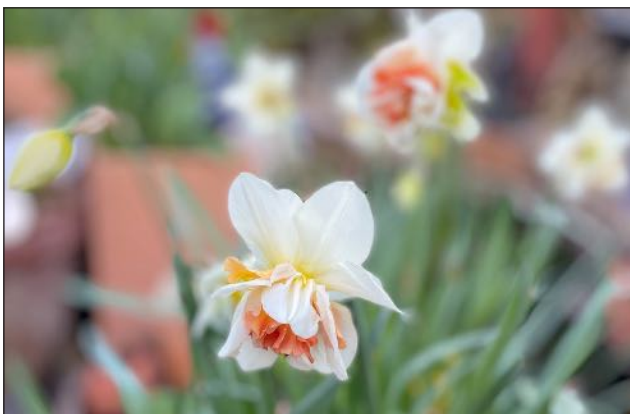


# The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



Mum in a Million rose



Replete narcissus



The Bates Green garden

## Blooming great idea for a lovely way to celebrate Mother's Day

**W**HAT have you got planned for Mother's Day tomorrow? If you need a last-minute idea to treat your mum to something special, then look no further than a visit to Bates Green in Arlington, which opens for the National Garden Scheme tomorrow from 10.30am to 4pm.

This 1.5 acre garden has been owned by the McCutchan family since 1921 and was developed and skillfully planted by Carolyn McCutchan when she moved to the property in 1968.

Since Carolyn's death in 2019, the garden has been undergoing a period of restoration by a small team of gardeners led by Emma Reece who was a student of Carolyn's in 2002.

The garden surrounds the farmhouse, which was originally a small gamekeeper's cottage. In the Woodland Garden spring bulbs abound followed by herbaceous woodlanders and hardy cyclamen. In the more formal shaped Middle Garden colour is the main theme, starting with tulips and alliums, and then herbaceous and woody plants take over until the autumn.

Other beds flow with a good mixture of grasses and all manner of exciting plants to give colour, texture and movement.

Bates Green is in a tranquil setting, surrounded by pastures grazed by sheep with views to the South Downs.

The six-acre conservation meadow adjoining the garden contains a wealth of flora and fauna.

It is traditionally managed with mown paths and seating for visitors.

The picture above shows some of the gorgeous cyclamen growing beneath the spreading boughs of the trees. Home-made soup, cakes and scones, plus light lunches will be available in a large insulated barn. Full details at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk).

If your mum is into gardening and you've still to make a present choice, then you may be able to get your hands on a rose that I'd personally never heard of until recently.

It's called Rosa, Mum In A Million. Clearly a perennially popular choice, not just for its name, but

also for the profusion of large, well-scented flowers that appear continuously for several months throughout the summer.

It can be planted in the border, or potted up and placed on a sunny patio, and the flowers will last for ages after being cut and added to a vase. I've read that it is also known as Millie and makes an ideal gift, with classic, old fashioned quartered blooms with a wonderful strong, sweet rose fragrance.

Back at Driftwood I reckon I've now cut back all the grasses and shrubs in the beach garden, some of which are already showing new growth. It's a bit of a painstaking job but worth the effort. The hellebore has almost finished flowering and I'll be cutting the heads off to tidy the area up too.

There are quite a few daffodils flowering in the back garden now, always a good sign that spring is on the way, officially it commences on Monday, 20th, this date marks the "spring equinox" in the Northern Hemisphere and occurs when the Sun crosses the celestial equator going south to north.

It's called the "celestial" equator because it's an imaginary line in the sky above the Earth's equator.

If you imagine standing on the equator, the sun would pass directly overhead on its way north.

One daffodil I have in my garden is called Replete. It is a stunning variety of daffodil that is highly fragrant.

The bi-colour flowers have pretty ruffled apricot-pink centres that are surrounded by white petals with a tinge of pink.

A magnificent addition to any daffodil display in a border or planted in patio pots and containers, where its sweet scent can be really appreciated.

Replete also has the added benefit of being a great naturalising bulb so you will get an increasing display year after year.

It will flower in March and April and grow to a height of about 45cm. That all said, there are so many different varieties and colours to choose from that always look so beautiful at this time of the year.

Two of the many garden sculpture pieces I've recently positioned in the garden for the summer months are these two beautiful mo-



Geoff cutting back grasses in the beach garden

saic mackerel.

They are on long metal stakes and catch the light beautifully in the gravel bed at the top of the garden underneath the large yucca.

We were selling many similar pieces by the artist, Katie Green, several years ago during the Artwave Festival events we used to hold in the garden and I couldn't resist purchasing them myself, along with two beautiful mosaic seagulls with hats.

A few years previously, Katie had also completed a commission for us, a stained glass panel to block out a small redundant window by the kitchen, which gets removed for the winter months and now too has been restored to its home for the summer.

Read more of Geoff's garden at [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk)



The mosaic fish