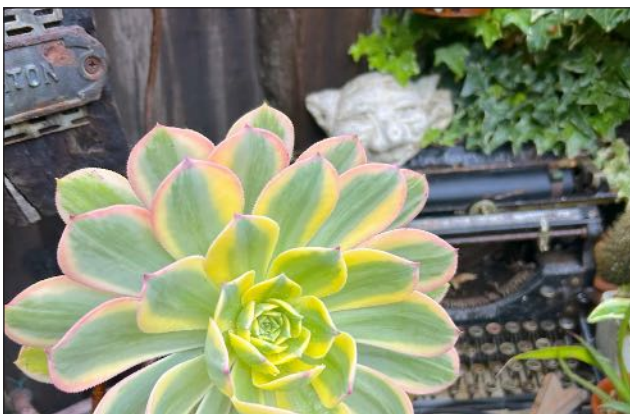


The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



Dicentra Scandens



Aeonium sunburst



Hydrangea

Dazzlers in the garden and some lovely places to visit

A REAL dazzler in the garden this week is the stunning aeonium, Sunburst. It is a variegated plant, branching occasionally, with medium to large heads displaying green yellow and white variegation, and can go pink on the edges with less water and strong sunlight. A stunning plant as you can see. It is just one of many different aeoniums in the garden but always the one I remember the name of! It stands out well against the vintage black typewriter behind!

Here are a couple of gardens you could visit with the National Garden Scheme this weekend. The first is Pekes Manor in Nash Street, Golden Cross, near Hailsham, brand new for 2025, opening tomorrow, Sunday from 2pm to 5pm with entry £6. They are now allowing dogs on leads too for this opening. Pekes garden was created in 1908, surrounding a pre-Tudor Manor House and includes several distinct gardens. Spanning approximately two acres, the garden features an ancient pond, a formal front garden, large topiary lawn, rose border, column garden, and a walled garden. Pekes is a hospitality venue, so they aim to have something of interest in the gardens year-round.

Our final opening next week is Pitfield Barn Cut Flower Farm and Studio. The second is Pitfield Barn Cut Flower Farm & Studio in Chalkers Lane, Hurstpierpoint, near Hassocks, tomorrow from midday to 4pm with entry £6. Here, they are passionate about British cut flowers and sow, grow and harvest seasonal, British cut flowers without chemicals or pesticides. Their seedlings are grown in peat free compost and their hand cut flowers are cut to order from what is available depending on the season. You can learn about the British flower market, how the garden works and their philosophy on the tours. There is a converted barn and studio where various flower, art and craft workshops take place and café. Freshly cut bunches of seasonal flowers, local produce and gifts for sale too.

A fairly new hydrangea is 'Groundbreaker Blush', the world's first truly ground covering

Hydrangea paniculata. It brings astonishing panicles of blush-pink flowers that mature beautifully over summer and into autumn, but with a twist. Unlike traditional hydrangeas that tower high, this variety stays low and spreads wide, creating a lush carpet of blooms for 100 days. It combines extraordinary floral displays with ease of care, thriving in well-drained soil and tolerating partial shade to full sun. It's fully hardy, disease resistant, and a magnet for pollinators, adding life and colour all season long. Flowers first emerge white, developing an adorable soft pink blush shade as summer progresses. Imagine your borders, containers, or garden beds transformed by this low-growing wonder. It's versatile for patios and small spaces, providing all the stunning summer floral show you love, but without towering stems that demand staking.

Towering high above the railway sleepers and starting to tumble down is the lovely dicentra scandens. Climbing Bleeding Heart is a vigorous vine from China with loads of delicate cascading golden yellow flowers from mid-summer to frost. The leaves are delicate and fern-like in appearance. It prefers rich, evenly moist, well-drained soils with the roots shaded but where it can grow into the sun.

It will die down to the ground in the winter and in colder climates, it can be grown as an annual. Plant it in a woodland garden, on a trellis or fence, or in a container on the patio. Although a vigorous grower, it is not invasive or weedy. I love it.

Looking its very best at the moment is the pretty buddleja Buzz Magenta. It is almost one of the first plants visitors see as they enter the back garden and its colouring is really striking as you can see. I have two others, lilac and white but the magenta is the real show stopper. It is a sensational, fairly new dwarf variety with vivid magenta, fragrant flowers smothering the short, bushy stems. This lovely compact shrub is perfectly proportioned for patio pots and smaller gardens and is very attractive to bees and butterflies. It will grow in sun or semi-shade in most soil types.

You can see me pictured by the



Geoff Stonebanks

central steps in the garden with several containers lining both sides. Looking really good at the moment are the beautiful eucomis, or pineapple lilies, towering either side of me. They take their common name from the unusual appearance of its flower. It's an easy to grow summer-flowering bulb, perfect for growing in sunny herbaceous borders, in pots on the patio and the greenhouse or conservatory. They produce long thin flower spikes topped with a small rosette of leaves. For best results, keep plants well-watered during the summer months but keep dry in winter. New plants can be propagated by removing offsets from the parent bulbs in spring. Mine remain in the garden, in pots, in winter and have thrived in recent years!

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk



Buddleja buzz