

Episode 131 show notes and advice

Episode description

For today's episode in our 12 best series, we turn our attention to the most sensational shrubs for elevating all types of gardens. Whether you're looking for a shrub that's pollinator-friendly, compact, or colourful, Sarah, and Gary, Senior Horticultural Buyer at Sarah Raven, share their favourites for adding scent, structure, and extravagance.

In this episode, discover:

- Gorgeous shrubs which thrive in wet and dry conditions
- Evergreens to bring sensational structure all year round
- How to care for your shrubs

episode 131 advice sheet

Shrubs (1:28)

Shrubs have become a growing passion of Gary's, and over the past decade, many people have become drawn to herbaceous perennials and naturalistic planting styles.

Gary also believes that when it comes to design, shrubs should be one of the first things we consider. Not just because of the timescale it takes for them to establish, but because they are essential for creating structure.

Gary says there's also a lot of practical reasoning that comes from introducing shrubs into the garden, such as creating shade, or providing other plants with protection from the wind. Plus, a lot of varieties are weather resistant too.

Gary and Sarah's favourite shrubs

Winter shrubs (4:00)

Daphne 'Perfume Princess'

Super extravagant and gorgeous in the garden, Daphne's are a strong winter shrub that are a welcome addition to a variety of gardens.

Daphne 'Perfume Princess' is a new variety from New Zealand. Taking the strong scent and durability of two different types, it is an ultra-strong hybrid. It also boasts spicy fragrance with masses of blooms and is a must-have in Gary's book.

Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Bannow Bay'

Excellent for containers, this is a winter shrub that is totally evergreen and provides presence all year round. Throughout the winter, the leaves are wine coloured before revealing bright green tips in the summertime. Sarah also intends on planting some of these shrubs in the cutting garden this autumn. Also, surprisingly frost resilient.

Chaenomeles x superba 'Crimson and Gold'

If treated like a traditional climber, tied in, and lightly pruned, this variety is fabulous on a shady wall. Early flowers on the bare branches are a really nice addition to this plant and are loved by pollinators. It's great for cutting too.

Spring shrubs

Viburnum opulus 'Roseum'

Sarah explains that there are two main types of viburnum opulus. The first produces an abundance of red berries in July and August, and the second produces beautiful green pom poms, that Sarah simply adores.

Sarah has this on an arch as you enter the perennial cutting garden from the car park, and it produces gorgeous, apple-green pom poms which turn white as the season progresses. They then drop their petals without browning too much.

Great for picking, but notoriously grows to be quite large.

Deutzia gracilis 'Nikko'

A great shrub for ground cover which naturally suppresses weeds without too much maintenance. This is a great plant and really compact. Double white flowers with green foliage that turns a reddish-brown in Autumn. The masses of pure white flowers are great for pollinators too.

Teucrium fruticans

With foliage not unlike rosemary with silvery blue flowers. A lovely evergreen in a pot and in a Mediterranean garden, it's great for creating shelter in coastal areas. Salt-tolerant, and hardy with it. There are also new forms being produced all the time.

Summer shrubs

Hebe 'Medieval Pink Princess'

A popular shrub throughout the 90s which Gary has come to recently love. Young forms are relatively susceptible to mildew, which can be a bit of a challenge for some growers, but new forms, such as Hebe 'Medieval Pink Princess,' are much easier to care for.

With pretty pink and yellow-green foliage, it is also evergreen and has small purple spike flowers, perfect for pollinators. An excellent balcony or small patio plant.

Buddleja davidii 'Wisteria Lane'

Sarah grows this on the north side of a sunny wall in the herb and rose garden at Perch Hill. Super elegant with long panicles, and gorgeous perfume and flowers from July to September. This is a fantastic plant for biodiversity and is always popular with pollinators throughout the summer.

Rostrinucula dependens

Originally from the foothills in China, this plant is notoriously hardy and incredibly rare. It has the most amazing pendants of dangling lilac flowers, which last up to December. Tremendous for pollinators, but really different and super-reliable.

Hydrangea arborescens 'Incrediball'

Huge heads that bob up and down in the wind, about the size of a human head. Forming from early summer, its little green buds turn white, then pink, then brown. Cut down in the

winter and they will reliably return. Perfect for moist, shady gardens. These are an absolute must-have!

***Cornus sanguinea* 'Anny Winter Orange'**

Bear stems that are reddish orange at the base, graduating to yellow at the top. Gary says they look as if there's a fire in the hedge! Easy to achieve and really lovely with it, this form will hold colour over time.

Cercidiphyllum japonicum

This has been bred for smaller gardens and is just coming into its own in the corner of the Oast Garden. It smells of toffee and is absolutely delightful! Gary says the plant will emit a candyfloss scent when there's about to be a drought to signpost watering!