

episode 98 show notes and advice

Episode description

For the very first episode in our '12 best' series, Sarah is joined by Head Gardener at Perch Hill, Josie Lewis, to share their favourite roses. From excellent vase life to the most delicious scents, Sarah and Josie take time to share everything they know about growing excellent roses for all types of gardens, and with over 100 varieties at Perch Hill to choose from, they're seriously spoiled for choice!

In this episode, discover:

- ❖ Sarah and Josie's definitive top 12 roses
- ❖ Updates from the vase life and perfume rose trial 2022
- ❖ Josie's top tips for getting the best from bare root roses

episode 98 advice sheet

Vase life and scent trial 2022 (3:26)

- ❖ Over quite a few weeks, Rosie and her team laid out masses of vases in the offices and then each gardener went out into the gardens to pick 10 roses each.
- ❖ Each stem was cut relatively short and then seared for 10 to 15 seconds. This is an excellent tip with proven results. You can read more about it [here](#).
- ❖ The team then all took it in turns to assess the scent of the roses, one by one. As this is down to individual preference, they scored each stem out of 10 and ranked their favourites.
- ❖ Rosa 'Jude the Obscure' was a good rose to measure the others against, as the team were unanimous in their admiration for its excellent perfume.

Roses that have excelled in the scent trial (5:50)

- ❖ Rosa Ebb Tide – looks like Rosa 'Timeless Purple'
- ❖ Rosa 'Evelyn May'
- ❖ Anemone Fullstar Bright Rose
- ❖ Rosa 'Felicia'
- ❖ Rosa 'First Great Western'
- ❖ Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll'
- ❖ Rosa 'Goldfinch'
- ❖ Rosa Jude the Obscure
- ❖ Rosa 'Just Joey' – One of Sarah's favourites for scent
- ❖ Rosa Lady Emma Hamilton – An absolute cracker
- ❖ Rosa Princess Alexandra of Kent
- ❖ Rose De Rêsch
- ❖ Rosa rugosa 'Roseraie De Lhay' – Benchmark scent
- ❖ Stanwell Perpetual Rose
- ❖ Rosa 'Sweet Juliet'

Roses that excelled in the vase life in the trial (7:10)

Josie explains that it's difficult to pick each rose at exactly the same stage of life. This trial is also quite subjective but yielded interesting results.

- ❖ Anis Perfumella (Hybrid Tea) – Vase life of 5 days, although Sarah wasn't a fan of its appearance.
- ❖ Rosa Duchess of Cornwall – see below for more details.

12 best roses

Sarah and Josie's 12 top picks (8:50)

- ❖ (Sarah) Rosa 'Duchess of Cornwall' (Hybrid Tea) – lasts well at 5 days – a beautiful and classic English rose, in a variable soft coral, but then also quite pink at different stages. Still flowers right into the beginning of Winter and named after our Queen Consort – A total winner!
- ❖ (Josie) Rosa 'Timeless Purple' – Not included in this year's trial, but a terrific lasting rose, great scent and exceptionally healthy. Colours vary in the light and season. Great for a smaller garden as it's really compact.

- ❖ (Sarah) Rosa 'Night Owl' – Excellent perfume, and a different habit to the varieties above, so great for training on a fence. Looks truly classic on shared panelling between neighbours. A really beautiful colour too.
- ❖ (Josie) Rosa 'Hot Chocolate' – Great for long flowering, as it can still be picked in December. This rose has to be seen to be believed, almost burnished copper crossed with terracotta in colour – a real cracker!
- ❖ Rosa 'Champagne moment' – a mother of pearl combined with soft ivory. This rose is almost like Dahlia 'Café Au Lait' and flowers long into the depths of winter. Looks great with Tabacco Plant (*Nicotiana sylvestris*) and Dahlia 'Merckii'. An ethereal and elegant trio.
- ❖ (Sarah) Rose De Rêsch – a perfect, petit rose. A great addition to any tiny garden, this is the rose that Sarah would definitely go for. Flowers well into November with healthy foliage.
- ❖ (Josie) Up against a wall, Josie loves 'Scent from Heaven' (climbing) – an orangey apricot which looks great against brickwork - although, be sure to make sure the two will work nicely together. The scent is wonderful and is a short climber. Eventual height is something to look out for when it comes to planning. This variety is great for arches and obelisks.
- ❖ (Sarah) Not currently in the garden at Perch Hill, but one to plant in the coming months - Rosa 'Madame Alfred Carrière' – first introduced into the garden at Sissinghurst in the 1930s when Vita Sackville-West and her husband, Harold Nicolson, exchanged on the property. This remarkably healthy rose is a total celebration, with short flower stems, great for a taller wall. It's lasted nearly 100 years too.
- ❖ (Josie) For hips – Rosa rugosa 'Roseaie De Lhay'. The birds absolutely love this rose. Be sure to deadhead like you would a normal rose and it will send out a second flush, and maybe a third flush. It's currently in the garden at Perch Hill as a mini hedge, and sports healthy and chiselled foliage.
- ❖ (Sarah) Rosa moyesii Geranium – Inspired by her friend and garden designer, Pip Morrisson. This variety produces big, casket-shaped hips, with a sealing wax texture in mellow orange. Tall, elegant, and graceful. This is another favourite of visiting garden birds.
- ❖ (Josie) Josie shares her 'marmite' rose which she says divides people with its appearance - Rosa 'For Your Eyes Only'. Great for pollinators, but the pink, apricot,

and crimson eye are too much for her. Sarah says it's like a dog rose with her party clothes on!

- ❖ (Sarah) Rosa x odorata 'Mutabilis' – A simple, single rose, which reminds Sarah of her childhood. Its early flowering time (April) and ever-changing colour palette (opens apricot and changes to pink) are what make it so interesting. Not a strong hybrid and often comes looking a little bit sparse. Once established, this rose will last for years to come and has incredible crimson buds. Subtle and stunning, once it gets going, it's truly worth it.

Bare root rose planting (27:40)

- ❖ Josie's top tips on how to plant and get the best from bare root roses.
- ❖ Unwrap when they arrive. As they are 'bare root' this means that there won't be any soil around them.
- ❖ If you can't plant them straight away, place them into a pot and cover with spent compost. This will ensure that they keep for a few weeks before you're ready to plant them out. Another good tip if you're battling frozen ground.
- ❖ The graft union needs to be just below the surface of the soil, you can use something like a bamboo cane. Be careful, as this can cause sucker formation, which will stop your plants from getting the nutrients they need.
- ❖ Hold the rose over the hole that you've dug, make sure you've considered the size of the roots and how much space the rose will need. Sprinkle over some mycorrhizal fungi over the hole and fill in around the rose's roots. This is a proven method and will allow the rose roots to access more water and more nutrients. It will also help to anchor the rose to the soil. Sarah recommends Merlin Sheldrake's book 'Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures'.
- ❖ Place the rose in the hole. Gently press the earth down, don't be tempted to stamp as the soil is a living thing.
- ❖ Water – this will settle the soil and will also stop air pockets forming around the roots. Be careful not to saturate.