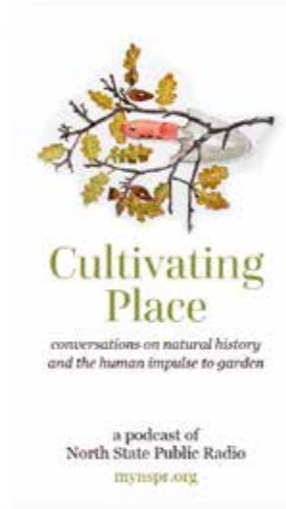


# ONLY CONNECT

Whether you want to learn how to keep your houseplants alive, discover more about the National Trust's gardens or just enjoy some lively conversation while you're at work in the potting shed, there's a podcast for you. We recommend six of the best

WORDS ALYS HURN



**CULTIVATING PLACE**  
 Average length  
 50 minutes  
 How often is it released  
 Weekly  
 Link  
[cultivatingplace.com](http://cultivatingplace.com)

Host Jennifer Jewell puts the culture back into horticulture and explores the different ways gardens and gardening have, and continue to have, an impact in a wider sense.

Have you ever taken the time to consider why you spend time cultivating the garden and exploring the gardens of others? Perhaps not to any great length, but for garden writer Jennifer Jewell, host of *Cultivating Place*, this question is at the heart of every conversation featured on her podcast.

Broadcast on public radio in California each week, its full title is *Cultivating Place: conversations on natural history and the human impulse to garden*, and it is based on two beliefs. The first is that horticulture is on a par with art, music, architecture, geography, history and literature and is a key part of our cultural literacy. The second is that gardens and gardening connect us to larger environments, both culturally and botanically.

On her website, Jewell writes: 'Gardens are both more and less versions of ourselves,

our fingerprints, our signatures, our reflections, our legacies – as individuals and as cultures' and her weekly interviews explore the different ways gardening and gardens affect people.

The conversations are philosophical, rather than practical so if you're adverse to connecting to your emotions, it might not be the podcast for you, but the guests on Jewell's show are engaging and involved in interesting and inspiring projects. Speakers range from growers and gardeners to artists, scientists and naturalists. Designer Jinny Blom recently discussed why she made the career move from psychology to garden design and talked about her latest book *The Thoughtful Gardener*.

In a time where mindfulness is gaining traction, *Cultivating Place* seems very 'of the moment' but there is plenty to take away from this intriguing podcast and it's definitely worth a listen.



**ON THE LEDGE**  
 Average length  
 40 minutes  
 How often is it released  
 Weekly  
 Link  
[janeperrone.com](http://janeperrone.com)

Aside from the stylised Instagram shots of air plants and succulents, indoor plants have a lot to offer. This is the podcast to help you become a part of the houseplant revolution.

Freelance writer and previously garden editor at the *Guardian*, Jane Perrone has extensive horticultural knowledge and it makes her indoor gardening blog and podcast *On the Ledge* a must-listen.

Episodes cover a huge range of indoor plants, from trendy succulents and air plants to more exotic specimens. In the style of a horticultural agony aunt, Perrone answers her listeners' plant conundrums from floppy *Aloe vera* to yellowing *Monstera* leaves and gives advice and tips throughout the show on houseplant maintenance and care.

Episode 25 – covering watering, the nemesis of most beginner gardeners and an easy oversight by seasoned houseplant parents – is particularly useful. In just 20 minutes, you learn that a simple sports bottle with a small spout is more effective than the most stylish watering

can and how tap water can be harmful to some plants, with recommended options on how to avoid its negative effects.

*On the Ledge* invites gardening personalities on to the show who have a particular interest or expertise in houseplants, such as garden writer and author of *Plant Love* Alys Fowler, and garden blogger Matthew Perry. Perrone also visits some of the best places to buy your houseplants and in episode 27 she gives her top tips for getting your houseplant home, safe and sound.

Plants for conservatories, balconies and bathroom shelves are all carefully considered, plus you'll find episodes dedicated to pests and diseases and finding the right pot for your plant. Perrone's fun, relaxed style of presenting allows you to take in her advice without being overwhelmed.





**NATIONAL TRUST**  
**Average length**  
 15-30 minutes  
**How often is it released**  
 Weekly  
**Link**  
[nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)

A great source of inspiration. Explore some of the country's most historic gardens and wild landscapes and learn from the dedicated experts who love and manage them.

The National Trust Podcast offers an insight into gardens, walks and literary locations around the country.

The Garden Podcast series began in 2016 with host Alan Power, the head gardener at Stourhead, visiting some of the National Trust's most treasured gardens: Croome Court, Stourhead, Sissinghurst, Stowe, Mount Stewart and Cliveden. During his visits, he chats to the staff and volunteers who manage the garden and shares the historical impacts and hidden stories of these great estates.

Although the Garden Podcasts aren't the most recent series to be broadcast by the National Trust, the episodes are still available and it's worth going back and listening again. Don't miss 'Garden Cuttings', a collection of shorter clips offering expert gardening advice from some of the gardens featured in the series. Learn how to protect and

manage pelargoniums from the walled garden at Stourhead and discover how the traditional method of scything has revitalised meadows and the wildlife population at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent.

If you're an avid walker on the lookout for new routes to explore, tune in to Walks of the National Trust hosted by ranger Kate Martin. Recorded on location, this podcast series delves into the myths, legends and history associated with each new landscape and Martin meets fellow ramblers who share their own experiences from the area.

Throughout the series you will journey through Kinder Scout, in the Peak District, the birthplace of the 'right to roam' movement, Beddgelert in Snowdonia and Formby in Liverpool, home to the red squirrel.

You can listen to all the National Trust Podcast's on iTunes, SoundCloud and Acast.



**GROWING WILD**  
**Average length**  
 50 minutes  
**How often is it released**  
 Monthly  
**Link**  
[audioboom.com/channel/growing-wild](http://audioboom.com/channel/growing-wild)

This is the perfect accompaniment to an afternoon on the allotment. It will help you appreciate the sun on your face and relish the feeling of your hands covered in dirt.

On the last Sunday of every month, it's worth tuning in to Growing Wild, a lifestyle podcast focused on promoting the joys of exploring the great outdoors.

Host Charlotte Petts won the Alan Titchmarsh New Talent Award for her work on the show at last year's Garden Media Guild Awards, the judges commending her 'original, rich content'.

Petts' relaxed but chatty style brings out the best from her guest speakers allowing them to share their stories and experiences without too much interruption. She visits allotments and community gardens and talks to a range of people dedicated to making the most of outdoor living, from wild swimmers to birdwatchers.

Petts also explores the environmental and social issues threatening some of our much-loved green spaces, such as budget cuts to city parks and the increase in plastic

pollution, and includes interviews with individuals and organisations who are trying to make a difference.

Growing Wild is easy listening, and Petts plays snippets of music tracks to perfectly fit in to the theme of each episode, break-up the content of the show and give a witty twist to the topic of conversation, think Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's *The Onion Song*, to liven up an episode on allotments. Download and listen for the perfect escape from a busy day at the office and it will encourage you to get out and explore, whether you live in the countryside or in a more urban environment.

Growing Wild is broadcast on RadioReverb, a not-for-profit radio station based in Brighton (97.2FM, DAB+ and radioreverb.com) at 5pm, and available as a podcast. You can also follow on Instagram and Twitter @growingwildfm.



**THE SODSHOW**  
**Average length**  
 45 minutes  
**How often is it released**  
 Weekly  
**Link**  
[sodshow.com](http://sodshow.com)

If you love staying up to date with the latest news from the gardening world and listening to top designers and head gardeners chat about their work, this is the podcast for you.

Launched back in 2010, there are over 350 episodes of the SodShow available with Dublin-based Peter Donegan as its lively host.

This is a podcast for the gardener who loves listening to a garden personality, as every episode of Donegan's show is a hotspot for a name drop. Designers, head gardeners and nurserymen have all featured on the show and it's a good place to find out about the latest garden projects, and hear all about upcoming plant fairs and gardening events.

A garden designer himself, Donegan is a familiar face in the garden industry and he quickly helps his guest speakers to feel at ease on his show, which results in a more insightful interview for the listener, and often return appearances from his guests.

He makes swift work of starting his interviews off, avoiding much of the filler chat often heard at the start of

podcast episodes and he seems to have researched his guests and their work well, which helps conversation flow.

He regularly visits RHS shows, including RHS Chelsea Flower Show where he chats to garden designers and nurseries going for those coveted Gold medals. He has also broadcast from live events, both in the UK and overseas. Most recently from Salt Lake City where as the guest of US gardening brand, Thyme and Place, he was joined by gardening experts from around the USA for a series of gardening workshops on-air.

A new episode is available every Friday, and each one is packed with horticultural advice and fun facts. Donegan's charm and unfaltering energy makes for an enjoyable show that will help you to build on your gardening knowledge and keep you entertained while working in the potting shed.



**IN DEFENSE OF PLANTS**  
**Average length**  
 40-60 minutes  
**How often is it released**  
 Weekly  
**Link**  
[indefenseofplants.com](http://indefenseofplants.com)

If the state of the world is getting you down, tune in to In Defense of Plants and listen to the amazing ways people are working to protect and preserve our fragile environment.

Matt Candeias is on a mission to cure plant blindness. His podcast In Defense of Plants started in January 2015 as an additional element to his blog of the same name and now 141 episodes later, it has become a fascinating platform for sharing amazing evolutionary stories from the botanical world.

Stemming from a frustration with the way plants are only considered useful if they have an anthropocentric use, his podcast celebrates the importance of plants in their own right. For Candeias, plants are everything and he hopes, by listening to his podcast, people will be inspired to look at plants in a different way. "Plants are the backbone of every major ecosystem on the planet and we desperately need to give them the attention they deserve," he says.

Candeias regularly interviews specialists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and botanists from all over the world to shine a light on the incredible work

being done to aid and promote plant conservation. Whether you're a plant person or not, the topics covered in Candeias's podcast are wide ranging and cover subjects such as plant hunting in Papua New Guinea, ancient fossilised forests in Antarctica, plant poaching and plant pollinators.

As you would expect from a podcast dedicated to botany, many of the new plants discussed are referenced in Latin, and although it might leave you a little confused, you can't help but be drawn in to the expeditions and new discoveries featured on the show.

It's worth noting that 'the order of business' at the start of the show can drag on a bit but a free podcast relies on the support of its listeners and the main content is worth the wait.

Based in the USA, In Defense of Plants is broadcast every Sunday and is available on iTunes and at [indefenseofplants.com](http://indefenseofplants.com)