

## Episode 103 show notes and advice

### Episode description

In this week's episode, Sarah is joined by her husband, the writer, Adam Nicolson, to discuss her exciting new book, 'A Year Full of Veg: A harvest for all seasons'.

Packed full of expert tips, this handy guide will guide you in creating your own kitchen garden, which is colourful and generous no matter how small or large the space.

Sarah and Adam also cover some of the best varieties to grow and plant, and why companion planting is so important for a healthy and abundant garden.

### In this episode, discover:

- ❖ Methods to make your vegetable garden look simply beautiful
- ❖ Sarah's top vegetables to grow for the perfect kitchen garden
- ❖ The cut and come again philosophy

## episode 103 advice sheet

### The cut and come again philosophy (6:25)

Sarah explains that the cut and come again philosophy centres on plants that are super productive and when cut, will continue to grow in abundance.

- ❖ Sarah suggests, don't fill your ground. Go for alternative vegetables from the same family that will readily produce. Consider going for Flower Sprouts (Kalette) over Brussels sprout, as they frequently reshoot.
- ❖ Kale instead of Cabbage is always a good idea. Break the leave off from the stem, and underneath you will often see another baby kale leaf, which will continue to grow.
- ❖ Cut and come again lettuces – pick the outside leaves but leave the heart intact, this will encourage the leaves to keep growing.
- ❖ Swiss chard is very versatile. Sarah suggests adding it to a simple bechamel, mixing it into pasta with parmesan, crème fraîche, and nutmeg, or creating a Provençal gratin, the options are endless! To see the chard gratin recipe, visit this link <https://www.sarahraven.com/articles/chard-gratin>.

- ❖ Plants such as flat leaf parsley, coriander, chervil, spinach, and rocket, are great for square-inch productivity, and it's very rewarding to grow from seed. Whatever the size of your garden, balcony, terrace, or pots, there's something for everyone.

### **Design tips and increasing productivity (9:26)**

Adam explains that long gone are the days when growing vegetables and herbs revolved around upside plastic bottles and ugly gardening equipment. Like a cutting garden or a beautiful border, a vegetable garden can be just as gorgeous to look at too.

Sarah explains that the vegetable garden at Perch Hill looks abundant and beautiful. Top tips for achieving a similar look include:

- ❖ Loads of flowers, which Sarah finds are excellent for companion planting. Plants such as salvias are brilliant for pollinators, and are also great for vegetables too, keeping them strong and healthy.
- ❖ Sarah believes in incorporating your own wooden plant supports, which are immensely helpful and give a naturalistic look and feel. Forget bamboo canes. Everything at Perch Hill is harvested onsite or purchased locally. Sarah creates silver birch nests and hazel tepees which are sculptural, architectural and offer great support to beans and climbing veg.
- ❖ Don't make the vegetable garden hostile to nature – Symbiotic relationships are so important in horticulture, so again, make sure you're companion planting for the best results.
- ❖ Sarah explains that in a recent experiment, she chose to plant 'Blue Lake' a French climbing bean on a support with sweet peas alongside. On the other side of the vegetable garden, she planted the climbing bean on its own. Sarah discovered that the scent of the sweet peas attracted pollinators in great numbers, which upped the pollination of the flowers of the climbing bean. This was a simple but truly effective way to increase the productivity of the plant. Note: Sweet peas are not edible, so be careful when picking.
- ❖ Similarly, with the tomato plants in the greenhouse, Sarah consciously draws in bumblebees. She achieves this by *Ipomoea lobata* a climber, or even *Ipomoea purpurea* 'Grandpa Ott' which she finds dramatically increases pollination too.
- ❖ Leaving the doors and vents open in the greenhouse also meant that a pair of blackbirds nestled safely. They didn't do any damage to the tomato plants and kept on top of the aphids, slugs, and snails.

- ❖ Encouraging nature, flowers, and beauty is the secret to a knock-out vegetable garden. The whole garden then becomes an edible, beautiful, and productive vegetable shop, full of flowers, and wildlife