

episode 36 show notes and advice

As winter descends on our gardens, it's a perfect time to plan for the emergence of wonderful possibilities next spring, particularly by sowing your own organic crops. While the prospect might be daunting to some, it's just been made easier by this week's guest on the podcast.

The delightful Anna Greenland joins Sarah on episode 36, fresh from the release of her new book, *Grow Easy*, organic crops for pots and small plots.

In this episode, discover:

- Anna's down-to-earth style of gardening that's accessible to everyone
- The transition from staff at a Jamie Oliver restaurant to an organic supplier for them
- Releasing a beginner-friendly but impressively detailed book perfect for new and knowledgeable gardeners alike
- Which crops are perfect for sowing around this time of year
- How to put Nasturtiums to good use in two delightful recipes

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

Order Anna's new book - <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Grow-Easy-Organic-crops-small/dp/1784727350>

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

Follow Arthur: <https://bit.ly/3ixSKK5>

Episode 36 advice sheet

Sarah met Anna when she worked growing the veg for Soho Farmhouse on the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire border.

Anna introduced Sarah to two plants she now grows every year:

Crimson-flowered broad bean – growing under glass/plastic for edible flowers to scatter over risottos or salads from March to May.

AND

Wood sorrel 'Iron Cross' with taste of the peel of apples, crossed with lemon. Fabulous looking and tasting leaf.

She came to Soho Farmhouse from Raymond Blanc's hotel garden at The Manoir aux Quat'Saisons and there from the Vegetable garden at the Lost Gardens of Heligan. And before that, Anna worked at Jamie Oliver at 15 Cornwall in Watergate Bay, so she has quite a pedigree at only the age of 39.

Anna has now moved (with her young family) to Suffolk, between Woodbridge and Framlingham (on heavy clay soil) where she has her own mini productive small-holding.

That's the foundation stone of her new book.

The crux of the book is the small scale. It came out of lockdown, giving advice to so many friends and family, urban creatures, about what to grow and how.

She covers everything from the most basic and simple – how do you grow from scratch in a very small space – to unusual and interesting plants learned over the years from chefs and restaurants she has trained and worked in, always looking for the very best flavour.

TIPS FOR NOW

Anna's recommendations to sow and grow now:

Winter Salads – Asian greens and salad mixes, e.g. Lamb's Lettuce, mizuna, any of the mustards etc.

Microgreens (red cabbage, pak choi, coriander, Greek Cress) – just at the seedling stage making a harvest possible even if you have only a tiny amount of space. Pea shoots give you two cuts,

microgreens Anna leaves to second leaf stage, which gives just one cut but a very tasty harvest that makes it worthwhile. They are more than a garnish, pack the flavour and nutrition into something very tiny.

Harvesting Now

Squash e.g. 'Delicata' is a favourite – wonderful for right now

Leafy Greens – kales, chards etc are coming into their own right now (plant Tagetes and calendulas underneath to help protect against white fly. Chards and Cavallo Nero are good in pots too

Beetroot e.g. golden and stripy varieties Chioggia, as well as the more usual purples.

Nasturtiums – great edible flowers for now

Cooking now

Nasturtium butter

A colourful way to preserve the peppery flowers. I often use a recipe from the legendary Alice Waters' Chez Panisse pasta book: sauté sliced baby courgettes and shallots in nasturtium butter with parsley and thyme, simmer in a little vegetable stock, then stir through pasta with more butter. It's a beautiful dish. Nasturtium butter is also delicious baked with fish.

For 250g

- 40 nasturtium flowers chopped (will work with less)
 - 250g butter at room temperature
 - 1 garlic clove
 - 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice
 - Salt and pepper
- 1) Mix all the ingredients in a bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper
 - 2) Spoon out on to a sheet of parchment paper and roll tightly into a log. Twist at both ends. There are plenty of online videos that will show you how to do this
 - 3) Place in the fridge to firm up
 - 4) Rounds can be sliced off with a warm knife as needed – use within 5 days. Alternatively, freeze for up to 6 months (cut into sections and freeze separately).

Pickled nasturtium seeds (Poor man's capers)

If you're a caper fiend, this recipe is a thrifter route to the same tangy treat, adapted here from Preserves: River Cottage Handbook No. 2 by Pam Corbin. Pick the seeds just before their green colour fades – once brown, they are past their best.

1 x 250g jar

- 100g nasturtium seeds (green)
 - 15g (3 teaspoons) salt
 - 200ml white wine vinegar
 - 3 – 4 peppercorns – slightly crushed
 - A few herb sprigs (optional)
 - 250g jar
- 1) Place the seeds in a bowl and cover with 300ml water. Add the salt and stir to dissolve.
 - 2) Cover the bowl with a clean tea towel and leave the seeds to sit in the brine for 24 hours. There will be a mild sulphur like smell, which is part of the pickling process.
 - 3) Drain and rinse the seeds. Lay the seeds on trays lined with kitchen paper to dry. Meanwhile sterilise your jar.
 - 4) Once dry, place the seeds in sterilised jars with the peppercorns and herbs and cover completely with the vinegar.
 - 5) Seal with a lid (if using metal lid, place a layer of parchment paper between the top of the jar and lid, as vinegar erodes metal)
 - 6) Store in a cool, dark place. They will be ready to eat after 2 weeks. Once opened, store in the fridge, keeping submerged.

Coconut calendula salve

A soothing salve for tired gardener's hands or skin irritations – think stings, burns, eczema, scrapes and grazes

For 250ml salve

- 240ml coconut calendula-infused oil (see below for this recipe)
- 35g beeswax pellets
- 20 drops of lavender essential oil (optional)
- Dried calendula petals to decorate
- You will also need 20 x 150ml lip balm tins or 4 x 60ml jars

- 1) If using glass jars make sure you sterilise them
- 2) Lay out all your tins or jars and remove the lids before you start. Beeswax starts to solidify once removed from the heat, so you need to move swiftly
- 3) Heat the calendula oil and beeswax over a bain-marie (see method opposite) until the beeswax is melted. Whisk the fork to speed up the process.
- 4) Remove from the heat and mix in the essential oil, if using. Now you need to move fast as the wax will start to set. Using oven gloves, carefully pour the mixture into a jug, taking care to avoid any water drips falling into it.
- 5) From the jug, pour into tins or jars of your choosing.
- 6) Decorate with dried calendula petals if you wish.
- 7) Allow the salve to set, pop on the lids, label / date. Use within 6 months. The salve hardens in cold weather but can be quickly softened in your hands.

Coconut calendula infused oil

275ml infused oil

- 400ml coconut oil
 - 30g dried calendula flowers
- 1) Place the coconut oil in a bain Marie (a heatproof bowl over a saucepan part-filled with simmering water). Allow the coconut oil to melt
 - 2) Add the flowers and leave to infuse for 3 hours over a gentle simmer – do not cover and do not allow the water in the pan to dry out.
 - 3) For a stronger infusion strain after 2 – 3 hours and repeat the process with the same oil and a fresh batch of flowers.
 - 4) Remove from the heat. Line a sieve or funnel with muslin and strain the oil into a clean jug. When cool enough, squeeze out as much oil as possible from the muslin. The discarded flowers can go for composting.
 - 5) You can use this oil directly on the skin, but I like to make into a salve as it's less messy.