

## episode 13 show notes and advice

With a mix of English and Kiwi flair, The Land Gardeners, Henrietta Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy, are on a mission to improve the health of our plants, land and soil, designing gardens as productive as they are stunning.

On this week's 'grow, cook, eat, arrange' we hear about the Land Gardeners' pioneering compost revival with their unique 'climate compost', as well as tips to make your own 'compost cakes', and a variety of new ways to use asparagus in your cooking.

### In this episode, discover:

- The story behind Henrietta and Bridget's mission around plant and soil health
- How biodiversity helps nurture the wildlife in our gardens
- Tips for making 'compost cakes'
- Two lovely recipes with asparagus

### Links and references

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

Order Arthur's new book: <http://bit.ly/3qiBgUs>

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

Get in touch: [info@sarahraven.com](mailto:info@sarahraven.com)

The Land Gardeners' Instagram: <https://bit.ly/3acUKE8>

The Land Gardeners' website: <https://bit.ly/3trISXx>

### Products mentioned:

Asparagus Collection: <https://bit.ly/3qgWrEr>

Tulips: <https://bit.ly/3d7RuMp>

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

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

## Episode 13 advice sheet | Compost, looking after soil & asparagus with the Land Gardeners

Sarah and Arthur are with Bridget Elworthy and Henrietta Courtauld, great soil and compost enthusiasts and experts, who call themselves The Land Gardeners.

### Their Books

The Land Gardeners': Cut Flowers

From Soil to Table (Release date TBC)

### What the Land Gardeners mention in this episode

Kay Baxter, Regeneration Production: <https://bit.ly/3aMBJZF>

Tim Williams, a Regenerative farmer in Cornwall: <https://bit.ly/3gMdJti>

Website – Farms to Feed us: <https://bit.ly/3gNLhaE>

### The Land Gardeners' tips for healthy gardens

- Don't leave soil bare, instead sow with quick-growing green manures e.g. Phacelia tanacetifolia, mustards, lupins, field beans. Chop the top growth down and put it into your compost but leave the roots in the ground to break down. You can plant straight into the ground amongst the roots with species such as tulips or cosmos. The roots will slowly decompose and feed the soil and new plants.

- Minimal digging – don't destroy the structure of your soil

- Mixing flowers and vegetables together helps the health of every part of your garden

- Use comfrey 'Bocking 14' as a compost activator

- Make compost cakes (takes 4 or 5 months)

Overtime collect ingredients, lawn clippings, annual weeds (in the a of pantry or holding bay)

Insert hazel stakes into the ground in a circle and layer up your ingredients within them.

### Layers

- 50% carbon (e.g. straw, artichokes, cardoons, old hay, leaves, cardboard, young wood chip, thin branches of 5cm diameter maximum)

- 30% nitrogen (e.g. lawn clippings, kitchen waste, chicken poo)
- 10% clay (this is KEY because it contains tons of minerals and is super microbially-rich)
- 10% material from your previous pile – as the activator or inoculum
- Layer up as above

#### You need 3 main things for good compost making:

- Water – moisture is key
- Oxygen – introducing a lot of carbon adds air, particularly in the base layers
- Temperature - 59-65 degrees, no hotter or you'll kill the good bugs

If you get the right combination of ingredients in your layers there should be no need to turn it, – saving you a lot of hard work. It should be ready to use in 4 or 5 months.

Asparagus is just coming into season.

#### Sarah's Recipe of the week - Asparagus, pea and Broad Bean Salad

This is the perfect late spring, early summer salad, using all the best produce from the garden, a good farmer's market or greengrocer.

#### For 4 as a main course and 6 as a starter

- 160g freshly podded peas (frozen are fine)
- 200g freshly-podded broad beans (frozen are fine)
- 1 bunch thin asparagus (about 220g)
- 1 heaped tablespoon fresh mint, roughly chopped
- Juice and zest of 2 lemons
- 50ml extra olive oil
- Sea salt and ground black pepper

#### For the roasted onions

- 4 red onions (about 400g)
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar syrup
- 2 tablespoons Agave nectar or runny honey
- 50ml olive oil

#### For the basil sauce

- Large bunch basil (about 50g)
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- Flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 150ml olive oil
1. Preheat the oven to 180°C Gas Mark 4
  2. Peel the onions and cut into rounds (about 5mm) then spread onto a baking tray. Stir in the balsamic vinegar syrup, agave nectar syrup or honey and olive oil. Season with a little salt and freshly ground black pepper and roast for 30 minutes, stirring half-way through the cooking time.
  3. Meanwhile make the basil sauce. Pull the leaves from a large bunch of basil and put in a food processor with the garlic and seasoning. Process till chopped, then slowly add the olive oil. Any not used will keep for a week in the fridge.
  4. To make the salad, first blanch the peas, boiling them for 2-3 minutes, drain and refresh in cold water. Do the same with the broad beans, then slip off their skins.
  5. Griddle the asparagus until lightly charred. Don't oil the griddle pan. Get it really hot before putting on the asparagus and just brush the spears with a little oil whilst griddling.
  6. Mix all the vegetables with the fresh mint, squeeze over the lemon juice and drizzle with the extra virgin olive oil and toss.
  7. Lay out the vegetables, top with the roasted onion and drizzle with some of the basil sauce. Finally sprinkle over the lemon zest.