

Episode 107 show notes and advice

Episode description

For today's episode, Sarah is joined by returning guest and Senior Horticultural Buyer, Gary Newell. The pair discuss their favourite resilient and low-maintenance plants for a happy, healthy, and beautiful garden. Taking turns to share their must-haves, these easy-to-care-for plants breathe life and character into any outside space and are perfect for those with busy lives.

In this episode, discover:

- ❖ Sarah's stunning stalwarts which are super easy to care for
- ❖ Easy ways to achieve a fully established outdoor look
- ❖ Gary's top choices for a low-maintenance garden

episode 107 advice sheet

Gary's best plants

Lonicera periclymenum 'Rhubarb and Custard'®

- ❖ A perennial climber which packs a punch when it comes to colour and scent. Gary loves this honeysuckle for its compact properties, which means that it maxes out at around 2 metres and never becomes a tangled mess of branches.
- ❖ It produces masses of big, scented flowers and red berries towards the end of the season and requires essentially no maintenance.
- ❖ This variety has also been on trial at Perch Hill for quite a few years, growing in a relatively large pot against the east face of a garden wall. Natively, honeysuckle will grow in dappled shade, which makes this a great all-rounder for all types of gardens.
- ❖ Sarah says it never looks a mess, which makes it particularly desirable

Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight'

- ❖ A gorgeous shrub, which has been part of the Sarah Raven range for well over 7 years. It's a favourite of customers and rightly so.
- ❖ Productive in even the poorest soil, Gary recalls planting this hydrangea in the garden of his first home many years ago. Returning year after year, with a flowering time of around 5 months.
- ❖ Gary particularly likes their changing colour scheme. Acid green in August, moving to pale pink in September, and then bright and bold red at the turn of the season, these hardy shrubs are an absolute must-have for every type of garden.
- ❖ Cut the flowers at the end of the season and dry them for Christmas. They look great sprayed silver or gold and displayed on the Christmas tree.
- ❖ Upright and strong growth, 'Limelight' won't take up too much space, which makes it suitable for compact gardens or city spaces. With a simple pruning, it'll look great for years to come.
- ❖ Sarah also suggests Hydrangea paniculata 'Little Lime' which is even more compact in form, and more suited to container growing. This plant is also a good choice for those with smaller gardens.

Galium odoratum (Woodruff)

- ❖ Gary simply loves this great ground cover plant, which he says is dominating, but creates a tremendously easy-to-care-for green carpet.
- ❖ With scented foliage and white flowers in early to mid-spring, it creates a lovely woodland look with a truly naturalistic feel. It'll also look after itself if planted in dappled shade.
- ❖ Sarah explains that traditionally, it has been used in pillows. People would harvest the flowers and dry them out. Producing the aroma of dried hay, it's meant to be great for encouraging sleep and even better than chamomile.

Gary's perennials to be grown together

This group favours the same planting conditions. Plus, they all readily self-seed, and look exceptional together - the perfect vignette as Gary says. The drier the soil the longer they are likely to live.

Anemanthele lessoniana 'Sirocco'

- ❖ Native to New Zealand, a gorgeous evergreen grass which will add a naturalistic look to the garden. The older foliage has copper tones which complement the green of the newer leaves. It also has a spray of purple flowers throughout the summer.

Verbena bonariensis

- ❖ A favourite in many UK gardens, verbena adds height really quickly and provides a wonderful 'settled-in' look. Loved by birds like goldfinches for their abundant seed, it also works as a great source of natural bird seed. A true rival to buddleia for attracting pollinators.

Euphorbia oblongata

- ❖ Treat it as a short-lived perennial or an annual, and compost it when it's past its best. Sarah has grown this for 30 years in her garden at Perch Hill. Make sure you wear gloves to avoid the milky sap.

Sarah's best plants

Geranium 'Rozanne'

- ❖ Superb for ground cover, it's a garden stalwart loved by so many gardeners across the breadth of the UK.
- ❖ Purple/blue big saucer flowers with healthy vibrant green foliage, a great mood and garden booster.
- ❖ Often found growing in sheltered spots, this geranium is very easy to look after. Simply give it a haircut down to the ground and it'll spring up again, as healthy and vivacious as before.
- ❖ Gary explains that regular pruning throughout the summer will encourage a second flush of brilliant blooms later in the season. Don't worry about how you prune this geranium, it's incredibly robust and will bounce back time and time again. The perfect choice for even the most novice gardeners.

Rosa 'Timeless Purple'

- ❖ With roses, high maintenance isn't always the case. Roses such as these are tremendous growers and easy as can be to look after. A disease-resistant variety with a super long-flowering season, which give great garden value.
- ❖ Opens purple and turns pink. On display outside Sarah's bedroom window, it looks great for a really long time. It's beautiful with a stunning scent, adding real oomph to any garden.
- ❖ Sarah chooses to plant roses in threes, which she says creates excellent rhythm. Either plant singularly or go for clumps of three for serious wow.
- ❖ Lovely as part of an arrangement, they also have exceptional vase life.

Erigeron karvinskianus

- ❖ Super well known and loved by all gardeners, lovely for ground cover in sunny spots, drought-tolerant, and will also take salt, so suitable for seaside gardens.
- ❖ Flowers from April until November and looks beautiful lining steps.
- ❖ Self-seeding and works well as a container plant. Like a geranium, just pick up the tip of the plant and sheer off one third from the top, and it will quickly reflower.
- ❖ Gary also says they are evergreen, so pruning will promote regrowth.

Buddleia 'Hot Raspberry'

- ❖ A recent trial of newly bred buddleias has gone exceptionally well at Perch Hill. Bright and bold magenta/crimson. Excellent bee and butterfly forage.

Buddleja davidii 'Wisteria Lane'

- ❖ Almost like a cascading wisteria, in the corner of the garden underplanted by catmint and alongside lonicera – this is another fantastic vignette.

Rosemary 'Foftail'

- ❖ Although used widely for culinary purposes, rosemary is also really effective for screening off areas and adding privacy. There are also many varieties with different flowers and forms.
- ❖ The needles of this particular rosemary emerge from the plant and spiral around the stem which gives an upright 'foxtail' look. Prominent in the winter too, it's evergreen and gives a lovely texture.
- ❖ Sarah also loves Rosemary 'Tuscan Blue' which flowers well until November.

- ❖ Drought-tolerant and excellent for pollinators too.

Linaria

- ❖ In bloom, *Linaria maroccana* 'Sweeties' smells like a fruit salad bowl and is a jumble of little snapdragon flowers in the most gorgeous colours.
- ❖ Sarah says that *Linaria x purpurea* 'Peachy' is light on its feet until it puts up lovely spires of Tulip 'La Belle Epoque' style peachy-brown flowers that keep going throughout summer.
- ❖ *Linaria purpurea* 'Canon Went' also known as 'Came and went' seeds around the garden and is perfect for the May gap when things might be looking a little sparse.