

episode 1 show notes and advice

Episode Description

Every single bite of a home grown, freshly picked, winter salad should taste completely different from the last and that's what makes it so exciting. In this episode of grow, cook, eat, arrange Sarah Raven and Arthur Parkinson delve into the world of rocket, basil, mizuna and parsley.

Sarah provides her top tips to ensure your salad leaves last for at least 20 picks, which varieties do best in frosty weather, and why you can actually sow them any time of the year. In this jam-packed episode they also discuss their favourite types of hellebores, the best ones for growing in shaded and sunny spots, and picking techniques to increase their vase life.

Learn

- Sarah's choice of ingredients for a winter salad
- The importance of giving salads space
- How to condition and arrange hellebores
- Where hellebores grow and how best to cut back foliage

Links and references

Pre-order Sarah's new book: <http://bit.ly/3cR0kyh>

Pre-order Arthur's new book: <http://bit.ly/3qiBqUs>

Shop on the Sarah Raven Website: <http://bit.ly/3jvbaeu>

Get in touch: info@sarahraven.com

Products mentioned

Helleborus x ballardiae 'Maestro': <http://bit.ly/2OnifSZ>

Helleborus x ballardiae 'Merlin': <http://bit.ly/2Ocsut5>

Helleborus niger 'Christmas carol': <https://bit.ly/2LAL0ue>

Hardy Winter Salad Leaf Collection: <http://bit.ly/3tKcKxK>

Mizuna 'Red Knight' F1: <http://bit.ly/3qckG96>

Rocket 'Buzz': <http://bit.ly/3jKVVhT>

Crimson and Jade Pattern Lettuce Collection: <http://bit.ly/2Z3LjRn>

Really Good Organic Salad Seed Collection: <http://bit.ly/3rCrmxI>

Picking and preparing a winter salad: <https://bit.ly/3p3ibEF>

episode 1 advice sheet | winter salad and hellebores

Cut-and-come-again winter into spring salads for sowing and growing now

Salad leaves

- Mizuna – the lovely green, or crimson-leaved ‘Red Knight’
- Salad Rocket
- Mustards – ‘Red Frills’, ‘Red Giant’, ‘Wasabi’

Lettuce for crunch

- ‘Merveille de Quatre Saisons’
- ‘Black Seeded Simpson’

Salad Herbs

- Parsley ‘Gigante di Napoli’
- Coriander
- Chervil

Edible flowers for this time of year

- All polyanthus/primroses
- Winter flowering pansies

Gutters

We sow loads of things, particularly amongst the herbs and salads, into lengths of gutters from the local builder’s yard. Serial sowing every eight weeks, with a new generation coming along somewhere else in the garden is the ideal, but often I have a chock-a-block vegetable plot without a chink of room. Sowing my salads and herbs into pipes in the wings is a perfect, efficient way of growing salad to pick all year. The plants from these can be slotted in, ready to pick, as the ones in the ground come to an end.

Sowing into guttering

Fill the gutter with a peat-free potting compost.

Water the compost from the top. Don’t bother to drill holes in the bottom of the gutters – simply leave the ends unblocked, so the water can drain away.

Place the seeds about 3-4cm apart on the top of the compost. Don't push them in until you've laid out all your seed, that way you won't forget where you've placed them.

Push each seed in lightly with your finger, so it's just under the compost surface. Cover and label. Water every few days, when the compost starts to dry on the surface. Overall, it's a very successful system. There is one downside to gutter sowing, you need to do careful watering. The compost dries out quickly in the sun but that is not usually a problem until April or May and these will all be planted out by then.

For rapid germination, put them somewhere warm if you can. Once the seeds start to sprout, move to a cool spot, with excellent all-round light.

Once the seedlings are 3-4cms tall, (at the end of March or early April) plant out.

Make a trench to mirror the depth and length of the pipe, scooping out the soil with a trowel or draw hoe.

Water well to bind the compost and then slide the seedlings from the guttering into the U trench, pushing in short, manageable lengths about 45cm long at a time.

Move the next lot down to the mouth of the pipe and push them out, and so on.

- Plants which suit this sowing system
- Lettuce and all cut-and-come-again salad leaves, e.g. lamb's lettuce, mizuna, chard (when grown as salad leaf), rocket and all mustard varieties
- All annual and biennial herbs, e.g. parsley, coriander, basil, chervil, sorrel, oregano
- Perennial herbs e.g. chives
- Roots e.g. radishes, celeriac, parsnips and beetroot
- Spring onions and onions from seed
- Spinach and baby leaf chard
- Peas
- Leeks

Hellebores

Brilliant for dappled shade

Helleborus x ballardiae 'Merlin' and 'Maestro'

Brilliant winter flowerers — which make great cut flowers

Helleborus x sahinii 'Winterbells' Good as a houseplant. Once it's over, put it in the garden.

Helleborus argutifolius (also known as Helleborus corsicus)

Beautiful clear green flowers with evergreen leaves.

Conditioning Hellebores

EITHER

- Pick them, head by head, on a short stem and float in water, or arrange them, the stems threaded through a grid, with the petals held out of the water, (see podcast 2 for fact sheet on making grid).

OR FOR WHOLE STEMS

- It's partly down to variety
- And at what stage you pick them. If a stem has at least one flower where the seedpod is beginning to form, you can cut it on its full-length stem.
- Sear the stem ends (2cms) in boiling water for 20 seconds and the flowers will last. If the flowers have only just opened and still have anthers and pollen in place, they won't last on a stem.
- Lay them flat in a sink of cold water for a few hours or overnight.

THEN ARRANGE