



Walter Andersen
Nursery™

SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

Garden Talk

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Poinsettia Picks

By WAN Staff



What's Christmas without a poinsettia?

It certainly is one of the season's flowers that screams "Christmas"! Both stores are well-stocked with many shapes, sizes, and colors.

Shop early for the best selection, especially if you are looking for the novelty colors found in the **Princetta** poinsettias as they sell quickly. You'll also find **Ice Crystal**, **Jadore Pink**, **Jadore White Peark**, **Winterrose Red**, **Candy Cane**, **Jingle Bells**, **Green Envy** and **Luv U Pink**.

We have hanging baskets and for you sparkly fans, some all glittered up. •

Companion Planting For An Unbelievable Harvest

By Amanda MacArthur
Food Gardening Network



Photo: Renee's Garden
Corn, Beans & Squash—the three sisters

Pest protection, fuller flavor, and super soil are the best vegetables to plant together to get a delicious and delightful garden.

Some things are meant to be together: wine and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, Simon and

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Introduction To & Fascinating History Of Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes

By Bill Dugan, Editor & Publisher of Food Gardening Network

Whether you bake, mash, fry, steam or, microwave 'em, the potato comes out a champ every time. We can say much the same for the sweet potato, which is not related to the potato at all. **Potatoes are tubers** from the nightshade family, related to the pepper, tomato, eggplant, and tomatillo; **sweet potatoes are roots** whose closest cousin is the morning glory. Even though the potato is not properly a root (it's actually a swollen stem called a tuber), potatoes and sweet potatoes are grouped under the category of root vegetables.



You can grow both potatoes and sweet potatoes in your garden, in raised beds, and even in containers. Potatoes are among some of the

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Companion Planting

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Beets & Garlic—a powerhouse combo

Garfunkel, and the three sisters.

The three sisters, otherwise known as **corn, beans, and squash**, are three of the best vegetables to plant together. There is evidence that indigenous people of what is now Mexico and the southwestern United States were planting these three crops together thousands of years ago.

Why those three? The tall corn stalks give beans a pole to climb, and the leaves of the corn plant shade the squash. The beans provide nitrogen for the corn and squash, while the large leaves of the squash help the ground retain moisture. The three also create a nutritional balance of carbohydrates, protein, and vitamins.

Those aren't the only plants that go well together, though. Whether you're looking for flavor combos, pest protection, or environmental advantages, here are some of the best companions to plant together.

The Best Vegetables to Plant Together for Environmental Benefits

Tomatoes & Carrots – Carrots enjoy the shade of the tomato plant, while the tomato benefits from the way carrots grow and allow air and water to get to the tomato's roots.

Beets & Garlic – This one is really a powerhouse combo. The

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Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes continued from p1

most nutritious vegetables around and full of vitamins.

In fact, the potato is the third most important food crop in the world, right after rice and wheat. More than a billion people in the world eat potatoes and over 600 billion pounds of potatoes are produced every year. You can grow them right at sea level, or all the way up to an altitude of 15,000 feet.

Potatoes have been around for thousands of years, so it should come as no surprise that there are literally thousands of varieties, or cultivars, of potatoes—more than 4,000 at last count.

But what about yams? I don't know how to break this to you, the orange roots you've been cooking to make sweet potato pie and candied yams? They're sweet potatoes. It all came out of a marketing ploy in the 1930s. Sweet potatoes come in many different colors, their flesh can be orange, white, yellow and even purple. Louisiana sweet potato farmers wanted to distinguish their orange-fleshed crop from the rest, so they started calling them yams. The name stuck, but it's technically incorrect. If you see sweet potatoes labeled as yams, there should also be some fine print in the produce section that clarifies that "yam" in this instance is just a nickname.

An actual yam is a totally different root vegetable, and not commonly available in the United States. It's used a lot in Caribbean and West African cooking. It's more like a yucca in texture and flavor, and the flesh is more starchy than sweet. What we all think of as a yam is just a sweet potato by another name.

A Brief History of Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes

The potato is a real-world traveler, from South America to Europe and eventually back to North America.



Its culinary cousin, the sweet potato, has a similar history.

The traditional "Irish" potato that we eat today can trace its roots back thousands of years to the Andes Mountains of South America. High on the Titicaca Plateau that stretches across parts of Peru and Bolivia, the Aymara Indians developed more than 200 varieties of potato, all at elevations over 10,000 feet! Potatoes became the foundation of the Aymaran and Incan diet.

You can see the potato's influence in Incan art, too. Archaeologists often find potato-shaped pieces of pottery at ancient sites. Incans measured time by how long it took to cook a potato to different consistencies.

The itinerary of the potato goes like this. In the late 15th century and early 16th century, the Spanish Conquistadors roamed the wilds of South America in search of gold. What they wound up with was a treasure even more valuable: the compact, nutritious potato. Because potatoes are packed with vitamin C (45% of your daily requirement in one spud), sailors who ate potatoes didn't suffer from scurvy.

Upon returning to Europe, it took a while for the potato to catch on. Part of its image problem was its membership in the nightshade family, and people avoided it out

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Companion Planting

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Tarragon &...everything?

smell of the garlic repels beetles, snails, and other pests, and also improves the flavor of the beets. Environmentally, though, garlic produces sulfur that helps prevent disease in beets thanks to garlic's antifungal properties.

Broccoli & Salad Greens –

Lettuce, spinach, and other leafy greens need shade or they will wilt in the hot, direct sunlight. The large leaves of the broccoli plant provide a perfect amount of shade to help the more delicate greens thrive.

The Best Plant Combinations for Flavor

Peas & Mint – Mint is an herb and not a vegetable, but you can't deny the benefits. Mint not only adds a nice flavor to peas, but a lot of pests avoid mint.

Onion & Chamomile – Not only does chamomile improve the flavor of onions, but you get the bonus of free chamomile tea!

Tarragon &... Everything? – Most pests steer clear of tarragon and some gardeners swear it improves the flavor of pretty much anything that grows near it.

For the most part, though, strategic companion planting can nearly eliminate pests and give you healthy, abundant crops without too much worry. ●

Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes continued from p2



Boy, are we ever having a hard time understanding the reluctance to embracing the potato all those years ago. Here is a recent meal served at Angus Barn in Raleigh, N.C. of potatoes on the left deliciously topped with cheese and bacon. How soon can we celebrate National Potato Day, or turn it into a month-long celebration??

of fear of magic and poisoning. It's most likely that the first potato crops in Europe belonged to those Spanish sailors saved from scurvy. By the late 16th century, the potato was a common food in Spain.

In the 1620s, Germany recognized the delicious, compact nutritiousness of the potato, and Frederick the Great ordered his Prussian subjects to plant and eat potatoes to protect against famine. Those who didn't comply ran the risk of losing their noses and ears. And so, the potato became a German staple.

In France, a young scientist who'd been a prisoner of war in Prussia was determined to make the potato popular in Paris; there was still resistance because of that whole nightshade family thing. He worked with chefs to develop fabulous potato dishes fit for Louis the XVI and Marie Antoinette. Soon the commoners were clamoring for potatoes for themselves.

In Ireland, the potato was the top dog for all its nutritional qualities; it was possible for people to survive on potatoes alone if need be. Sir Walter Raleigh had introduced the potato to Ireland back in 1589. It was first a food for the landed gentry;

eventually tenant farmers raised potatoes as a way to survive the long winter months.

But in 1845, the crops began to fail because of blight. What's known in Ireland as The Great Hunger, or the Great Potato Famine, killed as many as a million people in Ireland. The crops didn't recover until 1852. By then a million more people had fled Ireland.

In North America, potatoes made their first appearance in the 1600s, to little acclaim. It wasn't until Scotch-Irish immigrants planted potatoes in Londonderry, New Hampshire in 1719 that the potato began to grow in popularity and start to spread across the nation.

The sweet potato has been in Central and South America for time beyond memory, more than 5,000 years. Evidence of domesticated sweet potato has been carbon-dated on the Cook Islands in Polynesia back to 1210 to 1400. It made its way from there to Hawaii and New Zealand and eventually to Japan and China.

When Columbus landed at the Greater Antilles Islands, the natives there called sweet potatoes batatas. Christopher Columbus took them back to Spain after his legendary exploration. In Spain, they called them patatas. The Spanish introduced them to the English by serving King Henry VIII a delicious pie. King Henry took the tasty root back to England, where the vegetable's name became potato. It wasn't until the Scotch-Irish immigrants brought white potatoes to New England and beyond that the sweet potato got its descriptive name.

A yellow variety of sweet potato dominated the American market in the 1930s, which is when those clever farmers mentioned earlier took advantage of the southern slang term "yam" to distinguish their orange-fleshed root vegetable. ●

Boy Scouts To Help Recycle Christmas Trees

By WAN Staff



If you live in Sabre Springs, Del Sur or 4S Ranch, Boy Scout Troop 682 would like to recycle your Christmas tree.

Boy Scouts will pick up your tree on January 6 and you can make a reservation for service by emailing Troop682TreePickup@yahoo.com. The scouts ask for a \$10 donation and that your tree be put curbside by 7:30am on January 6. Trees can not be flocked, must be undecorated, and have the stand removed. •

Desperately Seeking Sotol

By Ken Andersen



Dasyliirion wheeleri



Desert Door Distillery makes a sotol based cocktail called Evergreen made with lime juice, agave, mint and cucumber.

On a recent trip to Austin, Texas, my 'to do' list included driving to Driftwood to find Desert Door Distillery where they make the American version of **Sotol**, a spirit with origins in Mexico. It was disappointing to arrive at the distillery on the day of the week it was closed.

Sotol has been made for centuries by the indigenous people of northern Mexico and western Texas. The spirit is similar to tequila and mezcal, both of which are derived

from agave species. Sotol is derived primarily from **Dasyliirion wheeleri**, however, other species of Dasyliirion may also be used. Three different forms of Sotol are typically made. **Plata** which is unaged and bottled straight from distillation, **Reposada** (rested) which is aged for several months to a year, and **Anejo** which is aged for at least one year.

All was not lost on the quest for Sotol though. During a downpour, I ducked into a Mexican restaurant called La Condesa. There I met one of the most knowledgeable bar tenders. I talked to him about Sotol and ordered a tasting of all three types accompanied by slices of orange dusted with tajin. The spirits were remarkably smooth to drink and you could easily tell the differences between the three types. Its taste reminded me somewhat of tequila more than mezcal as it did not have the smoky flavor common in mezcal. It also reminded me of the Hawaiian spirit Okolehau, which is derived from the Tii Plant roots.

If you want to try something new and different look for Sotol behind the bar. •

An Ode To Weeds

By Food Gardening Network

What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have never been discovered.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.
—Doug Larson

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them. —A.A. Milne

Plant and your spouse plants with you; weed and you weed alone.
—Jean Jacques Rousseau

To an optimist every weed is a flower; to a pessimist every flower is a weed.
—Finnish proverb

The philosopher who said that "work well done never needs doing over" never weeded a garden. —Ray D. Everson •



Helping Hands At Holiday Times

By WAN Staff



Our cashiers, Mina and Kyle, demonstrate how easy it is to donate baby clothes!

The holiday season doesn't see babies taking a break from being born. Many will be born to mothers experiencing life's challenges and this year our stores are lending helping hands. We will work with Gently Hugged to collect gently used or new clothing in preemie to 12-month sizes along with blankets and accessories (hats, socks, bibs). **Look for the pink box in our stores and we thank you in advance for leaving your donations in it. The box will be available until Dec. 31.**

Donated items are sorted and sized for the first year then placed in a reusable bag. Multilingual educational materials related to SIDS and information on other prevention issues are also included with each package. The completed bags are then distributed by nurses and social workers to low income, military, immigrant, and foster families in need within underserved areas. ●

To Do List: December



Plant broccoli, cabbage & more



Force Paperwhite bulbs now



Look for Holly, Christmas Cactus, Cyclamen & more!

Plant

- > Bulbs: Force Paperwhites now for Christmas blooms. Last chance for fall bulbs.
- > Color: Don't miss Pansies, Violas, Stocks, and Calendulas.
- > Vegetables: plant onions, garlic, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, beets, carrots, and more.
- > Plant conifers, junipers, evergreens, California natives and drought-tolerant plants.
- > Roses, roses, and roses are due the third week of the month.

> Potted pomegranates, figs, grapes, and cane berries are here! Selection varies by store. Call for details or **[check the website for the list.](#)**

> Look for Camellias, Azaleas, Pyracantha, Holly, Living Christmas Trees, Poinsettias, Christmas Cactus, Cyclamen, and Photinia.

Pest Control

> Dormant spray for diseases and over wintering pests. Use Liqui-Cop for disease control and Horticultural Oil Spray. ●

Potted Bareroot Trees Have Arrived!



We have a jump on bareroot season and now have available potted bareroot trees. Follow this link to see what's in our stores.

[WAN Website Bareroot Tree List](#)



Thanks to Tom Spellman from Dave Wilson Nursery for sharing bareroot tips at a recent class.



Holiday Hours

December 24

Poway closes at 2pm

December 25 – Christmas

Both stores closed

December 31

Poway closes at 2pm

January 1 – New Year's Day

Both stores closed

*Happy
Holidays!*

Garden Classes: December

Saturday classes are **FREE** and last about an hour. Complimentary coffee is served. During inclement weather, classes are held indoors in San Diego and on the covered, heated patio in Poway. Topics are subject to change. See the full schedule at <https://www.walterandersen.com/classes-events/>.

SAN DIEGO | 9:00AM

POWAY | 9:30AM



**Our Garden Classes are on holiday
for the month of December.**

We will be back in January, 2024!

Walter Andersen Nursery

Holidays & Hot Cocoa Open House

Join us at the San Diego store for a festive celebration and enjoy the holiday spirit with free gourmet hot cocoa and exclusive discounts on select holiday merchandise!

December 9th
3642 Enterprise Street, San Diego
10:00am – 12:00pm



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SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

GardenTalk

Visit Our 2 Locations

SAN DIEGO

3642 Enterprise Street
San Diego, California 92110

619-224-8271

Open 8am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

POWAY

12755 Danielson Court
Poway, California 92064

858-513-4900

Open 9am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

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