

episode 12 show notes and advice

With the last of the frosts nearly behind us, now is a good time to start growing your own wonderful pumpkins and squash, and the great thing is that they're suitable for gardens of all sizes. Even better, pairing these with fruit blossom can bring you both edible veg and delightful songbirds.

In this next episode of 'grow, cook, eat, arrange', Sarah and Arthur share the best ways to grow a healthy pumpkin, assemble a delicious squash tip frittata, and create a canopy of fruit blossom.

In this episode, discover:

- Enticing songbirds into your garden with a canopy of fruit trees
- The transient beauty of cherry blossom
- Sarah's recipe for a lovely squash tip frittata
- The ideal time to grow pumpkins and squash
- What makes pumpkins ideal for small, vertical gardens

Links and references

Order Sarah's new book: <http://bit.ly/3cR0kyh>

Pre-order Arthur's new book: <http://bit.ly/3qiBqUs>

Shop on the Sarah Raven Website: <http://bit.ly/3jvbaeu>

Get in touch: info@sarahraven.com

Products mentioned:

Clematis armandii 'Apple Blossom': <https://bit.ly/2Q8dFZN>

Pumpkin Collection: <https://bit.ly/3uEhQvo>

Squash 'Early Butternut': <https://bit.ly/3uxXunp>

Squash 'Crown Prince': <https://bit.ly/3s473IX>

Squash 'Tromboncino': <https://bit.ly/3eG6SQX>

Follow Sarah: <https://bit.ly/3iDTvBp>

Follow Arthur: <https://bit.ly/3jxSKK5>

episode 12 advice sheet | Spring blossoms, squash and pumpkins

Sarah and Arthur's favourite varieties

- Prunus 'Tai-haku' – huge white saucer blossom, but no fruit
- Malus hupehensis – Chinese crabapple with white single flowers and red fruits
- Malus 'Dartmouth' – another crabapple with white flowers and then wonderful, long-lasting deep red fruit
- Malus 'Wisley' – planted by Arthur to try to draw in a bullfinch, this has beetroot-pink blossom and large, deep crimson crabapples
- Amelanchier lamarckii – beautiful (if fleeting) blossom with Japanese silk painting-style flowers, and then jewel bead-like fruit and wonderful autumn colour
- Crataegus persimilis 'Prunifolia' – huge haws on this hawthorn and they hold on to their fruit longer than any other in the garden here, almost until Christmas. Healthy, with attractive bark.

Crabapples in particular are super easy to look after; they rarely need pruning and are largely pest and disease-free.

To make blossom last in water, sear the stem ends in boiling water, (the bottom 10% of the stem) for a minute.

Squash/pumpkins

Anytime from now is a good moment to sow these. Arthur loves them because they're happy to climb (over sheds or fences) and they look gorgeous, ideal for even a small garden.

Arthur leaves sowing them until mid-May, Sarah a few weeks earlier (because she has a greenhouse).

Sarah and Arthur's favourite varieties

- Crown Prince
- Black Futsu
- Early Butternut
- Tromboncino – looks fabulous with the shape of a trombone

Sowing into individual pots, a 9cm square pot, one or two seeds to each pot

- Fill the pots with a peat-free potting compost

- Water
- Push the seed in to the depth of your knuckle. Push it in vertically, rather than flat. The compost usually folds over the seed and buries it, but you can cover with compost if this hasn't happened
- Label
- There's no need to water again straight away. Put on a heated propagator (or on a window ledge) until they germinate
- Once germinated, water every few days when the compost starts to dry on the surface
- Start feeding with liquid seaweed feed once they have 2 pairs of true leaves
- Keep these half-hardy annuals protected inside until the risk of frost has passed
- Plant out with tons of manure in full sun — or even grow on your compost heap to cascade down the sides
- Mulch deeply around the seedlings
- If you grow them for a pot, they need REALLY regular feeding and watering. Wherever you grow them, you can make them a climbing frame, but the fruit will then need to be supported with some sort of hammock so it doesn't break its stems with the weight, or just leave them trailing on the ground.
- Pinch out the growth tips of the trailing varieties. This is key for ripening the fruit. Otherwise it tends to drop off, or even rots at a very early stage.

Squash shoot Frittata

Pretty instant and delicious dinner for one, or double up for two. This is cooked in a small frying pan which is perfect for individual frittata to feed one person.

- Squash shoots and stems (we use the variety 'Tromboncino')
- 1 courgette - cut into chunks
- A handful of squash shoots — the shoots were boiled for 3 minutes until soft, drained and dried
- Handful of mint
- 1 large tablespoon Mascapone
- 3 large free range, organic eggs, forked
- A little freshly grated Parmesan (mixed in with the mixture and some added on top after cooking)
- Salt and pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and pour into an already searing hot frying pan oiled with a little olive oil.