
Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 155 Simple, Seasonal Eating for Get-Togethers

Show Notes are at: www.LivingHomegrown.com/155

Ashley: There are these unidentifiable but deeply nourishing elements that happen when people come together around food.

Theresa: This is the Living Homegrown Podcast, episode 155.

Announcer: Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert, Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there everybody. Welcome to the Podcast. I'm your host Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without a farm. Now that includes organic small space food gardening, canning, and fermenting the harvest, and artisan food crafts. It's all about the different ways that we can live closer to our food, and take small delicious steps toward living a more sustainable lifestyle. If you would like to learn more about any of these topics or my online courses, my coaching, or my living homegrown institute, just visit my website; livinghomegrown.com. Today we're going to talk about seasonal entertaining. So many of us are growing our food. We shop farmers markets. We are eating and consuming food in season that is locally sourced, and it has the very very best flavor. What better way to enjoy it then by inviting over some friends and family, and having a party. That is what today's episode is all about.

Now I brought back on Ashley English, who was on episode 149. Ashley is a blogger and an author. She has written many many books, and recently on episode 149, we had conversation all about real food from scratch with a southern flare. But on today's episode, I brought her back to talk about throwing a party with seasonal food, because Ashley is all about community and seasonal eating, and having a potluck party. I thought it would be a fantastic topic to cover, since so many of us are growing our own food, shopping farmers markets, and I love to throw parties. I love to have people over, and especially if you do it potluck, because then everybody is contributing and it isn't all put on the host.

Ashley has some really interesting and fun ideas, and she shares a recipe for making plum liqueur, or as she says, "Liqueur." We are going to cover that recipe, and in the show notes for today's episode, we have the full recipe that you can print out so that you can make at anytime you want this summer. Now, what's fun about this particular recipe is it doesn't have to be made with plums. It

can be made with any stone fruit. To get to the show notes, you just go to livinghomegrown.com/155, and there we will have information about Ashley, all of her books. Including the book we're talking about today, which is called *Handmade Gatherings*, and also her website, blog, everything Ashley will be in the show notes. As well as a link to the other episode that she was on, episode 149.

Now let me tell you a little bit about Ashley. Ashley English has degrees in holistic nutrition and sociology. She has worked over the years with a number of non-profit organizations, committed to social and agriculture issues, and is a member of the slow food USA. She regularly writes for regional and national publications, both online and in print. Now Ashley's written a lot of books. She is the author of all four books in the *Homemade Living* series, *Canning and Preserving*, *Keeping Chickens*, *Keeping Bees*, and *Home Dairy*. As well as, *A Year of Pies*, *Handmade Gatherings*, *Quench*, *A Year of Picnics*, *The Essential Book of Homesteading*, and *Southern from Scratch*. Ashley has written a lot of books and I love them all.

Now Ashley and her family live in North Carolina, where they're converting their land into a thriving homestead. As I said, we will have links to everything in the show notes for today's episode. Now before we dive into the interview, I just want you to know that today's podcast episode is brought to you by My Living Homegrown Institute. Which is my monthly membership site, and this is where you can have access to an entire library of monthly master classes that help you live a farm fresh lifestyle without the farm. Now in our membership we cover everything from how to grow epic heirloom tomatoes, to how to make homemade cheese and fermented vegetables.

Now I believe that living an organic farm fresh lifestyle is really just a journey in learning, and there are three distinct stages for growth in that learning process. We start out as curious, we move into experimentation, and eventually we grow into mastery of these different skills. Now if you're looking at creating a farm fresh lifestyle for yourself, and you're curious where you may fall on the growth scale for these different skills, then I have a free resource for you. It's my farm fresh success path that my students use inside my learning institute, and it will help you decide where you are on your journey, the characteristics of that stage, and some action steps and information to take you to the next level.

To get to the success path PDF, just go to livinghomegrown.com/path. That's P-A-T-H, and you can download it there for free. Okay, let's dive into this conversation about seasonal entertaining. Taking those seasonal foods and bringing them to the next level where we can share them with those that we love. Alright, here's my interview with Ashley English, the author of *Handmade Gatherings*. Hey Ashley, thanks for coming back so fast.

-
- Ashley: Thank you. I'm excited to be back.
- Theresa: Well when I had you on episode 149, which was just a little over a month ago, I had a huge response. Everybody was saying, "Have her on again, have her on. Bring her back."
- Ashley: Oh.
- Theresa: It was so fun because I could say, "I've already got her scheduled."
- Ashley: Oh, that makes me really happy to hear. Thank you.
- Theresa: Yeah, you really resonated with my audience, which I knew you would. Let's start off by backing up a little bit. You've written a lot of books, from everything about homesteading and chicken keeping, to cooking real food, and even making dairy products and canning. Pretty much everything that my audience loves, and everything in between there as well. I'd love for you to tell everybody just a little bit about what got you interested in living this farm fresh lifestyle of seasonal food.
- Ashley: Absolutely. I've been interested in food and cooking since I was eight years old, and I first raided my mothers cookbook collection, and baked her a pan of very questionable petit fours that she ate happily like a mom does. I've been playing in the kitchen and hosting parties ever since. I've got a degree in nutrition, and another degree in sociology in my twenties, and married the two together. Literally when I met and married my spouse, he was living at the time where we live now, which is an 11 acre parcel of land in western North Carolina that's flanked by a 300 acre nature preserve. In its previous life, the property here had been an edible, organic herb and flower farm.
- I was working at a doctors office as a nutrition consultant, and a medical assistant, and I got this urge to bring the farm back in some form or another. And the way that that ended up manifesting was by beginning this homesteading book series that I've written four titles for. Like you mentioned, chickens, beekeeping, canning, and home dairy, and I'm actually right this minute, in the process of working on books five and six for that series. Then just one thing led to another, we got a pie book and a beverage book, potluck book, a picnic book, and then Southern From Scratch which was my book on creating a southern whole foods kitchen.
- Theresa: That's so exciting. That's so exciting, and I'm really excited that you have more books coming out, because I have your whole library on my shelf. Having more of you is just really really exciting. Do you know when those books, the new books that you're doing, do you know when they'll be coming out?

-
- Ashley: Yes. The series is called, Homemade Living, and book five will be on creating a home apothecary. Things for health and wellness and body, and that'll be out in 2019. Then housekeeping which is all sorts of natural cleaning products, and then making your own kitchen napkins and cloths, those sorts of small eco-minded crafts. That book will be out in 2020.
- Theresa: So exciting. Yeah, that's right up our alley. You'll have to come back when the books come out.
- Ashley: Sounds wonderful.
- Theresa: Yeah, I'd love to hear more about them when they come out. Cool, well it's with this book, I wanted to bring you on to talk about today, which is Handmade Gatherings. It's really a lovely book and it's warm. It's hard to describe, but I would describe it as warm and friendly, and it makes me just want to invite over all my friends.
- Ashley: Well mission accomplished then. My work is done.
- Theresa: Yeah, it really is, because it's really about applying our seasonal eating that we talk about all the time on the podcast. But applying that in entertaining your friends, and sharing food and community with them. I love it, and it's really clear from looking at your book, that you love to entertain. What I was wondering was, if that was something that you grew up doing with your family or did you really get into entertaining more as an adult?
- Ashley: Well I think the answer is twofold. I think it's in my DNA to entertain. I have long heard stories about my paternal grandparents, who lived in Philadelphia and they would host these elaborate bridge parties that would happen at midnight. People would come over, dressed in cocktail finery. My dad has seven brothers and sisters, there's eight of them.
- Theresa: Oh my goodness.
- Ashley: I know, and my grandmother was a master bridge player, and they would have these big parties with their friends, and dress to the nines and the champagne was flowing. They would have these big parties, and then my dad and mom, when they were first married, they hosted a lot of cocktail parties and dinner parties. Then they separated when I was quite young, but both of them continued to do that, and we were always having parties. My mom made a huge deal out of holiday get togethers, as well as birthday parties.
- She didn't phone it in ever, it was like a big to do. Both my dad and my stepmother as well. That was just introduced to me from an early age, and then I started throwing tea parties when I was really little, and then when I was 12, I

hosted my first potluck. It was a New Kids on the Block potluck, which I was super into at the time in junior high and all of my girlfriends came dressed as their favorite New Kid, and brought what was reported to be their favorite New Kids favorite food.

Theresa: I love it.

Ashley: And then for prom, senior prom, I hosted a potluck dinner at my house, and every couple was responsible for one of the courses. As well as we did a sleepover, my mom was really cool and let us all camp out in the living room, and then we did breakfast the next morning which was also a potluck. Then I met and married my husband, and he is as equally enumerative entertaining as I am. It's just been going from before I was born to present day.

Theresa: Ah, well definitely in your DNA I would say for sure, and something that you mentioned there I want to backtrack on, because you mentioned potluck. So many people when they're thinking about throwing parties, they maybe love the idea but it can be expensive, you actually do address this in your writing. I'd love for you to talk about that, what are some of the advantages if we just switch to potluck so that we aren't having to pay for everything ourselves?

Ashley: Well that's what happened when we first got married and started hosting parties. We were doing these international supper club parties, where we would just point to a map of the globe and choose a country, and then we'd host a dinner party based around that, and it was a lot of fun. We did one for India, we did one for Cypress, just off the top of my head. But at the end of the evening, we would have exhausted ourselves and our bank account, and we were like, "There's got to be a better way." My husband has always loved potlucks. The whole idea of sharing the labor, sharing the creativity. And we just transitioned from the parties that we had hosted, to creating a theme, rallying around it, incorporating the way that we were already cooking based around the seasons and entertaining based around the seasons. And then encouraging our friends to get on board with us, and people love it. They really showed up.

The 16 potlucks that are in Handmade Gatherings were parties, a lot of them that we were already doing before the book was created. It was easy to just shift gears into writing about what was already being done. What I love, that in addition to shared costs, there's shared labor and shared creativity. Because throwing off a party of any scale, whether it's just for a few people or a large group, can really be daunting for so many different reasons. Having that opportunity to spread all of that with your friends and loved ones, it just removes a lot of the psychological and physical weight of entertaining.

Theresa: Yeah, that's so true, and the thing is, is you're really bringing everybody together to enjoy this seasonal food and everybody gets to participate in that.

You have this whole sense of community, but then you always incorporate something really creative like crafts, or some sort of take home thing that happens during the party as well. Tell us about that.

Ashley: Glen and I, my husband and I, are really into nesting. I mean if there's a word for what we do it's we nest, and we love to decorate, and have craft aspects to our parties. And I thought, "How fun would it be to create these potlucks that are about more than just the food?" A lot of them I ask guests to, in some way, contribute the way that the party looks and takeaway keepsake mementos to take home with them in the form of crafts. Which was wonderful when there was kids present at the party, but even when kids weren't at some of these get togethers. There's a cookie exchange in winter, where we had guests decoupage cookie tins that they'd brought with them. I think maybe there was a baby or two at that party, but for the most part it was adults, and it was just lovely to incorporate all those aspects and really engage all of the senses with the food, and the way that things looked with aesthetic choices, and then also crafting at the same time.

Theresa: Yeah, that's great, and then you have the whole everyone's participating, from the children to the adults can all participate. I've done that with some of my parties myself. We did a wreath making party, and it was really fun because everyone got to take something home. It didn't matter your age, you could participate in the craft. You could gingerbread in the wintertime, there's lots of different things you could do. I would love to talk about the different seasons that you cover in the book, and talk about some of the party ideas of what we could do to bring in seasonal eating to our party. I guess we'll start at the beginning of the year. Let's start at spring. What type of foods or party themes work well for springtime?

Ashley: Well anything that celebrates the return of green foods really, or anything that's very ephemeral, like strawberries. You can get them year around, but fresh strawberries or rhubarb when they're right in season and at the peak of ripeness, or peas or asparagus. Any of those really fleeting foods are just to be celebrated, especially there's a wild foods potluck in the book. It was so much fun. Our guests wild foraged or we have markets in Asheville, farmers markets, that there's a couple of different vendors who do wild foraging themselves, and then they sell what they found.

Guests were encouraged to either glean something themselves or pick it up from someone who had done so, and cook a dish out of morels, or fiddlehead ferns, ramps, these strong wild onions, and then render that into a dish. Then for the décor for that party, guests brought things that they had found that were beautiful in the woods, or wherever they were wild foraging. Yeah, just the things in spring that are really short lived but that just are such a welcome respite from a lot of the root vegetables and earthier concentrated dense produce that people have gotten accustomed to during the colder months.

-
- Theresa: Yeah, I bet you that table was so beautiful, and you wouldn't even be able to predict how it would've turned out because everybody brings something different.
- Ashley: And that's what the beauty of it is in sharing the entire experience. From the food, to the décor, and then these crafting aspects. I want to, when I thought about a potluck book, I thought, "I want something more than just a composite of recipes. I want them to be these standalone experiences that people are really going to remember." When you're engaging all of the senses and there's olfactory elements, and tactile elements, and visual elements, people they just light up.
- People still tell me about how memorable these parties have been and there are several of them in the book that we actually host every year. People build their calendars around them, they get really bummed when they're sick or they miss them for some reasons. It's been lovely to see how these ideas that we've had for entertaining here in the woods, have become part of other peoples stories and occasions as well. That was really my hope with the book at its core.
- Theresa: I bet. I bet people just die if they have to miss the party.
- Ashley: We get a lot of deep regret when there's a sick child or something comes up.
- Theresa: I bet, oh man. Well there was another thing that you had in spring which I thought was a lovely idea, and that was for one of the crafts. I think it was for your pollinator party, and everybody got to decorate a seed pack and take some seeds home.
- Ashley: Yes.
- Theresa: I think that would really resonate with everybody who listens to this podcast as well. Great ideas. Really really good ideas. Well okay, let's move into the summertime, because this is an area where we always have an abundance. There's a million of ideas we could do, but my favorite one that you had in the summer section was like a rolling stone fruit. That was such a cute party idea. Could you tell us about some of the ways that we can use summer fruit in a party?
- Ashley: Absolutely. For that party it was pretty fun. As a side note, an editorial side note, all of the potlucks that are photographed in Handmade Gatherings, they all actually happened. Because we realized pretty early on that we couldn't really fake any of this, we needed people to show up with food to round about the table. It's a book on potluck, and if we were to try to do all of that in addition to the food and décor that we were already doing, it would be

daunting. It was amazing how harmonious everything felt, with minimal art direction in my emails to guests, how everything flowed together.

For this, we photographed this and hosted it on a little mountain ball back behind our home that some friends own. We did it in the morning before the sun was really punishing, and we ended up having this stone fruit pie breakfast potluck, and it was just a group of women and their kids. It was so much fun, but I feel like stone fruits, there is no shortage of options with them. I just got a big shipment of cherries in. Every year I get a shipment from the Washington State Fruit Commission. They send me various stone fruits, and I'm always so excited when that email comes.

I just got this huge shipment of sweet cherries, which I'm going to do many different things with. From pickling them in a strong vinegar base pickle, to making sweet maraschino cherries, to making a buttermilk based clafoutis, a sort of french custard dessert with stone fruits. You can grill stone fruits and put them into a salad alongside proteins. There's no shortage or like the craft that I have in the book, you can render them into a liqueur and allow it to steep, and then have this delicious beverage to remember months after the event has past. Remember the beauty of that day.

Theresa: That's right, I loved that recipe in the book, and I would love for you to share that recipe if you don't mind. Just explain to everybody how they can do this, because you had everybody bring home a jar of this plum liqueur that everybody made at the party. What would be a real simple recipe for doing that?

Ashley: Well you want to bring a couple pounds of fruit. For the plum liqueur, I use two and half pounds of plums. You could also swap that out. If you'd rather use whatever you have on hand, if you have apricots, if you have nectarines, if you have peaches. Whatever is in abundance where you are, you could do it with cherries. The stone fruit itself is pretty interchangeable. For this particular potluck, I provided the stone fruit and a cutting board and a knife. Everybody brought their own jar to take home with them. They brought an empty jar, which we filled together. I believe someone brought the alcohol, which was vodka, and it's really just stone fruit, sugar, and vodka. You infuse everything there.

You want to keep the pits, they actually help with the flavor, and preserving the liqueur. Everything gets chopped up, mixed with the sugar and the vodka, you fill up your jars. If you wanted to add additional aromatics, you could. You could add whole cloves, cinnamon sticks, star anise, peppercorns, whatever. Allspice berries, cardamon pods, you could tuck those in with your stone fruit and then the sugar and vodka. Then you're going to shake it. Once you leave the party and you go home, and you've got your jar with a lid on tightly. You shake it

everyday. Just a little bit of vigorous shaking for a week, and then after a week you just do it once a week for three months. Then you just let it infuse.

Just stick it somewhere where you're going to see it, you're going to remember to give it a shake once a week, or plug it into your phone as a note, shake the liqueur. Something to remember to do it, and then you strain it through a double layer of cheesecloth and a fine mesh sieve. Discard the fruit, it's going to be way too boozy to eat by that point. Discard the fruit and the pits and the aromatics if you've used them, and then you've got your liqueur. You could add a little bit to a glass, top it off with some sparkling wine if you want, or some club soda and some ice. You could have it as is, just have it neat in a little shot glass. It's a wonderful gift to enjoy for the occasion. To remember the occasion itself, but it's also a wonderful gift to give as well.

Theresa: So good, so so good. Yeah, I love doing that kind of thing. Especially at the holiday time. You make it now, and then in three months it's perfect. It's perfect for giving.

Ashley: Right.

Theresa: You can bring it for thanksgiving as a hostess gift. There's a million things you could do with this. Thank you for sharing that. That's awesome. Well and you also did ice cream social and pies. I mean there's a lot of things that we can do in summer time. I think probably of all the times of year, probably summer is probably the easiest for doing a party.

Ashley: It really is. You don't have to worry so much about the constraints of space limitations, because you're just going to be outside. Your biggest challenge might be if a thunderstorm pops up, but otherwise if it's hot, you're having a heatwave in LA, you're still going to be outside.

Theresa: Yes, exactly.

Ashley: You're still going to entertain. Get a little thing of bug spray and you're good to go.

Theresa: Yeah, perfect. Well alright, let's move into autumn or fall. What type of foods should we focus here at this time of year?

Ashley: Well what I love, I've kind of made my own phrase. I'm not sure if I mentioned it in our interview for Southern from Scratch, but I love what I call bump up against seasons. Where one season is gently unfolding into the next, and that really starts to happen, at least for where I live in the southeast United States, in September. Where you still have the fruits of summer coming in. You still have tomatoes, you still have okra and peppers, but you're also starting to get some

of the early fall crops. The apple harvest is here. We're the seventh largest apple producing region here in North Carolina in the United States. There's so many different varieties of apples.

Figs start to come in. I'm a huge fan of figs, and for us that's end of August, beginning of September is when the crop comes in. All sorts of wonderful varieties of grapes, like muscadines. When I see the muscadines and the scuppernongs at the farmers market, then I know we're moving into fall, and fall's my favorite time of year. Of course pumpkins and all manner of winter squashes are starting to become available, and it's for me, deeply exciting because I historically have not been a fan of hot weather. Although more recently I've started to make my peace with it. We're not best friends, but we're frenemies.

I've come to terms with embracing summer, which is pretty funny because my birthday's in two days and I'm a summer baby. You'd think I like it, but I get really excited when I know ... I told my husband last week, I said, "The best part of summer is that it's that much closer to fall." When I start seeing pumpkins out, and the muscadines, and the scuppernongs, I'm deeply excited that we're transitioning. But there still is this amazing harvest from all of the summer bounty as well. It's really exciting in those early months of fall to get to play with all of that together.

Theresa: Yeah, that's absolutely true, and I think also like you said, there's other varieties even of one particular food. Like doing an apple party, you could have everybody bringing different types of apples and there's a million things you could do with that. From pie, to cider, to anything. I mean there's a million different possibilities. Yeah, and I think a really good suggestion for people would probably be if you're not sure what to really have on the menu, is to go to the local farmers market and see what's in season at that particular time of year.

Ashley: Absolutely. Just see what's out there. You could even chat with the farmers, see what's coming, because there might be some things that are not there that week but that'll be there the next week, but just browse and check in. It's great to have a regular working relationship with a farm or farmer, especially if you have limited space. There's only so much that you can grow, or maybe you have limited sunlight and they have a better location, and they're just able to grow things that aren't hospitable in your area. Working at, striking that close relationship with the working farm or farmer, is a really wonderful, wonderful thing to have.

Theresa: Yeah I agree 100%, and I also tell people that if there's ever something at the farmers market and you're not sure how to prepare it, always ask the farmer who grew it. Because chances are they have a million ways to prepare it, and

they know how to do it the best way because they're growing it. They're eating a ton of it, they know what to do with it.

Ashley: Absolutely.

Theresa: Yeah, always have to want to be talking to your farmer. Well okay, let's move into winter, because I think a lot of people make the mistake of only thinking of December holidays for parties. Really, winter's a great time to have a party, even that has nothing to do with the holidays. What are your favorite types of parties to throw during the wintertime?

Ashley: Well every year, I think last year was my 10th annual, but every year before Christmas, I always host a ladies cookie exchange and it's gotten pretty big. When I first started it, I worked at the doctor's office. I think there were five or six of us. Last year I got a little crazy and invited 75 people.

Theresa: Oh my gosh.

Ashley: And then I was like, "Where am I going to put all these people?" Then I thought, "You know what, not everyone will come." Not everyone did, but it's so much fun. We just have a blast. That happens every year. People, like I said, they build their holiday plans around it. I get a lot of, "When is this going to happen," a month beforehand so that they can put it on their calendar not to be missed. That's a lovely event that we host every year. I also regularly have a potluck called heartwarming, and it's in the book in the winter months.

It's warming winter foods, however you want to interpret that. There's a steak and bourbon pie, a savory pie. There's also foods with ginger, crystallized ginger. Things that kind of warm you from the inside out, and at that potluck, I believe we made a mustard bath salt. So when you get a cold in the wintertime, these warming mustard baths increase your core body temperature and help you sweat things out. Things that bring people together, and for that one everyone brought a candle and different ways to create light and warmth when it's dark.

A soup potluck is a lot of fun to do in the wintertime. To create different types of soups together. Even though there might be less in terms of produce available, I never want that to be a reason for people to not get together. Especially in the winter when you really need it more than at any other time of year. You might not have the same food choices available, but what you're going to get in terms of nourishment for your soul and your psyche, just to be in the company of others, is really essential.

Theresa: That's so good, yes, and I think of all those. I think the soup party really sounded fun to me. You could make it really simple with mugs, so everyone's putting

their soup in mugs and you're not having to try and juggle a bowl in your hand while you're talking to people. You could really make it simple yet a lot of fun.

- Ashley: Absolutely, and even just creating soup mixes to take home later with everyone bringing a jar and putting in a spice blend, and then different sorts of beans to create a navy bean soup or what have you. Even if you're not collectively cooking food together, you're making plans to do so later in your individual homes. You're using a product you collectively made. There are these unidentifiable but deeply nourishing elements that happen when people come together around food.
- Theresa: That's so beautiful. Well, we talk a lot on this podcast about seasonal eating, and I just love that you reminded us to dive into seasonal entertaining. In closing, I'd love to know when it comes to seasonal food, what advice would you give someone who's just thinking about throwing a party? What would you tell them as a form of encouragement?
- Ashley: Don't ever be daunted, and I talk about this in the introduction to the book. When I first moved to Washington D.C. I was 20 years old, I didn't know anyone there. I just had this idea that I was ... I had thought I was going to move to New York City and then I quickly realized I didn't know anyone in New York City or how to get an apartment in New York City, and I'm coming from a small town in North Carolina. My stepmother said, "Well I've got this apartment in Washington D.C. It's not New York, but maybe you could start there and work your way to the big apple." I did it, I jumped on that opportunity, and I didn't have anything. I didn't have a set of soup bowls or spoons, or anything. I was just getting started, but I thought, "You know what? I still want to have parties. It's just part of who I am." I would tell my friends, "Come over, bring a bowl with you."
- Theresa: That's good.
- Ashley: "And we're going to do this together. We're still going to make it work." If I can start throwing potlucks when I'm 12 years old, and I'm still doing it now, and I'll be 42 Wednesday, just start wherever you are. If you are an introvert but you still want to have a party, recruit a really gregarious wingman or wingwoman to do the one that does the talking, that is your liaison. You don't have to do it all. You can get someone who handles correspondence, that shows up early and does logistics of moving furniture around if that's necessary. Know your strengths and your limitations, and then rope in people accordingly. But really, just wherever you are in life, in circumstance, should never deter you from hosting.
- There's a wonderful phrase I've heard going around called scrappy hospitality. It's basically the anti Martha Stewart, with no disrespect to Martha, lifelong fan

here. But not all of us have her resources or her checking account, and just getting started wherever you are is fine. You can cobble it together. It's not really your home that people are scrutinizing anyway, it's people coming together, interacting, socializing. That's what they're going to remember. They're not going to remember if you vacuumed underneath your couch, or if you had a matching set of soup bowls. They're just going to remember that day and the experience that you all shared together.

Theresa: That's so good, I love that. Yes, that's beautiful. Well Ashley, thank you so much for coming on today. I really appreciate you coming back and I'm glad that I've already got you to promise that you'll come back again. Thank you so much for joining us today, I really really loved this one. Thanks.

Ashley: Thank you Theresa, I appreciate it.

Theresa: I hope you enjoyed that interview with Ashley English, the author of Handmade Gatherings. As I said before, everything that we talked about, including links to Ashley's website, her blog, all about her lifestyle, all of her information about her books and the PDF download of the recipe that she mentioned about plum liqueur, is all in the show notes for today's episode. To get to the show notes, you just go to livinghomegrown.com/155, and everything will be there for you.

As a reminder, today's podcast episode was brought to you by my Living Homegrown Membership. If you'd like to get the free PDF success path that my students use inside my membership, then just go to livinghomegrown.com/path, and I'll have it there for you for free. That's it for today's episode. I hope you enjoyed that and it sparked some inspiration for you to throw your own seasonal food party. Until next time, just try to live a little more local, seasonal, and homegrown. Take care everybody.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of The Living Homegrown podcast. Visit livinghomegrown.com to download Theresa's free Canning Resource Guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on The Living Homegrown Podcast.

Bloopers