

Watercolor with

the mint gardener
S A R A H S I M O N





An Introduction to Sarah, TheMintGardener

Sarah Simon is the Designer, Artist Illustrator and Author at TheMintGardener. Finding inspiration in the ever-blooming variety of textures and colors in her urban garden, Sarah creates and teaches lush Watercolors inspired by the diverse variety of herbs, flowers, and trees grown in her yard. With a continually blooming following of botanical and art lovers alike, Sarah shares her teaching talents in Seattle, Washington, of the USA, where she regularly instructs Watercolor Classes to students of all skill levels. Her teaching has received international attention with her online and virtual painting courses that she hosts monthly, as well as in the Watercolor Summit and on Skillshare. Sarah's work has been featured in many publications and blogs worldwide, and has been celebrated in the form of commercial product design, stationery, textiles as well as wholesale and private commissions. Just a few of her clients include: Target, Nordstrom, Country Living, Facebook, The University of Washington, Sakura of America, Blick Artist Materials, Winsor & Newton, Estée Lauder and Sur La Table. Her books "Modern Watercolor Botanicals" and "The Plant Lady" Coloring Book were released in November 2019, and are best sellers on Amazon. She is currently working on book number three, and enjoys hosting the #FlowerPaintingClub for an online community of painting-lovers. Sarah loves to garden with her partner Colin and their two little girls on their urban farm. She enjoys seeking quiet moments for sketching and painting, making small bouquets of flowers and herbs, or reading. She loves Jesus, exploring new places, and enjoys anything that includes the sea, friends and food; and yes, as a Pacific Northwest native, she does enjoy the gloomy gray days a bit more than the hot, sunny ones.





A note from Sarah:

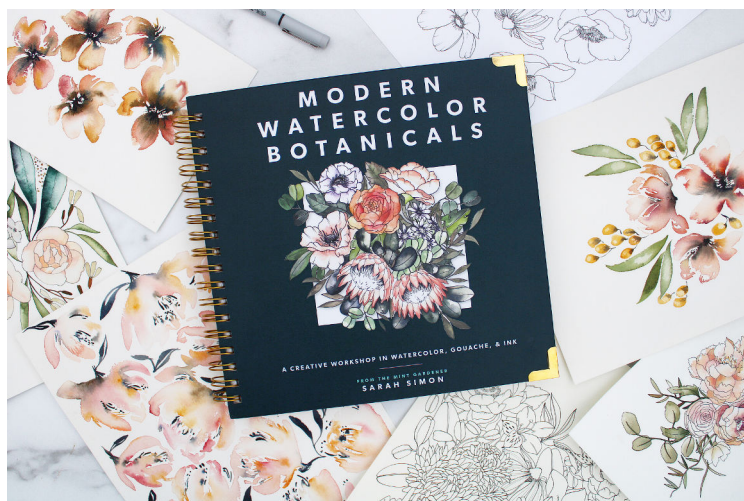
I'm so happy you're here, and on this creative journey with me! Through this short video tutorial, I will share some of the foundational techniques of watercolor: how to create a wash, how to mix up color recipes and how to put this new knowledge together to create a beautiful piece. You will receive a pre-drawn template of botanical art, already created and in this eBook, so all you will need to do is print, trace and draw it onto watercolor paper in the comfort of your home. Then, using your newfound watercolor skills, you can paint it, and have a lovely piece of art - ready to frame!

I've always been a beauty-seeker at heart. I grew up hungry for it, seeking joy in my parents' garden and the forests near our home. I spent summers playing hide-and-seek with my cousins in the sky-high sunflowers that my grandfather planted and treasured every year. And I loved to draw. To paint, to create. To make something tactile with my hands, translating the beauty I saw all around me onto paper, into an art piece I could share with people I loved. My grandmother and my mother paint, and the tools I needed were always there at my fingertips, ready to bring my visions to life.

It felt very natural to begin and cultivate a garden of our own in Seattle, as my husband and I settled into the rhythm of everyday life. Tomatoes and squash, corn and beans—and, of course, flowers. Always flowers. Irises, peonies, a rosebush for every anniversary. A flowering magnolia tree for my birthday. The beauty of the garden consistently inspires me to pick up my pens and paintbrushes.

My passion for painting and sharing this beauty I seek has been the most natural way to express myself that I've ever found. Watercolor is the way I share; others use words or hospitality, singing, music, food or gifts. Painting pictures is the tool I was given to show people love. It's how I express the peace I find in small, joyful moments, and when I get to share my watercolor—my art and my process—it's like giving that small gift of love and peace to all it touches. Teaching others this passion of mine has become such a beautiful way to share and enjoy it again and again. It's the best kind of contagious there is!

Again, welcome - I'm thrilled you're here. I hope the experience you have with watercolor here will hand you just a taste of the mindful habit of sustainable creativity, one that can grow and grow! If you enjoy this interactive course in watercolor, I would invite you to learn further with my book, "Modern Watercolor Botanicals" which can be found wherever books are sold. I also have many online classes, and fun new things happening all of the time, so please check out my Instagram @themintgardener or my website themintgardener.com for more. This eBook comes from my hands and my heart—it is my gift to you as you venture into your painting journey. I want your experience to be fulfilling and invigorating and inspiring, to both sustain you and encourage you to connect with the wider community of artists. I'm so excited to have you as part of our tribe.





Tools:

Connection and accessibility are my two main considerations when it comes to teaching people how to paint. I want you to connect with yourself and your community, using art as a way of showing your love. By making cards or painting lovely pieces, you can give gifts from your heart and your hands. To be able to do this, all you need are some basic tools. No, you really don't need a twenty-dollar paintbrush—you can do it with three-dollar paintbrush! Painting palettes? Meh. If you don't have one at home already, use a dinner plate. You just need a few key tools, and you're off. I want you to enjoy the process and not fuss about the other stuff. I want you to see how much beauty you can create with minimum expense. I want you to feel the satisfaction of mixing some gorgeous colors with student-grade paints and brushes on a leftover dinner plate. I want you to experience the simple joys of painting.

Materials to Begin this Class:

- Round Watercolor Brushes (*I suggest Student-Grade Princeton Brushes in the #SelectArtist series, sizes Round 1 and 4*)
- Watercolor Paper (*I suggest a minimum of 140-lb. weight Cold Press in the Student-Grade Canson XL or Strathmore variety OR if you're looking to invest and increase the beauty of your final pieces, a Professional-Grade Hahnemühle paper*)
- Painting Palette (*or a large white dinner plate, pictured to the left*)
- Micron Pens (*size 01*) or a Pen with waterproof ink
- Water (*I use Mason jars filled with tap water; a clear jar works best, so you can see when the water needs changing.*)
- Paper Towels (*for blotting*)
- Colored Pencil (*a light color for tracing the final floral design onto your watercolor paper. This works better than a regular pencil, as the pigment from a lightly-traced colored pencil line dissolves within the watercolor, whereas a regular pencil line shows through and is often difficult to remove afterwards.*)
- Scrap Paper (*for testing strokes and marks*)
- A Cray-Pastel in Gray from Sakura of America (or a regular crayon at home)
- Paint! Choosing colors is a very personal thing, so select a few colors that speak to you. If you already have a collection of colors, I would encourage you to use watercolor paints you already have. But if you're looking for a few of my favorites, here is my best-loved color combination for this Peony Floral:
 - "Alizarin Crimson" Winsor & Newton Watercolor
 - "Burnt Sienna" Winsor & Newton Watercolor
 - "Yellow Ochre" Winsor & Newton Watercolor
 - "Chinese White" Winsor & Newton Watercolor
 - "Payne's Gray" Winsor & Newton Watercolor

Let's Begin!

Once you have all of your materials gathered, it's time to begin your watercolor project.

Begin your painting journey by typing the link below into your web browser, and watch the video.

Print off the Tracing to the right and follow my tracing tips below if you'd like a few pointers.

Then, once you have your art piece drawn onto watercolor paper, you are ready to watch the video again, and follow along with your own paintbrush.

Abstract Peony Watercolor with Mixed Media:

<https://youtu.be/5qBqRP1D9O4>





Line Tracing
(print and trace onto your watercolor paper)

Tracing Tips:

If you do not already own a light board for tracing, it's not necessary to go out and purchase one. Simply hold your watercolor paper over your printed lines against a well-lit window, and lightly trace the floral lines with a colored pencil or your waterproof ink pen.







Thank you for painting with me!

I believe watercolor is accessible to anyone; my aim is to take any intimidation out of the process, so you can feel comfortable to just play and create. I like to say: paint on my hands and earth under my nails gives me joy. Perhaps I'm biased, but I believe in the magic of painting. When my paintbrush moves just right and creates a beautiful image on the paper, it is as though I've grabbed hold of a dream and brought it to life. When the paint flows and my hands create things beyond what my mind can imagine, it's as though I can make time stand still. When I'm fully engaged and present in my artwork, painting can whisk me away into a creative space that is all my own. With any endeavor, strength develops through repeated practice. And the more you create and mature in your skills, the more your distinct voice will emerge. Every artist has something to say – the challenge is translating the image in our minds onto the page, especially as the vision continues to grow, pushing us to greater skills and demanding a higher level of technique. Build slowly and steadily, be gentle with yourself. Feeling clumsy with the slight resistance to growth in a new area is normal. Allow yourself the space to feel this way, push through the uncomfortable. You are on the path to becoming an artist and this is where you begin to define yourself. Soak in the shapes and colors of botanicals all around you, filter them through your Self, and use your new skills to translate them onto paper, in paint and water.

Share your process with me by tagging @TheMintGardener on Instagram, and using the hashtag #themintgardenerteaches - I truly cannot wait to see what you create and encourage you on your journey. Your learning process inspires me! And it inspires others who need to see—who need that little spark to go ahead and - CREATE.

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