

The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



White bottlebrush



King Charles Coronation Rose



Campanula

Rose fit for a king is one of the prettiest blooms in the garden

THE garden has had a steady flow of visitors over the last couple of weeks and, in the main, the weather has played ball. It has been a constant job keeping the plot neat and tidy and you can see me tidying up in the beach garden.

At the back, there is much more deadheading to do on a daily basis, along with checking what may need watering.

Looking good this week is the summer house doorstep container, brimming with campanula. It is a very versatile, low-growing plant that can grow indefinitely. You can let it run through the garden like a carpet or let it grow over a wall, or frothing over a container like mine. It is hardy and flowers between May and July.

The most favourable time to plant this creeping plant is in spring, placing it in a sunny spot or in partial shade. Mine has been planted for many years now and returns to impress every year.

Next weekend you could celebrate life in full bloom at the Borde Hill Garden Festival, where the splendour of nature meets aspirational outdoor living. Nestled within the stunning heritage listed garden, the festival is set to take place on Saturday, June 22, and Sunday, June 23, and will showcase the best finds for both home and garden.

Discover over 40 beautifully curated independent stalls with planters, garden furniture, lifestyle trends and artisan accessories, alongside rare and unusual plants from national specialist nurseries.

Enjoy eclectic live music on the South Lawn, explore curated talks from leading garden designers and experts and discover irresistible flavours from Sussex's best pop-ups.

Check out the website for full details. www.bordehill.co.uk

A gift from my mum last year was the pretty King Charles Coronation Rose. It is a commemorative rose, produced in honour of the historic occasion. This beautiful rose is a fitting tribute to the King.

It produces waves of double baby pink flower clusters which contrast effortlessly against bushy foliage of dark green and glossy leaves. This seems to be one of the

prettiest roses in the garden with each bloom having layer upon layer of pink petals with perfectly ruffled edges.

Make sure you plant it where you can enjoy its lovely light fragrance through the summer, and well into the short nights of autumn by planting near a window or doorway, the aroma will gently drift into your home. This rose is generally hardy, and more robust and disease resistant than many others.

Opening for the National Garden Scheme tomorrow (June 16) is the Hellingly Parish Trail. One not to be missed this year. Four of the eight gardens are new for 2024 too. Tickets and maps will be available on the green near the church and at May House.

They all open on Sunday from 11am to 5pm with combined entry £7. Eight gardens in a delightful Sussex village, including a pretty walled cottage garden, what could be more enticing?

If you missed its first opening back in April, here's another chance to visit 5 Coastguard Cottages at Cuckmere Haven in Seaford, it will open both days this weekend from 10am to 5pm with entry £5.

This garden overlooking the Seven Sisters will be known to many from a distance but is rarely seen close up.

Nestled on the cliff top in the South Downs National Park with sea views, planted with poppies, herbs and acanthus it is a perfect setting for the owner's sculpture and pottery display.

Full details on all the gardens can be found at www.ngs.org.uk and you can hear me talking on BBC Radio Sussex, about NGS gardens, again on Sunday too, at about 11.40am.

One of my favourites in the garden at the moment is the pretty white bottlebrush tree.

It is free flowering and seems to tolerate the often, wet, windy coastal weather here in Seaford. In colder areas they can be planted in a sunny position with shelter from a wall or be planted in a container which can be moved to a cold greenhouse or conservatory in cold spells.

Mine is in the ground and has three durable fleeces placed over it



Geoff and valerian in the beach garden

through the winter months.

They get their common name from their fluffy, blooms which are shaped like old-fashioned bottle brushes.

Botanically called Callistemon, they are hardy Australian native plants and you'll find varieties with flowers in red, pink and soft yellow too.

They come in a range of sizes from low-growing shrubs to much taller varieties that can easily form hedges and screening.

These spring-to-summer flowering beauties are well suited to growing in full sun to part shade spots. However, for more flowers plant them in as much sun as possible.

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk or email visitdriftwood@gmail.com to arrange a visit before July 31



Borde Hill rose garden by Clive Nichols