

## episode 54 show notes and advice

This week Arthur interviews Tattie from [Tattie Rose Flowers](#), a botanical set designer who creates extraordinary floral installations on a vast scale. Arthur first saw her work at the Chelsea Flower Show last September. She had covered the iconic main gates in hydrangeas, hops and autumnal foliage creating amazing bowers of natural splendour.

In this episode Tattie shares how her love of the outdoors inspires her work, why foliage always takes centre stage and how working sustainably is her top priority.

### In this episode, discover:

- How Tattie and her team tell magical stories through their designs with themes like botanical circus or magical wild garden.
- Tattie's go-to treasures to forage from hedgerows.
- How bohemia, architecture, trees and [Tim Walker](#) inspire Tattie's work.
- Tattie's sustainable floral arranging techniques with no oasis floral foam in sight.

## Episode 54 advice sheet

### A family affair

Tattie is based in West Dorset with a studio in London and travels all over the UK and abroad for events. Her son Alf is obsessed with chickens and is a passionate hen keeper, he's Arthur's biggest fan. Tattie runs Tattie Rose Flowers with her husband Fred and her team of makers, florists, botanists, artists and welders. It is very much a family affair which helps Tattie marry her busy homelife as a mum of three young boys with her international events.

### Nature as inspiration

Tattie is more interested in nature than flowers – she loves trees and foliage but can take or leave a bunch of roses or peonies. She loves colour and the outdoors, her aim is to bring nature into spaces. Tattie started out doing flowers for an event florist to be outdoors and for the hands on, creative work. She didn't learn names of all the flowers until she was 25, they were just ingredients to make beautiful. Now she appreciates the journey from seed to flower so much more.

### Reacting to the seasons

For Tattie what is magical is being able to react to the seasons and use what's available. Right now catkins are her current favourite. She loves spindle berry at the end of October/November for that flash of pink in a hedge. She likes working with open, flat or bell-shaped flowers rather than pom pom frills. She loves rose hips and the dog rose. Foliage takes centre stage and finding these treasures is almost harder work than finding the flowers.

### **Sourcing foliage**

Networking is key and Tattie and the team work really hard researching and finding places to cut from, often direct from estates and woodsmen. She also uses lots of trees and shrubs in pots, once used, they are planted up and can then be cut from. Brilliant for longevity and more reliable than cut flowers.

### **Peonies are fine... in June!**

Tattie Rose Flowers often have very floral commissions and are happy to use popular flowers if in season. If it is mid-June and people want peonies, no problem. But peonies in March is a no. For Tattie her work is about surprising people, creating an atmosphere and energy. She loves the unexpected, turning the ordinary into something extra using scale or light but fitting it with the surroundings or seasons so it doesn't feel uncomfortable. She loves how Arthur works with seedheads, it so exciting and beautiful, reimagining and using them in a different way.

### **Using props**

Tattie has a warehouse full of vintage chandeliers and modular kit for set building on a large scale. She has a lot made locally by a steelworker in Dorset. It is important to her that kit can be reused over and over. After the Chelsea Flower Show, her rubbish consisted of a handful of elastic bands, every other bit of kit was reused, chopped up, welded, composted or planted.

### **Tattie's Inspirations**

Tattie gets a lot of her inspiration from visiting the event space and checking the scale. Too big and it can squash a design. She read lots of books although doesn't follow that many people in the flower industry as she tries to not follow trends. She adores [Tim Walker](#) the photographer, for his freedom. Tattie feels lucky to live in West Dorset, surrounded by

beautiful nature, with her family, two magical white peacocks and doves. Having three imaginative little boys helps too!

### **Production timescale**

Tattie ideally likes to work on site from scratch so starting prep on Thursday for a Saturday event. She's done jobs at the V&A museum with one hour to set up a dinner for 400 people with trees on the tables – that took 8 vans and a team of 30. She likes projects where the team are on site and can get embedded into the work, building installations up like a painting or tapestry in layers.

### **Sustainable events**

A lot of foliage is suspended for Tattie's events. Arthur asks how she conditions flowers for this given she won't use Oasis floral foam (see ep. Shane Connolly for more on Oasis and sustainable floristry). Tattie has hundreds of sketchbooks with notes on how to create her installations. She likes embracing what is possible to do, plants grow upwards, flowers stand upright in a vase, rather than trying to recreate a round suspended ball of oasis flowers, so the constraints of using water can help with new inspiration and new designs.

### **Tattie Rose Flowers projects coming up**

Tattie has a busy year ahead and is particularly looking forward to an event in Scotland to do a wild wedding in castle, all the foliage foraged from land around it. There are various Tattie Rose in-house projects on the go. It is hard doing flowers at Tattie Rose's scale as growers don't have the capacity. As buying from 15-20 different growers each weekend is hard, a Tattie Rose Flowers in-house flower farm is on the cards for the future.

For a glimpse into the extraordinary worlds Tattie Rose Flowers create you can visit their [Instagram](#) and [website](#) to find out more.

See [episode 46 sustainable floristry with Shane Connolly](#) for more information on alternatives to Oasis floral foam.