

Smart gardeners double up plantings whenever possible. This idea, called interplanting, lets them use the same space simultaneously for two crops. For example, fast-growing radishes are sown between young cabbages. The radishes mature before the cabbage plants need the space. Or sow a package of radishes between rows of corn. You'll get a good harvest of radishes long before the corn is tall enough to block out their sunlight.

Radishes also can be mixed half and half with carrot seeds. The radishes will sprout more quickly than the carrots and will shade the ground where weeds that compete with the carrots might grow. As you pull the radishes, you'll also be thinning the carrots.

Onions you intend to use as young green scallions can be set among cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, or Brussels sprouts. Fast-growing leaf lettuces and spinach also qualify for interplanting with slower vegetables. Basil grows well around staked or caged tomatoes.

Beets and broccoli are another good combination. The beets grow rapidly in the cool, early spring weather, while the broccoli is just getting established. Later, as the broccoli plants begin to mature, the beets can be harvested.

If you have empty spots in your flower border, tuck in leftover plants of tomatoes, eggplants, or peppers. Many of the more colorful vegetables--such as red cabbage, rhubarb, Swiss chard, or flowering kale--can even be used to edge borders or walkways.

Another way to double your crops is to plant some of the many mini-vegetables. These pint-size vegetables mature quickly and rival their larger cousins for flavor. Team them with flowers, herbs, and normal-size vegetables; or plant them alone in their own special garden. Tom Thumb Midget lettuce forms heads in just 65 days; Tiny Dill and Pot Luck cucumbers grow on two-foot vines and start bearing in 55 days. For even more good eating, try the Golden Midget sweet corn (58 days), Mini Cantaloupe (60 days), or New Hampshire Midget watermelon (65 days).