

## episode 35 show notes and advice

Whether it's a productive collection to provide a cohesive, colourful pot combination, or perhaps a single flower with such a striking appearance that it becomes your new favourite, there's something for everyone on this week's episode of 'grow, cook, eat, arrange'.

### In this episode, discover:

- Collections in our Autumn range that will bring life and colour through the darker winter and then emerging into spring months
- A perfect houseplant for those less confident in looking after garden plants
- How quality tools can make planting a lot easier
- Sarah's 'best-ever' recipe for Rhubarb Cordial

### Links & references:

Order Sarah's new book: <https://bit.ly/2TWHJcz>

Order Arthur's new book: <https://bit.ly/3xOov7H>

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

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

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

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

## Episode 35 advice sheet

Arthur suggests using the catalogue to cut the pictures out and stick the tulips and your other flowers of choice into your own combinations on a huge sheet of paper. Layer your pots up in a lasagne, starting with what's going on top.

### Choose your pot toppers first

These are key to give interest from when you plant your pots up in November, until May when you move on to summer bedding.

Arthur is using our **Winter Kale collection**, to give foliage through the winter, so his pots are never empty — and then in spring, the kale flowers come, brilliant yellow, cheery (and edible) flowers which the bees adore.

AND

**Wallflower 'Sunset Orange' F1** with orange and red tones. The bees love them, and the perfume is gorgeous. The slight problem is that your wallflowers arrive long before you should plant your tulips. So, pot them up into a good-sized pot and feed them, liquid seaweed is recommended in this instance.

**Next, choose your tulips.**

The Tulip collection Arthur is then adding to his Flower Yard pots is the **New Jasper Conran collection**. There are 3 tulips in it — 'Black Parrot' which is not too large, quite perennial and super glam, paired with 'Palmyra', an early mulberry claret double, with good tall stems. Both these are contrasted to the brilliant red, ruffled, elegant Parrot, 'Rococo', which as Arthur says looks like a baby Mackaw parrot chick.

Arthur is combining the tulip trio above with 'Princess Irene', 'Irene Parrot' and 'Cairo' for a splash of orange amongst the crimson and red. That will give just the right amount of contrast.

Sarah starts off with our long-standing best-seller the **Venetian Tulip Collection**.

We've sold this now for 15 or 16 years — and this spring, we grew it again at Perch Hill. This is a mix which gives you the perfect heights together for a pot, they all flower together, have handsome silvery-grey foliage, with beautiful rich, strong coloured flowers, red 'Couleur Cardinal', orange with sunset colours on the outer petals, 'Princess Irene' and dark, rich 'Havran' (for contrast). And as Arthur points out – they all have really good weather resistance too, so survive in wind and rain.

### **Spring Sunset Tulip Collection**

This is a new refresh of the Venetian collection and just as rich, lovely and hard performing, with a similar mix of colours with 'Attila Graffiti', 'Slawa' and 'Lasting Love'. Try this one if you've grown and loved the 'Venetian' and want a change.

### **Plum and Apricot Tulip Mix**

With 'Apricot Foxx', 'Jan Reus' and the scented 'Request'. This is a super-perennial collection – guaranteed to come back year after year. We have this planted at the base of a privet hedge at Perch Hill, so the ground they're in is poor and dry — and the tulips thrive in this situation. That's what we've learnt over the years at Perch Hill, put your tulips in poor conditions and they'll be much more perennial. That's where they thrive in the wild.

**Ultra-perennial Tulip Collection** (*Unfortunately, this is currently out of stock on our website, but the Tulip 'Spring Green' is available*)

This includes 'Green Wave' and 'Spring Green'. At Perch Hill we have this pairing planted amongst our globe artichokes, with the artichokes taking most of the goodness and moisture out of the soil. We've found the green flash on a tulip (shared by both these tulips, and all the 'Viridiflora' group) seems to indicate that a tulip will be more perennial, and they last in poor weather too.

And don't forget the total-trooper, 'Ballerina', tall, elegant, scented, long-flowering and very perennial.

And 'Brown Sugar' scented, early, chunky, tall, brilliant for picking, lasts ten days in a vase.

### How to plant your bulbs

Sarah recommends a long-handled bulb planter to make light work of putting bulbs into the border, or grass. It's like an apple corer and removes the core of soil. Then in goes the bulb (onto a bed of grit if you're on heavy soil), and then as you cut the next hole, out pops the cylinder of soil to plop in over the bulb you've just planted. And on you go.

### Recommended Alliums

#### Arthur's

'Red Mohican' – new one on the block, which Arthur first saw at Chatsworth. Very tall, more red, cherry pie rather than purple. Brilliant for pollinators (like all alliums), through other plants, these really steal the show.

**Nectaroscordum bulgaricum** (called honey garlic) – shade tolerant, brilliant for pollinators, delicate candelabras of purple, coppery flowers.

#### Sarah's

'Purple Sensation' and **A. schubertii** for seed heads (and your Christmas tree) as much as for their flowers.

'Summer Drummer' – stately giant of 10 foot tall, and flowers from June to September, incredible new variety (*will be in our range in Autumn 2022*).

## Recommended narcissi

### Sarah's

**Narcissus 'Actea'** - scented, lasts decades and gradually bulks up with 20 bulbs turning into 200 within 3-4 years. Beautiful and long lasting in the garden and superb, en masse, in a vase.

### Arthur's

**Narcissus 'My Story'** – a fully-double, Cadbury's Cream egg-like, whacky, scented, and **'Earlicheer'** – also double, multi-headed and highly scented.

## Spring Bedding

Sarah recommends not just wallflowers, but also primroses/polyanthus. **Polyanthus 'Stella Champagne'** is her favourite – with peach, nectarine, apricot and strawberry colours all in one row of flowers, scented, lasts brilliantly in a vase (stem ends seared for 5 seconds), perennial, fantastic container plant, scented, flowers from January to May at least.

Arthur

**Viola 'Tiger Eye Red'** (named after the semi-precious stone) plan it in a pot on its own, better than as a pot topper. The more you pick, the more they flower. And they make fantastic, pressed flowers too.

## Perennials

### Hellebores

Sarah loves a couple of new varieties in the ballardiae series – **'Maestro'** (flowers November to Feb/March) and **'Merlin'** (flowers Feb-June). Sarah has them in the shade of the north and north-east side of the house at Perch Hill. Sear the stem ends in boiling water for 5-10 seconds, ideally picking stems where one flower has already dropped its anthers and the seed pod is just starting to form. Very perennial, great for bone-dry shade and slug resistant too.

Finally for Arthur is has to be a crocus **'Spring Beauty'** for very early in the year, tiny, elegant, sophisticated, brilliant for pollinators with anthers stuffed full of pollen. And Amaryllis – more for January and February than for Christmas, potted in November. **'Green Magic'** is Arthur's favourite, elegant, green flowers with crimson stippling.

And for Sarah, it's got to be a few forced bulbs e.g., hyacinths, and for winter, a beautiful and unusual houseplant. Her favourite is **Begonia 'Gryphon'**. Copes with deep shade, (like lots of houseplants), is elegant, and very easy to care for.

And not to forget an edible, rhubarb is ideal for planting in autumn. They thrive on minimal TLC, give them a mulch if you can, but you don't have to.

### Perch Hill rhubarb cordial

This is one of our most often made recipes at Perch Hill, where we serve a home-made cordial (or a selection) at all our courses and open days. We serve rhubarb from March until July, with an interlude of elderflower in May. In July we move to white and red currant and then into plum for late summer and early autumn, with quince for the end of the year. The rhubarb is a beautiful colour, a pale opalescent pink, particularly delicious diluted with sparkling water, with plenty of ice and a few leaves of fresh mint. A squeeze of lime juice is also a good addition.

### Makes 1 ½ litres

- 2kg rhubarb stems, roughly chopped
- 2 large oranges
- 8-10 whole star anise
- 1.2 kg Granulated sugar
- Citric acid (optional)

Put all the rhubarb into a large pan and add 1.5 litres of cold water (you don't want to cover it completely with water as this dilutes the flavour of the cordial). Using a potato peeler take 4 or so strips of orange skin from each orange, add this to the pan with the juice from both and add the star anise.

Bring the rhubarb up to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer gently until the rhubarb is soft (it may look like a mush at this stage). Take off the heat and allow to cool for an hour.

Pour the rhubarb and juice into a large jelly bag (hanging over a large bowl) and allow the juice to drip through overnight.

Now pour the collected juice into a pan and on a low heat add the sugar (about 600-800g, but do taste with a spoon as you go, so you get the sweetness you want, remember it will get diluted with water). Stir until the sugar has dissolved.

You can add 2 teaspoons of citric acid at this stage if you want to store this for several months, but this is not necessary if the cordial is going to be used straight away. The citric acid does give the cordial a good tart kick, or you can add the juice of 3 lemons for a sharper flavour.

Allow the cordial to cool

Pour into sterilised bottles and store in the fridge.