

episode 41 show notes and advice

Tender perennial climbers are the subject of this week's podcast. They are coming into their absolute peak now, as autumn goes into winter, and looking splendid at Perch Hill.

If you want a garden that goes on looking good this late in the year, Sarah passionately recommends this group of climbers. They have beautiful flowers and colours, with interesting shapes that bring sculpture and architecture to your garden, just as everything else is turning a little grey and mushy.

The other reason to talk about them now is, here in the UK, they are grown as annuals. To guarantee flowers that go on and on, these climbers need to be sown early in the year, so good to start thinking about if you want to grow them from seed.

On the podcast, Sarah and Arthur discuss their favourite varieties, where they grow them and why they are so fantastic at this time of year.

In this episode, discover:

- Sarah & Arthur's go-to climbers including Thunbergia 'African Sunset', Rhodithton and Love-in-a-puff.
- This type of climber can also be brilliant for pots. Arthur shares the plants he recommends growing i.e. Thunbergia 'African Sunset' with smaller dahlias like 'Waltzing Matilda' or 'Totally Tangerine'.
- A sowing guide - to ensure maximum flowering at this time of year, seeds need to be sown early in the year.
- The climbers that are fantastic for pollinators and cut flowers - Sarah picks cobeia, the cup-and saucer-plant, for her Christmas table arrangements.
- Sarah's easy, instant supper recipe for a spiced, roasted cauliflower with a tahini, soy dressing.

Links & references:

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

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

Get in touch: info@sarahraven.com

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

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

Episode 41 advice sheet

Tender perennials Climbers

Grown as annuals in the UK, fabulous for now, at this late stage of the year. Even if you've had a few degrees of frost, they survive, often until Christmas. They snake around the place in early summer then put on a growth spurt, starting to flower as autumn begins, making a garden feel like a jungle, just when we need it most, as almost all other garden plants are fading to grey.

These are one of the first things to sow, in January or February, so need to be at the front of your minds now if you want to grow them yourself from seed. They need sowing early otherwise they tend to reach their 6-foot flowering height just as the frosts cut them down at the end of the year. That's the commonest issue with them, they grow well and climb, but No flowers! Avoid this by starting them off early.

Growing tips

- Use bottom heat in a propagator. They hail from warmer places and need a bit of mollycoddling.
- Soak the seed from the night before.
- They should germinate in 2-3 weeks.

(You can also get most of these things as plugs and get us or others to do the sowing for you)

- Then it's key to pot them into a decent sized pot, at least a 1L but even bigger is better.
- Keep them inside until after the frosts are done.
- Make them a little silver birch climbing frame until they go out, get them going actively in March and April before you plant them out in May – by which times they may have reached 60cm plus.
- Arthur pinches out the *cobaea* and *thunbergia* to keep them contained.
- And start feeding them – we use a weekly dose of liquid seaweed.
- Plant them out on a climbing frame of silver birch once the frosts are over in your area, or grow them as a trailer with no support from larger pots and containers.

Recommended

- **Thunbergia 'African Sunset' – Black-eyed Susan**

They're brilliant for pots mixed up with smallish dahlias like 'Totally Tangerine', they'll climb a bit but will also spill, so soften the side of a pot. Also great for hanging baskets of the loose and relaxed kind.

- **Rhodichiton – Purple Bell Vine**

Deep red purple bells with a bell clanger in the centre, so lovely grown up a silver birch teepee. And beautiful mixed with thunbergia. Then just add Panicum 'Sparkling Fountain' and you have the perfect pot combination. Arthur has used them as a moveable pot table centre that you can move in and out, particularly ideal if you have a conservatory.

- **Ipomaea lobata – Spanish Flag**

Like Chinese pagodas or pelican's beaks, these are delicate and glamorous now in November, so late in the year. It's the shape, as well as the colour of these that is so beautiful.

- **Cardiospermum – Love-in-a-puff**

Green, cheesy football seed pods come after tiny little white flowers all over a delicate vine. They're called Love-in-a-puff because the seedpod contains 3 seeds, jet black with a perfect 'as-if-painted' white heart on the side.

- **Ipomaea 'Heavenly Blue'**

This stunning blue is such a beauty but we struggle with it at Perch Hill, whereas 'Grandpa Ott' is purple, flowers prolifically, and stays open for longer through the day.

- **Cobaea scandens – The cup-and-saucer plant**

This comes in purple and white forms, looking just like an Alice in Wonderland cup sitting on a saucer. Great for pollinators, and great for coating walls and arches, flowering right the way through until Christmas. We pick tons of it too, with stem ends seared in boiling water for five seconds. And we pick the flower as well as the climbing ends of vines which have such great shapes – beautiful twists and turns and corkscrews.

Roast Cauliflower steaks with Tahini dressing

This is as simple as it gets and makes for a delicious, quick and easy vegan supper. I sometimes scatter with a mix of toasted pumpkin, sunflower and perhaps sesame seeds, to make it more filling and substantial.

For 2

1 cauliflower

1/2 tsp cumin seeds

1/2 tsp coriander seeds

Salt

Olive oil

Dressing

- 1 heaped tbsp Tahini
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- Juice and zest of 2 limes or 2 lemons
- 2 tbsp olive oil

You can add yoghurt too (2tbsp) if you're not vegan

Preheat the oven to 180C. Add a baking tray with the lightest film of olive oil, salt and the whole spices and cook for 3-4 minutes for the seeds to toast a little.

Cut a cauliflower into 1cm thick steaks, right across the cauliflower head. Remove the chunkier bits of white stem and place on the oiled, salted and spiced baking tray.

Roast the steaks for 15-20 minutes until just charring at the edges and the main stem is soft to the point of a knife.

Remove from the oven and lay out on a flat serving plate. Leave to cool for 2-3 minutes and then pour over the dressing (which can be thinned with a little water if it's too thick to easily pour).

Scatter over the mix of seeds (if using).

Serve with a bright, crunchy, flavour-packed winter green salad including lots of strong flavoured leaves such as rocket, sorrel and mustard.