see her and took flowers from the club, which she sent her thanks to all. We shall be holding our "Garden Party" on the 1st September, 2.30-5.30pm. Will be having a tombola, Alice's home-made card, guess the name of the doll and grand raffle to finish and of course tea, etc. Look forward to seeing you all at the party, plus resident of Duffield Place will be welcome.

JOY CROOK

KENNINGTON SWIMMING CLUB

Why not get fit and enjoy yourself at the same time.

We have 3 family swimming sessions a week at Radley College pool:

Monday and Thursday 8 – 8.30pm

Saturday 9 – 10am

For more information phone 01865 739788

DO YOU NEED HELP?
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