

episode 7 show notes and advice

Episode Description

Your garden has so much potential to become an oasis for birds and bees, and you don't have to sacrifice beauty to make this happen. Arthur considers a butterfly, or a bee on a flower, nature's jewels in your garden, and combining glamour and wildlife can be particularly rewarding. Now is the perfect time to sow for a bustling summer garden.

Also discussed this week are courgettes - a particularly easy vegetable to sow. As always, Sarah shares some of the courgette's culinary uses, with a wonderful range of recipes. Sarah also relates an interesting anecdote on why you should always pick your courgettes more frequently than you might think...

In this episode, discover:

- How to bring the best of wildlife gardening, and regular gardening together
- Bringing butterflies, bees and birds into your garden
- Sarah and Arthur's three favourite courgettes
- Delicious courgette recipes
- Tips for sowing courgettes, and when best to pick them

Links and references

Pre-order Sarah's new book: <http://bit.ly/3cR0kyh>

Pre-order Arthur's new book: <http://bit.ly/3qiBqUs>

Shop on the Sarah Raven website: <http://bit.ly/3jybaeu>

Get in touch: info@sarahraven.com

Products mentioned:

Dahlia 'Blue Bayou': <https://bit.ly/2PxpliJ>

Sunflower 'ProCut Plum': <http://bit.ly/3qOINLF>

Crocus: <http://bit.ly/2PW9HTK>

Dahlias: <http://bit.ly/3bNovwp>

Scabious: <http://bit.ly/3bKXeuw>

Thistles: <https://bit.ly/3bOPs2l>

Salvias: <https://bit.ly/3lkZhJ3>

Oregano: <http://bit.ly/3tjCDlp>

Borage: <http://bit.ly/30H7uOj>

Rosemary: <https://bit.ly/3rI7kaN>

Buddleia davidii 'Buzz Indigo': <http://bit.ly/30HMCAb>

Courgettes and squash:

'Tromboncino': <http://bit.ly/3eG6SQX>

'Serpente di Sicilia': <http://bit.ly/3tf5bxW>

Romanesco: <http://bit.ly/2NhKTEL>

'Bianca di Trieste': <http://bit.ly/3cBF0uZ>

Soleil - <http://bit.ly/3lf6tqb>

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

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

episode 7 advice sheet | Sowing annuals for birds and sowing courgettes

Sarah and Arthur's 5 favourite categories of plants for gardens as nature reserves – to encourage butterflies, bees and birds

- Annual grasses such as Red Millet, Panicum violaceum – particularly loved by goldfinches and Panicum 'Sparkling Fountain'.
- Flowering herbs such as oregano and rosemary
- Single dahlias such as Bishop's series and anemone-flowered varieties
- Buddleja 'Buzz Series' e.g. 'Buzz Magenta' for Red Admirals and Peacock butterflies
- Sunflowers e.g. 'Procut Plum'

PLUS

- Maybe Hebes, (even though we don't love them!)
- Nettles, carefully and ornately staked (for the caterpillar stage of butterflies)

Sarah's rules for choosing plants, and creating suitable habitats for butterflies and bees

1. Grow single and semi-double flowers such as Dahlia 'Blue Bayou' not doubles
2. Grow stacked flowers e.g. foxgloves like a high-rise of cafés for pollinators
3. Succession of flowers from crocus in February (for bumblebees) to ivy flowers in September/October
4. Have a shallow source of fresh water
5. Leave some grasses to get tall and flower – brilliant for many moth varieties

Sarah and Arthur's rules for creating good habitats for garden birds

- Feed the birds with plants which are prolific producers of seeds and carefully site bird feeders. Birds in your garden will help you control slugs and snails without the need for slug pellets.

PLUS

- Plant or take care of existing hedges – hawthorn is perfect
- Plant small trees for gardens e.g. crabapple tree or amelanchier

Courgettes

I recommend a mix of three courgettes, one plant of each

- Dark-green 'Romanesco'
- White-green 'Bianca di Trieste'
- Yellow 'Soleil F1'

Together, these will give three great colours in the garden and on the plate. PLUS the unusual variety called 'Tromboncino' which is shaped like a trombone.

How to sow courgettes

Sowing into individual pots

- Fill the pots with a peat-free potting compost.
- Water the compost.
- Push the seed in to the depth of your knuckle. Push it in on its edge, rather than flat. The compost usually folds over the seed and buries them, but you can cover with compost if this hasn't happened.
- Label.
- There's no need to water again straight away. Put on a heated propagator until they germinate.
- Once germinated, water every few days when the compost starts to dry on the surface.
- Keep these half-hardy annuals protected inside until the chance of frost has past, or maybe get going early with planting a few of each in a greenhouse if you have room. We try to do this with both, bringing our first harvest forward to the end of May for the first courgette and about 4-6 weeks later with cucumbers.
- If you keep them for planting in the garden, you will need to pot on the seedlings as they grow.

Stuffed courgette flowers with goat's cheese and runny honey

You don't often see courgette flowers for sale in the UK, but if you do, buy them. If you grow courgettes, pumpkins or squash, you'll have plenty in your garden.

This recipe might look tricky, but it is, in fact, very easy. The Cretan combination of the mild goat's cheese with the runny honey is wonderful.

Serves 8

- 16 courgette flowers
- 100g pine nuts or 150g fresh or frozen peas
- 150g cream cheese
- 150g goat's cheese, crumbly or soft (any that will mix in with the cream cheese)
- Salt and black pepper
- Small bunch of fresh thyme, leaves finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Light olive oil, for frying
- Runny honey, to serve

For the batter

- 150g plain flour
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 egg whites
- Salt and black pepper

First make the batter: sift the flour into a medium bowl and make a well in the centre. Pour in the olive oil, stirring as you pour. Gradually add a little warm water to loosen the mixture, stirring all the time, until you have a batter the consistency of double cream. Season. Leave to stand at room temperature for at least 45 minutes. The warm water swells the flour and stops it being too heavy.

Just before cooking, beat the egg whites until stiff, then gently fold into the batter.

Shake the courgette flowers to dislodge any ants or earwigs that might be hidden inside, and remove the stigma from the centre. If you have mini courgettes with the flowers, slit them

lengthways two-thirds of the way up the fruit (this allows the heat to penetrate the courgette flesh).

Toast the pine nuts or cook the peas in plenty of salted boiling water for 3 minutes. In a mixing bowl, combine the pine nuts or peas with the cheeses, salt, pepper, thyme and olive oil.

Using your fingers, gently part the flower petals, keeping one finger on the inside to keep them open. Carefully stuff each flower with 2 teaspoons of the cheese mixture, sealing the pointed end by giving it a little twist.

Fill a deep saucepan with enough oil to reach about one third of the way up the side, and have a lid or splash-guard on standby to prevent the oil spitting too much after you add each batch.

Heat the oil until it reaches about 190°C, or until a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds.

Coat your stuffed flowers with batter and shallow fry them – just 3 or 4 at a time – until they're crisp and golden (you'll need to turn them while they're cooking). Drain on kitchen paper.

Put 2 flowers per person on individual plates, drizzle with the honey and add a scattering of salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Greek courgette pie

This is delicious warm and almost as good cold. The Greeks make it at the weekend and then eat it cold for breakfast or lunch for the rest of the week. It's good with a tomato and onion salad.

Serves 10-12:

- 1kg courgettes
- Salt
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 spring onions, chopped
- 150ml olive oil
- 1 pack of filo pastry
- 300g feta cheese
- 3 eggs
- 120ml double cream
- Small bunch of dill
- Small bunch of parsley
- Mint leaves stripped from 2-3 stems
- Milk, for glazing
- Sesame seeds for scattering

Grate the courgettes and salt them, allowing them to drain for 30 minutes. Squeeze out any excess juice.

Fry both types of onions in a little of the olive oil until they're soft and then add the courgettes. Fry them together gently for 15 minutes until the excess liquid evaporates.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Separate out 6 filo pastry sheets and brush them with oil on both sides. If the pastry seems to be a bit dry, lay it between two damp clean tea towels.

Place 3 of the sheets in the base of a 30 x 40cm oven tray, one oiled sheet layered on top of the next.

Pour in the courgette mixture and crumble the feta over it. Beat the eggs and cream together and drizzle them on top. Add the herbs, salt and pepper, and fork the cheese and egg mixture lightly into the courgettes.

Fold in the filo sheets enclosing the courgette mix and brush with oil. Then place another filo sheet on top and brush with oil, and repeat with 2 more sheets. Brush lightly with oil and snip most of the excess pastry around the edges, leaving just enough to tuck in right the way around the tin. Glaze the pie with a little milk and scatter sesame seeds over the top. Prick the pastry all over with a fork.

Put the pie in the preheated oven and cook for about an hour. You can shake it in the pan to see if there's much movement. Remove from the oven when the pie is set and the pastry golden. Put a tea towel over the top and leave it to cool for half an hour before you eat.