

## episode 9 show notes and advice

### Episode Description

We're delighted to welcome a very special guest onto 'grow, cook, eat, arrange' this week; someone whose award-winning talent as a food writer, grower and photographer, is matched by his enthusiasm for full-flavoured recipes - Mark Diacono.

From a slip of the tongue that led to the inception of his 'Charlie Mojito', to complementing mint with cosmos, along with growing tips, this episode offers an entertaining snapshot of Mark's passionate plant-growing at Otter Farm, and a sneak peek into his forthcoming book.

### In this episode, discover:

- Mark's favourite mint for food recipes and to pair with gin
- The strange story behind a very unique mojito recipe
- How to arrange cosmos with mint
- Tips on sowing cosmos, a great plant for beginners
- Mark's ideal recipe for mint sauce

### Links and references

Order Sarah's new book: <http://bit.ly/3cR0kyh>

Order Arthur's new book: <http://bit.ly/3qiBgUs>

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

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

### Products mentioned:

Sorrel: <https://bit.ly/39dHVJd>

Cosmos: <https://bit.ly/3rh5wPp>

Mint: <https://bit.ly/2PoH7ds>

Mark Diacono - 'Herb: A Cook's Companion': <https://bit.ly/2PoHfts>

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

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

## episode 9 advice sheet | Spring herbs and cosmos with guest Mark Diacono

### Spring Herbs and Cosmos – Easter episode

Sarah and Arthur are joined by Mark Diacono

Mark has a new book on herbs: <https://amzn.to/3d3mMCJ>

### Mint

Mark's 3 favourite mints are:

- Moroccan mint for all-round uses
- Chocolate mint for cooking stone fruit
- Apple Mint spreads brilliantly, is excellent for under-planting fruit trees and keeping fungal diseases at bay and attracts pollinators.

### Three Spring Herb Recipes from Mark

#### Adjika recipe

This incredible sauce/dip from Georgia is intense, bright and full-on. The main ingredients that you can tone up and down are heat (chillies), salt, garlic and oil, although I rarely make this without mint. Lemon verbena brings perfume and a cool breeze; coriander is altogether calmer. Once you feel confident with this, do play with it as you like: it's perfectly usual for me to make this drier or even on the edge of becoming an oil. It's up to you what proportions of mint to lemon verbena make up the 90g (3¼oz) – I usually go for 55g/35g. As with many combinations of salt, heat and herb, you'll find that ideas for using it, spiral from the mind as you taste it.

Makes a small jarful

- 90g (3¼oz) mint and lemon verbena
- 3 large green, medium-hot chillies
- 4 large garlic cloves
- 30g (1oz) salt

- 20ml (¾fl oz) olive oil
- 20ml (¾fl oz) walnut oil

Have a sterilized jar ready.

Strip the leaves from the mint and lemon verbena stems and discard the stems. Place all the ingredients into a blender and blitz on high speed.

Store in the fridge, where it should keep for at least a couple of weeks.

### Charlie's Mojito

A classic English mojito has gin in place of the rum, so sticking with that, I've used tonic to take the place of the traditional soda water. Lemon verbena syrup adds the usual sugar and lemon flavour that goes so well with the gin and tonic. In many ways, this is a gin and tonic mojito. It's the kind of invention that deserves a knighthood. It's most certainly the sort of drink that makes you wish for the next sunny evening.

For the syrup: dissolve 300g sugar in 300ml simmering water, turn off the heat and add a good handful of lemon verbena leaves. Remove the leaves when it has the strength you like. The remainder will last in the fridge for weeks.

- 50ml gin
- 40ml lemon verbena syrup
- 1 lime, juice and skin
- 26 leaves of mint
- Crushed ice
- Tonic water

The ingredients should be very cold indeed.

Add the lime juice, lime skin and mint to a bowl and pound the leaves with the end of a rolling pin - this is known as 'muddling' - to extract scent and flavour from the mint and lime skins.

Lift out the lime skins, and squeeze to extract all the juice. Add the lemon verbena and gin, stir and pour into a glass. Add ice and top with tonic to taste. Sit in the sun and enjoy.

### Mint sauce

Into a jug add a lot of chopped mint, boiling water, and half that of sugar and stir it up. Let this cool and add the white wine vinegar (equal to the volume added of water), and then a good amount of salt depending on your liking. At the end, add some fresh mint to add an extra depth to the flavour. You could swap sugar for redcurrant jelly and lemon juice instead of the white wine vinegar. Don't be afraid to add a squeeze more lemon.

### Cosmos

Perfect for sowing now from April into May

- sow into seed tray, well-spaced
- germinates very quickly – which is so encouraging
- prick out into 9cm pot
- very fast to grow and flower
- bees and butterflies love them
- epitome of cut-and-come-again plants, the more you pick, the more they flower

### Sarah and Arthur's Favourites are

#### RICH

- Cosmos 'Rubenza': rich raspberry colour, perfect for pots as more compact
- Cosmos 'Dazzler': Brilliant magenta-pink

#### PALE

- Cosmos 'Fizzy White': semi-double white but still buzzing with bees
- Cosmos 'Purity': pure white single, tall variety (gets to 3ft at least)