

episode 93 show notes and advice

episode description

This week, Sarah is joined by writer and gardening whizz, Julia Parker, to talk about tasty recipe ideas for children, exciting activities in the great outdoors, and the importance of growing your own vegetables.

Sarah shares her favourite moments from Julia's new book 'The Little Growers Cookbook' which she wrote with author, Ghillie James. Whether you're just embarking on the journey to growing fruit and veg, or you're looking for exciting ways to introduce nature into your children's lives, Julia's book is an excellent place to start.

In this episode, discover:

- ❖ A sneak peek into Julia's new book 'The Little Growers Cookbook'
- ❖ inspiring outdoor projects for children
- ❖ Top tips for growing vegetables at home

episode 93 advice sheet

Great ideas for homegrown veg

Plant with guttering (8:36)

- ❖ Like Sarah, Julia loves to use guttering in her gardening to grow salad items such as lettuce, and shallow-rooted vegetables that need warmth. Filled with multipurpose compost and scattered with seeds, Julia also explains that guttering works well as a holding bay that fits on window ledges.
- ❖ In Springtime, Julia chooses to fill her greenhouse with guttering and explains that this method is perfect for any garden, big or small, as they can be cut to size. Cut the guttering down even smaller so little people can have their own mini gutter pipes to grow garden treasures.
- ❖ Sarah explains that as guttering is also black in colour. So, great for attracting the retaining warmth from the sun, like a mini propagator.

Potatoes in containers (10:13)

- ❖ Growing potatoes in containers is another great activity idea to do with children. The surprise 'lucky dip' element always goes down a treat with little hands.

- ❖ Julia explains that potatoes need frequent watering, so be sure to keep a watering can close by. Another fun activity to do with children, which will teach them all about growing and harvesting vegetables.
- ❖ In preparation for her book, Julia grew 'International Kidney' also known as 'Jersey Royals' - one of her personal favourites.
- ❖ Sarah also likes to grow 'Jersey Royals', but her favourite is a waxy potato like 'Anya'.

Julia's sweetie peas project (12:14)

A great idea to keep children engaged all year round, this project is ideal for children and their families with access to any outdoor space of their own. Please note – the peas that Julia refers to are edible and not to be confused with sweet peas, the flowers.

- ❖ As children often have short attention spans, pea shoots (the edible variety) luckily germinate quickly.
- ❖ Any variety of edible pea seeds can be sown and cultivated, which is welcome news as pea shoots often come with a high price tag in food stores. The seeds are inexpensive and don't have to be sown in one go, meaning they go much further.
- ❖ Julia chooses to grow her pea shoots in something fun like a quality street tin, an idea that children love. Grow on a warm window ledge in the kitchen over a three-to-four-month period. They can be harvested up to about three times.
- ❖ A great idea for this time of year (October/November) – Sarah explains that in a recent trial at Perch Hill, they were unable to tell the difference between the expensive varieties and the cheaper alternatives. Sarah says her favourite pea variety is Nairobi.

Recipes that caught Sarah's eye (15:37)

Recipes to suit all ages and perfect for family dinners. 'The Little Growers Cookbook' is available from all good bookstores.

- ❖ 'Sticky salmon' – an easy-to-make 'one pot wonder' which centres on lemon, ginger, and garlic and only takes about 20 minutes in the oven. Julia also incorporates home-grown broccoli, a great addition to the meal. Lots of flavour packed into such a simple dish.

- ❖ 'Tray bake pizza with 5-minute pizza dough' – a recipe in the book that Sarah loves the sound of. Self-raising flour replaces the yeast, which makes it quicker to make and easier for the children to pull apart. Very few ingredients, make your own tomato sauce for an extra special touch.
- ❖ 'Chia seed jam' Use Chia seeds as a thickener. Quick, easy, and super tasty!
- ❖ 'Eton mess ice cream cake'. Julia's version in the book takes the classic Eton mess recipe and reinvents it. Frozen and cut into slices, the addition of strawberries and fresh or store cupboard custard is child-friendly and quick to make.
- ❖ For Sarah's 'Coffee, meringue and ice cream cake' visit the website for the full recipe.
- ❖ 'Courgette, apple and parsnip cake with cream cheese frosting'. Decorated with edible flowers grown and harvested in the garden. A real showstopper and healthy too!

Exciting projects to do with children (2:41)

Take inspiration from these cost-effective and family-friendly activity ideas. Great for parents, grandparents, or anyone with children in their life, there's so much fun to be had whatever the weather.

- ❖ Feeding the birds - fun, exciting, and inexpensive. Bringing birds into the garden is a great way to educate children and teach them about visiting wildlife. Scooping out the centre of citrus and filling it with a mixture of fat and seeds and hung with twine on a branch is a fun way to get children involved. Citrus also lasts much longer due to the tough skin.
- ❖ Invite pollinators into the garden - on a sunny day, putting out sweet fruit is a great way to attract butterflies. This is a more sustainable way to dispose of spoiled fruit and wonderful for the children too. Simply lay the fruit out on a table for a quick activity that's guaranteed to bring joy.
- ❖ Building a bug hotel – A great idea for protecting insects over the winter months. This is a great November/December weekend activity. Using an old tin – fill with foraged finds from the garden such as grass and leaves. This creates a little hidden area that will offer insects refuge. A great project for any child.