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Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden June 2021 Newsletter



Something New by Jim Baumann, Garden Coordinator

Every year I try something new, whether it be a different vegetable or a different technique. Some things work while others fail. Last year I had good success with a vegetable I wanted to grow for a few years. This year I'm trying to make greater use of the space around the tomatoes Melissa and I just planted.

In some ways making use of the space around tomatoes comes under the subject of companion planting. That is which plants can help each other or are just good neighbors. Also, the subject of companion planting includes the opposite: plants that do not do well together. For example, one plant may attract desirable insects that protect another plant. On the other hand, one plant may secrete a substance through its roots that inhibits the growth of another plant. Unfortunately, when it comes to tomatoes, there is a lot of conflicting information. So, I'll stick to some

simple and basic ideas:

- Carrots are a good companion to tomatoes and on every list I could find online. If nothing else, they loosen the soil. The carrots may not grow as long, but I see this planting as an extra row of carrots. This is one idea I'm going to try.
- Lettuce is another one I'm going to try. Lettuce "appreciates" the shade and forms a living mulch. I hope for at least one crop before the tomato plants get too big. Arugula also can benefit from the shade.
- I like cilantro and intend to grow it throughout the summer. Perhaps I'll need to allow some of it to flower so that the nectar attracts insects that will prey on tomato pests.
- Similarly, nasturtiums are a "trap crop" for aphids who will prey on insects that attack tomatoes.
- After planting marigolds year after year, I was a little surprised that their benefit is being disputed. It is not that they don't provide a benefit, but the benefit may be for the next year. I guess I will plant my marigolds where I intend to plant tomatoes next year.

There is far less consensus on the harmful side. Generally, it is advised to not grow cabbage family plants next to tomatoes which is fine for me since they would take up too much space. Another is fennel since it secretes a substance in its roots that inhibits tomato plant growth. If you have grown carrots, lettuce or anything else close to tomatoes to use the space, let me know how well it worked.



Herb Garden News by Ann-Britt Keillor

The perennials (spearmint, oregano, lemon balm, chives, thyme) are up and ready to be used. I have planted rosemary, lavender, parsley and basil which should be available soon. There also will be dill available soon as it really reseeded itself this year. These herbs are available to all gardeners so please help yourself to any of them.

Recipe for lemon balm or spearmint ice tea. Take a quart canning jar and fill with washed lemon balm or spearmint, Fill jar with boiling water and steep for 15 to 20 minutes. Pour over glass filled with ice cubes. Enjoy.



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