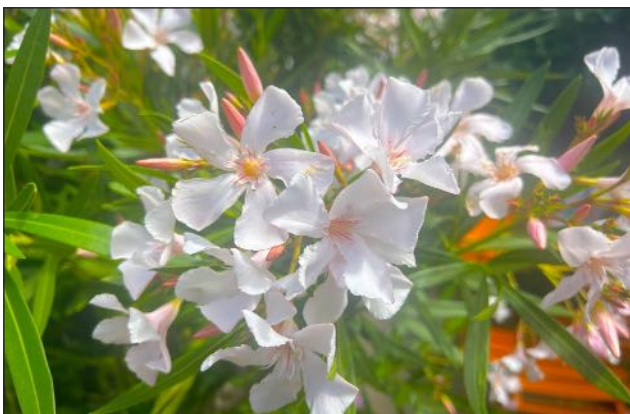


The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



Cox's orange pippin



Olearia



Buddleja buzz magenta

It's the epitome of elegance and renowned for its exquisite beauty

THIS week there are several plants looking pretty good in the garden here at Driftwood. A fairly new plant, escallonia "Pink Elle". The plant is the epitome of elegance and is renowned for its exquisite beauty and unparalleled charm. It is a captivating shrub that has many of my visitors asking what it is! With its glossy, dark green foliage and delicate pink blossoms, 'Pink Elle' adds a touch of sophistication to gardens of all sizes. Clusters of bright pink, five-petaled, tubular blooms form large nectar and pollen rich flowerheads at the end of each branch, from July to September. It attracts pollinators such as butterflies and bees too. Additionally, its compact size makes it perfect for container gardening and requires minimal maintenance while providing maximum visual impact.

Buddleja Buzz Magenta has long been an admired plant in my garden. This is a new twist on a much-loved garden favourite, it is the world's first patio Buddleja! These attractive, compact plants are loved by bees and butterflies, but won't take over your garden. It is easy to grow and problem-free with a super long-flowering period. Perfectly proportioned for patio pots and smaller gardens. You can also get it in white and lilac which are also planted in my garden.

There is a lovely new garden opening for the National Garden Scheme in Ovingdean this weekend, it's 2 Wanderdown Way, opening both days from 10am to 4pm with entry £5. This is a relatively new garden created almost from scratch five seasons ago. It is adjacent to the South Downs National Park and is primarily a coastal chalk garden with wonderful downland views to the sea beyond.

Also new for 2025 is Beardsland at 97 Lewes Road, Ditchling which opens on Sunday from midday to 5pm with entry £7. See a constantly evolving country garden together with a 2 acre wildflower meadow, with views of the Downs and Ditchling Beacon. Full details on both gardens at www.ngs.org.uk

It looks like I will get another great crop of Cox's orange Pippin

apples again this year, the small tree is laden with fruit at the moment. This is the classic English apple, often regarded as the finest of all dessert apples. It arose in England in the 19th century as a chance seedling, and has inspired apple lovers ever since. It remains unsurpassed for its richness and complexity of its rich aromatic flavour and crisp, juicy texture which set this apple apart from other varieties.

Apple 'Cox's Orange Pippin' produces medium sized, orange-red fruits with thin skins. Although not considered to be the easiest variety to grow, it is well suited to the temperate UK climate, producing a good crop that can be harvested from September for immediate use and store for a short period too

Back in 2008 I planted 3 small phormiums in the gravel at the top of the garden. Also known as the New Zealand flax, it is a unique and versatile shrub that is perfect for adding texture and colour to the garden. It is known for its striking foliage and long-lasting blooms, which you can see me holding in the picture. It is a great choice for adding a tropical feel to your garden, and its evergreen foliage will provide year-round interest.

They are low-maintenance shrubs that are easy to care for and can be planted in various garden styles. Mine are all planted in gravel beds and they pair well with other plants, such as grasses, succulents, and perennials. You can see they have grown really well in the intervening years and make a great statement.

Also looking good this week is a pretty Nerium oleander which is a mainstay of Mediterranean gardens and widely used for screen planting, on hillsides and alongside roads. They flower in summer, the large open flower clusters can be single or double, and come in many colours including white, pink, red and peach. Mine, as you can see, is pretty pink. Upright stems are clothed with evergreen leaves which are long, slender, and an attractive shade of silvery-green. It is worth noting however that every part of the oleander plant is extremely poisonous if ingested and consuming even a small amount can be fatal. While



The plants are looking pretty good in the garden here at Driftwood

oleander is toxic only if consumed, contact with the foliage may cause skin irritations. Wearing gloves when handling oleander is strongly advisable, along with thoroughly washing hands and exposed skin after handling or pruning.

Just a quick mention for 2 gardens opening for Martlets Hospice, tomorrow, Sunday 20th between 11am and 5pm. The 2 plots are located at 33 Wivelsfield Road in Saltdean BN2 8FP, entrance £6, and 91 The Ridgeway, Woodingdean BN2 6PB, entrance by donation. Refreshments and plant sale available at both. Both beautiful gardens, with lots to see, open for a good cause.

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk or book a visit before 3rd August by emailing visitdriftwood@gmail.com



Pink Elle