

## Episode 113 show notes and advice

### Episode description

This week, Sarah is joined by returning guest and Green and Gorgeous founder, Rachel Siegfried. With a background in floral design, landscaping, nursery work, and productive horticulture, when it comes to growing incredible cut flowers, Rachel is a true expert. Here, the pair discuss the 12 best perennials, climbers, and shrubs for the most sensational cutting garden.

### In this episode, discover:

- Rachel's 12 best perennials, climbers, and shrubs
- Top tips for a beautiful floral arrangement
- New and exciting varieties to add to your cutting garden

## episode 113 advice sheet

### Green and Gorgeous (1:30)

Celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, Green and Gorgeous is a 5-acre flower farm located on the banks of the River Thames in Wallingford, Oxfordshire. To discover more about Green and Gorgeous, visit their website here:

<https://www.greenandgorgeousflowers.co.uk/>

Rachel's brand-new book 'The Cut Flower Sourcebook: Exceptional Perennials and Woody Plants for Cutting' is available now at all good bookstores.

### Drought-tolerant perennials (6:46)

Rachel explains that many perennials can benefit from the heat, as the lack of rainfall means they won't become as lush, and therefore, won't require staking.

- Achillea millefolium
- Silene dioica
- Catananche caerulea (Cupid's Dart)
- Scabiosa
- Grasses

- Echinacea
- Echium vulgare

### **Rachel's 12 best perennials, climbers, and shrubs (7:44)**

Rachel likes to include four central elements in all of her arrangements which she says create balance, variety, and interest. This includes:

- Framework
- Supporting
- A focal point
- A final accent

### **The best plants for creating a framework (9:26)**

Rachel describes these plants as the architecture of an arrangement, providing invaluable bones and structure. This includes woody branches, which she says are important for scale, shape, and building character.

### **Spiraea thunbergii (Baby's Breath Spiraea)**

Not as well-known and much earlier to flower than other shrubs and trees, it's a stand-out in Rachel's book. Bare branches with the prettiest, little flowers in wintertime.

Rachel also says that it's excellent for harvesting in three separate stages, due to how it changes throughout the year. Remember – if you're using this plant for regular arrangements, you'll need three times as much.

### **Rosa glauca**

A truly unique shape in a smoky plum grey, these plants naturally arch and are great for structure. Rachel explains that they can be very tall and graceful, which means they are ideal for adding movement and air to arrangements.

This is a mid-summer to autumn woody cut with lovely hips and delicate single flowers too.

### **Symphoricarpos (Snowberry)**

Usually, a little bit sparse and suckering, Rachel was inspired by the Snowberry 'Magical Series' which she discovered on a trip to Holland. Excellent, upright stiff growth, with lovely berries, these come in a huge range of colours from pearly white, to pale pink, and wine red. Great for pollinators too.

### **The best plants for supporting (16:40)**

This group can be flowers or foliage and tend to be smaller and branching in habit. These are the understory and are commonly known as filler.

#### **helleborus hybridus**

The earliest perennial that they pick on the farm, Rachel says her favourite is the 'Harvington' cultivar. Great for introducing clarity and depth, this variety is also hardier than other hellebores. As they often droop once picked, Rachel advises waiting for seed pods to form before cutting. Great for blending arrangements and truly gorgeous.

#### **Bladder Campion (Silene vulgaris)**

A classic wildflower, this is incredibly easy to grow from seed and flowers in the first year too. If started in the greenhouse, Rachel says this plant will produce an abundance of flowers by July. It will also produce two flushes and is excellent for blending arrangements too.

To get the second flush of flowers, Rachel recommends taking a pair of shears and removing the stems. The second flourish will be as good as the first and is great for achieving a beautiful and natural meadow look.

#### **Rubus idaeus 'All Gold'**

An evergreen shrub that tastes amazing. It produces large, soft, golden fruit, and is very easy to care for. Rachel chooses to cut it back around early springtime, for an abundant harvest in the summertime.

This variety does have thorns, so if you're looking for a variety without, Rachel suggests *Rubus idaeus* 'Autumn Treasure' which is both thornless and incredibly sturdy.

### **Focal flowers (21:54)**

Showstoppers that give the arrangement serious depth, these should be used sparingly. Usually, Rachel only uses about 10 of these plants per arrangement.

### **Paeonia 'Buckeye Belle'**

Always looking for flowers that fill the May colour gap, Rachel explains that this early flowering peony always delivers. A semi-double in glossy, deep red, with the most striking yellow stamens.

Sarah says that 'Buckeye Belle' is a super reliable grower, which has been growing in the garden at Perch Hill for around 25 years.

Wait for three years for the peony to establish, and after this point only take half the stems for cutting, leaving the rest. If you pick too frequently, the flowers will become smaller, and the plant will weaken. Paeonia 'Coral charm' is also a great choice.

### **Herbaceous clematis 'East River'**

With beautiful, large, star-shaped flowers, this plant has an exceptional vase life. Non-climbing and non-clinging, Rachel says it's vital to find a way to support the stems and to prevent them from going floppy.

This plant gets to about a metre tall and should be tied in fairly regularly. It always look beautiful with roses in summertime.

### **Rosa 'Stephen Rulo'**

A repeat flowering and truly sophisticated rose, it shifts in colour from milky coffee to lavender grey, with mustard tones when it's in bud. Rachel says that if you like Rosa 'Rosa 'Koko Loko' (Floribunda), this is definitely the rose to try. Plus, it's healthier and more productive in Rachel's opinion.

### **Accents for arrangements (26:49)**

The final flourish that will elevate any homegrown arrangement, these accents provide movement, and air, and are great bridging colours. Rachel advises going easy on the accents, to avoid creating a fuzzy, and overly busy arrangement.

### **fritillaria uva vulpis**

Dainty nodding flowers tipped with gold on surprisingly robust stems. Rachel loves the dusky bell shape flowers and finds this variety easier to grow, easier to divide, and much more cost-effective than the standard snake's head fritillary.

Sarah says this variety is a lot more prolific but helps to sour the sweetness of summer flower arrangements.

### **Lonicera × americana (Mill.) K. Koch**

A very early flowering and highly scented honeysuckle, which can be picked as early as April. The foliage is exceptional, and the shape is truly unique adding just the right amount of disruption to the arrangement.

It also flowers through until June, so has a very long picking period. The multitone pinks, oranges, and peaches make it a lovely colour link for other flowers such as ranunculus or Icelandic poppy.

### **Pennisetum**

*Pennisetum orientale* 'Karley Rose' is one of Rachel's personal favourites, which creates a halo effect if backlit, bringing an excellent softness to any arrangement.