

Episode 116 show notes and advice

Episode description

In today's episode, Sarah talks with returning guest, Head Gardener at Perch Hill, Josie Lewis. With many years' experience working in horticulture, Josie is full of knowledge when it comes to picking the perfect plants for shady places. Here, Sarah and Josie focus on the plants and flowers that will bring light and life to the darker areas of the garden.

In this episode, discover:

- Sarah and Josie's top 12 flowers for shade
- How to create interest in darker spaces
- How to get the best from plants that prefer shade

episode 116 advice sheet

Selinum wallichianum (2:12)

Selinum wallichianum, is a beautiful umbellifer, with fine foliage that makes an excellent cut flower. Josie explains that it grows happily in shade or sun, and flowers July – September. It carries on after the flowers like *Ammi majus* and *Ammi visnaga* have given up, gently self-seeding, and is great for plugging gaps.

Sarah says that stems of airy selinum look wonderful in a vase with brightly coloured dahlias. This plant also forms beautiful seedheads with a reddish tinge.

Nicotiana sylvestris (3:37)

Sarah explains that many nicotiana plants are shade-resistant and cousins of the nightshade family, a fact many people might not know.

In particular, *Nicotiana sylvestris* 'Only the Lonely', with its tall, elegant trumpets, thrives in shaded areas. Sarah explains that it's particularly fragrant throughout the night, from around 10 PM to 4 AM.

Similarly, Sarah recommends sowing *Nicotiana Grandiflora* now (April) for the best results. Sarah has this outside her office door, in an east-facing position, which is quite shaded. This

variety flopped when it was in a south-facing position, but since being moved, is now happier than ever before. It also has a remarkable scent, which is delicious over the summer months. Try planting this variety by a shady window for continuous fragrance

Matteuccia struthiopteris (06:19)

Also known as the shuttlecock, this plant loves a shady and damp place and produces wonderful, ferny foliage. It emerges pale green, and if you mix in orange tulips that flower at the same time such as Tulip 'Annie Schilder', 'Ballerina', or 'Queen's Day' you can create a really gorgeous contrast.

As this plant is currently planted in The Oast Garden at Perch Hill, it can get a little bit singed by the sun. So gradually, Josie and Sarah are transplanting them to shadier places.

Pelargonium tomentosum (8:00)

A dry shade cover plant, which hales from South Africa. Sarah was once advised not to plant this tender perennial in bright sunshine, and to try it in the shade instead, which was a revelation.

Sarah says this plant looks wonderful alongside the nicotiana and genuinely thrives with great, felted, peppermint-scented leaves. Please note, these are unlike standard pelargoniums and prefer a shady spot. Bring inside over winter months and plant back out when the frost has subsided.

Sarcococca (9:54)

Sarcococca 'Purple stem' is one of Josie's absolute favourite varieties. Reaching a height of around 1.5 metres, it's an elegant version of a standard Sarcococca. Flowering from December until early March, it will take over a space but spread slowly so it's never out of control.

Josie has one of these by her north-facing front door which gets no sun at all. It emits the most wonderful scent and is a great plant for lifting spirits over winter.

Trachelospermum jasminoides (11:40)

As recommended by Sarah's friend and podcast guest, Jo Fairley. Sarah explains that if this plant is grown in shade, the leaves will go red through the autumn, winter, and spring, and green in the summer.

Great for growing in shade or sun, it's an incredibly perfumed climber which will grow slowly but is incredibly worth it. You can listen back to the episode with special guest, Jo Fairley, here: <https://www.sarahraven.com/podcast/show-notes-ep111>

Athyrium niponicum f. metallicum (12:31)

Josie's favourite frosted fern, which only grows to 45cm and produces the most beautiful fronds. Josie says this fern can be grown on its own in a pot and would be lovely as a centrepiece on a shaded table. Sarah has one of these, potted up on a plant theatre next to her north-facing back door for serious wow factor.

Plectranthus ciliatus 'Nico' (13:19)

Not quite as delicate in its appearance, but quick-growing, sumptuous, and easy, Plectranthus ciliatus 'Nico' is the perfect choice for gardens in shade. A dry shade plant, originating from New Zealand, it has a dark green glossy upper side, with a stunning crimson-purple underside. Gorgeous, displayed on its own in a zinc dolly tub.

Sarah finds that it tumbles right down the side of the pot, with the most wonderful velvet cascade of leaves. It's not hardy, so treat it almost like a houseplant, bringing it in and placing it on a window ledge in colder weather. As soon as the frosts have finished again in the spring, you can take it back outside.

Begonia 'Glowing Embers' (14:38)

An absolute garden classic, Begonia 'Glowing Embers' is a top choice at Perch Hill. Good in shade with pretty flowers. Josie says they are self-cleaning, as the flowers just fall off, which saves time on deadheading.

A tuber, make sure to bring the tubers in over winter and store them like you would store a dahlia. Once the tuber is big enough you can split it, let the cut side callous over, then you will have two plants.

Sarah says that sometimes the flowers can be a little rubbery, but they do produce a lot of flowers in a shady place. Sarah adds, Begonia 'Gryphon' is another great choice. Large, elegant leaves, and super indestructible too.

Gaura lindheimeri 'Sparkle White' (17:05)

Sarah says that sometimes finding out if something will work in shade is down to trial and error. Josie recently tried planting gaura in shade at Perch Hill and found that it worked well. Although it didn't flower as prolifically as it does in full sun, it still offers a lovely airy feel, so is always worth trying. Great for brightening up sombre spots.

Eucomis 'Pineapple Lilies' (17:46)

Another 'give it a go' variety, Pineapple lilies (Eucomis), Sarah says they had lots of these bulbs on trial at Perch Hill. Sarah has previously planted this variety along hostas, which looks fantastic. Lovely stripes and markings, alongside beautiful flowers in July and seedheads, well into the autumn.