

## Episode 104 show notes and advice

### Episode description

For today's episode, Sarah is joined by returning guest, and owner of biodynamic farm, Fern Verrow, Jane Scotter.

Farming the land since 1996, Jane has been cultivating impressive fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers in the foothills of the Black Mountains in Herefordshire.

Sharing their wealth of knowledge, Sarah and Jane take time to discuss their 12 most favourite crops and why growing your own can produce the most wonderful results when it comes to flavour.

### In this episode, discover:

- ❖ The basics of biodynamics
- ❖ Sarah and Jane's top edible crops for the perfect vegetable garden
- ❖ Why timing is key for picking produce

Create Academy is offering Sarah Raven listeners 15% off across all gardening courses, including Jane Scotter's new course 'How to Grow Exceptional Produce'. To redeem visit [www.createacademy.com](http://www.createacademy.com) and enter code 'SARAHRAVEN15' at checkout. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

## episode 104 advice sheet

### Create Academy course (1:45)

Create Academy delivers online courses specialising in garden, design, and interiors. And for those interested in the foundations of biodynamic gardening, Jane's course is a one-stop-shop, packed full of helpful hints, tips, and tricks.

To read more about Jane's course with Create Academy, visit the website here:

<https://www.createacademy.com/courses/jane-scotter>. And don't forget to visit the Fern Verrow website, here: <https://www.fernverrow.com>

## Jane's 12 best edible crops for the perfect vegetable garden

### Butterhead Lettuce (10:57)

- ❖ At this time of year, Jane explains that most of us will be missing the fresh growth that we associate with springtime. Butterhead lettuce grown in the cooler weather has a superior flavour in comparison to lettuce grown in the months of summer.
- ❖ Jane says that she starts the germination process around the middle of February, at the earliest, when we're racing to longer daylight hours. It's not so much about the warmth, it's more about the length of the day and those important hours of sunlight.
- ❖ Jane loves the variety 'Marvel of Four Seasons'. Really soft with large leaves that hold dressings well. Jane loves 'Adriana' too, which she says is a beautiful dark spring green.
- ❖ For more information on distinguishing lettuce types and Sarah's top tips for growing, visit the link here: <https://www.sarahraven.com/articles/how-to-plant-and-grow-lettuce>

### Celeriac (13:25)

- ❖ It's important to begin the growing process early. Jane aims for a weight of 700 grams and starts the celeriac off in seed trays, and says 15 degrees is the perfect temperature to kickstart the growing process.
- ❖ As the seeds are very tiny, be careful as you sow, ensuring you don't pour too many out.
- ❖ Sarah explains that the seeds should be well spaced to give them plenty of space to grow and swell. Getting them to a reasonable size is a real grower's pride, so watering at the correct time is essential too.

### Radish (14:50)

- ❖ Loved by Jane, and my many restaurants too, It's the crispy, crunchy, and peppery, texture that makes radishes so irresistible. Jane's current favourite is Radish 'French Breakfast' – a brilliant fuchsia colour with white tips. A delicious flavour too.
- ❖ Jane also loves to grow brightly coloured radishes, an 'Easter egg' mix of different varieties.
- ❖ Radish 'Rosa' is a great radish, particularly good for pickling, and looks beautiful too.

### **Cime di rapa (15:51)**

- ❖ A big favourite of many growers. A peppery flavour with notes of mustard and works very well in Italian cooking. Lovely as a wilted green with strong cheeses.
- ❖ Different harvesting times and very easy to grow. This is the perfect beginner's vegetable for delicious cooking! Very reliable and fills you with confidence.

### **Rocket (18:10)**

- ❖ Absolutely delicious in the winter. Again, grown in cooler temperatures, the rocket grows larger and has a lot more flavour. Rocket 'Esme' is a favourite of Janes. Sow in mid-autumn and it'll come up in spring. The flowers are terrifically tasty too.
- ❖ Jane explains that the flavour can have a strong heat to it but makes a lovely change from the brassicas we've all been eating over wintertime.

### **Salad leaves (19:35)**

- ❖ Quick growing and packed with flavour. Jane loves Mizuna, baby chard, and baby beetroot too. Mustard such as 'Golden Frills' and 'Purple Frills' are definite must-haves too, along with Miz America' - a dark and rich purple and also quite delicious.

### **Tomatoes and peppers (20:53)**

- ❖ Jane always tries to hold back on sowing too early and advises that waiting will produce better results. So, note, don't do anything before the beginning of March.
- ❖ If you don't have a polytunnel or greenhouse, Tomato 'Gardener's delight' is a great choice. An all-time favourite of Janes, and a very classic English salad tomato, it's got an excellent flavour too.
- ❖ Peppers need the long season, so start early, but not too early. March is a great time, as peppers are deeply affected by the fluctuation in temperatures and by the damp too. Keep it sunny, and pot them on as soon as they have a third or fourth leaf.
- ❖ Jane adores 'Jimmy Nardello' a red-horn variety, and a favourite at Spring restaurant. This year Jane will be trying 'Habanada' – this variety has warmth but isn't hot and has a sweet smokiness.

### **Turnips (24:10)**

- ❖ Late autumn and early spring are the best time to sow radishes. Jane says these are best picked and eaten, young.
- ❖ The tops are great too, so don't discard them after picking. Jane suggests treating the tops like cime di rapa. Added to something like pasta, they work as a delicious and healthy spring tonic.

### **Peas and Broad beans (25:06)**

- ❖ Start these early, in the autumn. In the mild winters, Jane chooses to sow inside. Jane hopes to beat the Italian market, with her own homegrown broad beans and peas to eat at the end of May or beginning of June.
- ❖ Jane adores Broad bean 'Hang down green' – huge pods and incredible colours, they are very generous with what they produce. 'Red epicure' and 'Witkiem manita' are all very reliable, and tasty. The secret to harvesting in abundance is to pick the beans young, and regularly.
- ❖ Pea 'Progress no.9' is wonderful tall variety, which does require support but produces an excellent yield. Jane prefers picking peas at the teenage stage, as supposed to waiting until they are older, and more marrow like. The in between stage is absolutely perfect for sweet but ravishing peas.

### **Stocks (27:35)**

- ❖ A great gap filler after the tulips and ranunculus. Nice and tall, beautifully scented, and incredible colours to fill the garden. Jane chooses the annual variety, which she says brings so much joy.