

## Episode 112 show notes and advice

### Episode description

For today's episode, Sarah is joined by returning guest, Garden Designer, Butter Wakefield. Specialising in small, outdoor urban spaces, Butter has a wealth of experience when it comes to transforming all types of gardens. Here they share their top tips for creating small cutting gardens and patches for those with a compact space.

### In this episode, discover:

- Butter's 12 best plants for a compact cutting patch
- How to get more from your pots
- Top tips for picking and conditioning.

## episode 112 advice sheet

### Butter's 12 best cut flowers for a mini back garden (1:56)

Like Sarah, Butter loves to pack out her pots and containers with bulbs for texture, colour, and scent.

### Narcissus (Daffodil) (2:05)

Picking daffodils is one of Butter's favourite things to do. Varieties like Narcissus 'Snow Baby' and 'Jetfire' are excellent for small pots.

Diminutive and super enchanting, Narcissus 'Snow Baby' has fine foliage complemented by sweet little cream flowers. Narcissus 'Jetfire' is slightly bigger and very early. They are also slightly reflexed, with a vibrant orange trumpet.

Other favourites include: Narcissi 'Beautiful eyes', 'Avalanche', and 'Pink Charm'.

### Tulips and creating a bulb lasagne (3:06)

A combination that Butter loves is Tulips 'Menton Exotic' and 'Queen of the night' alongside 'Apricot Paris' 'Disneyland Parrot', and 'Charade' – purple tones, with peach, and pale orange.

Butter then plants little bulbs of the muscari and scilla siberica around the outside. These can be used as cut flowers too, placed delicately in little milk jars down the middle of the table, along a mantelpiece, or on the kitchen shelf.

Sarah suggests creating a bulb lasagne to maximise impact. Check out our 'how to guide' for more information and expert advice: <https://www.sarahraven.com/articles/how-to-plant-a-bulb-lasagne>

### **Alchemilla mollis (4:38)**

Seriously frothy and in a luminescent bright green, Butter says that this variety brings so much joy to arrangements and looks great in the garden too. Ideal for gardens that have dappled shade, this plant will begin to wilt if exposed to the sun for too long. Place around the fringes of the garden, to ensure that it recovers on warm summer afternoons.

Sarah recommends cutting the plant back for a second flush of flowers. This will also help with preventing too much self-seeding, as it does tend to take over. For arrangements, Sarah says that searing the ends of each stem can drastically improve vase life, sometimes for up to two weeks at a time.

### **Buddleia 'Buzz series' (6:47)**

Buddleia 'Hot Raspberry', Buzz 'Midnight', Buzz 'Sky Blue' – these compact buddleias are terrific for pots and are a great idea for getting nectar-rich plants into a small space. Adored by butterflies and moths almost more than anything else in the garden.

With a low, arching habit, they also don't get as leggy and sprawling as the standard davidiis. Sarah says they also flower for three times as long as standard buddleia plants and is blown away by the results in a recent buddleia trial. They also look beautiful singularly by the bed, or in a bathroom with their gentle honey-like scent.

### **Dahlia (8:35)**

Many dahlia varieties are perfect for pots, and Butter loves them for their dramatic impact which enhances small spaces.

Butter's favourites include: Dahlias 'Rosie Raven', 'Lou Farman', 'Josie', and 'Waltzing Mathilda' which Butter says she underplants with *Cosmos atrosanguineus* 'Chocolate'. Although not all entirely compact, these varieties are adored by garden bees and butterflies. Sarah says Dahlia 'Waltzing Mathilda' has excellent vase life, along with 'Perch Hill' and 'Molly Raven' too.

### **Geranium (11:13)**

Terrific for border edging, Butter particularly likes low-growing forms such as Geranium 'Azur Rush', and its sister Geranium 'Lilac Ice'. Smaller relatives of RHS favourite Geranium 'Rozanne', these varieties are compact, early flowering, and are super long-lasting.

### **Geum (12:06)**

Great for breathing life and colour into compact gardens, Butter adores Geum 'Banana Daiquiri' which is a beautiful pale yellow and loved by pollinators.

Other favourites include Geum 'Totally Tangerine' and 'Borisii' although these are much bigger growers, and not as well suited to compact gardens.

Sarah says that soft yellows and oranges are brilliant for adding contrast to gardens.

### **Hosta 'Devon Green' (13:41)**

Ideal for shady gardens and blessed with the RHS 'AGM' trophy and has thrived in many trials. Hosta 'Devon Green' has gorgeous glossy leaves, that look incredible in flower arrangements.

Sarah explains that she's going to try incorporating more hostas into the perennial cutting garden, by the polyanthus and the hellebores.

Butter says Hosta 'Devon Green' also performs well in a pot and this enables you to keep a close eye on them when it comes to garden pests.

### **Knautia macedonica 'Mars Midget' (15:30)**

A dreamy wine colour, with pin cushion flowerheads. Butter says that any good flower arrangement has an array of different flower heads for dimension.

Another plant loved by bees; this variety is more compact than the standard *Knautia macedonica* but needs full sun to truly thrive.

Great for following on after the geum, if 'Mars Midget' is well-fed and watered correctly, it doesn't tend to experience as much mildew, which can often be a problem.

### **Path and border lining plants (16:58)**

#### **Nepeta**

Great for sunny gardens, *Nepeta* × *faassenii* 'Novanepjun' (Junior Walker) is a fabulous path and border-lining plant. A truly vibrant colour, loved by pollinators, and holds an RHS 'AGM' trophy.

Butter also says that this variety performs really well as a cut flower, mixed with *Alchemilla*, *Geum*, and *buddleia* too. The more colour the better!

#### **Tellima grandiflora**

A lovely plant for shady gardens, Butter particularly likes the tall spires with small, bell-shaped flowers.

Another honourable mention also goes to *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Variegatum' which lasts forever in a vase and is stylish and simple.

### **Shrub roses for pots (19:45)**

Great for compact gardens and for cutting. 'Rosa Desdemona' has a lovely scent and boasts glamorous white flowers that repeat well.

Rosa 'Lichfield Angel' – a soft apricot that fades nicely into cream, with a great fragrance.

Rosa 'Gabriel Oak' – a strong and rich fragrance that is reminiscent of prune, this variety is loved by Butter and Sarah alike. Dark pink too, it's definitely not the flower for the shy and retiring!

Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll' – the prettiest pink, this variety looks amazing with orange hues and has the most incredible scent.

### **Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna' (22:00)**

One of the earliest varieties which produce some of the longest spikes to add minarets to your borders. Holding the RHS AGM certificate, Butter adores the dark stems which add contrast to flower arrangements. It's also super manageable in size and is the most wonderful violet colour.

### **Tips for picking and conditioning (23:49)**

- ❖ Butter says that it's important to consider what time of day you pick the flowers. Avoid picking in the midday sun, as this is when flowers will be at their most vulnerable. Instead, go for early in the morning for strong and springy stems.
- ❖ Butter likes to sear most of her stems in boiling water, which prevents them from becoming too limp. Butter likes to place her stems into the boiling water and cut just below the water line, and then straight into a cool jug of water for the best results.
- ❖ Display your cottage garden annuals and perennials in beautiful, patterned jugs for maximum sophistication.