

# The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



The Susie rose



Magelliana



Dahlia

## Wonderful perfume and colour make this rose an absolute gem

**T**HERE are still some pretty flowers blooming in the garden, notably the pretty rose, Susie. This is an absolute gem of a rose which boasts a wonderful perfume and satisfying colour. Go on a journey of colour with this climbing rose, starting with a reddish bud, which opens up with yellow and golden shades in early summer, then taking on a pink and blush colour as they fade, and the petals fall. This repeat-flowering variety will continue to burst to life through summer and autumn.

Looking good in the beach garden is coronilla glauca which will light up the garden with an abundance of lemon-yellow, pea-like blooms. It flowers from December through to mid spring with sweetly scented blooms making this a useful shrub for bringing colour to those dull winter days. The small blue-green foliage is evergreen, providing a fine backdrop for its fragrant display. They also tend to flower again in late summer too. This versatile shrub is perfectly hardy in most UK locations, but performs particularly well in a sheltered, sunny spot, even in difficult coastal areas.

Fuchsia magellanica is a hardy fuchsia with pretty, red flowers with long, tapered sepals. When other fuchsias fail to survive winter, this robust South American species can be relied on to retain a framework of branches. The purple and red flowers are small but borne profusely throughout summer. Like all fuchsias it thrives in fertile, moist but well-drained soil, in a sheltered spot in partial shade. I have three large shrubs on an east-facing fence producing a profusion of flowers loved by the bees.

I've had a large container full of dahlia tubers for several years now and they never fail to put on a great show in the garden through the summer. You can see one of their dazzling pink flowers in my garden in the image. With a wide choice of flower shapes and colours, dahlias are unrivalled for giving a showy display from summer into autumn. You can combine them with other late-

flowering plants like salvias and grasses to boost late-season borders, add dwarf cultivars for colour in summer containers or grow them in rows to give lots of cut flowers for your home. Dahlias like a warm, sunny, sheltered spot with free-draining soil and regular feeding and watering to ensure the best flowering display. Tie stems of taller cultivars, especially large-flowered ones, to sturdy canes for support.

This weekend, opening for the National Garden Scheme, there are four gardens opening across Sussex. In Herstmonceux, you could visit Butlers Farmhouse in Butlers Lane open both Saturday and Sunday between 2pm and 5pm with entry £7. There will be live jazz in the garden too. The plot is set in a lovely rural setting surrounding a 16th century farmhouse with views of the South Downs. This is a fun, quirky garden with surprises around every corner. Visitors should take along their own chairs or rugs to sit and listen to the live jazz available too.

Across the county in Chichester, there is The Folly in Charlton, also opening both days from 2pm to 4.30pm with entry £5. This colourful cottage garden surrounds a 16th century period house, set in the pretty downland village of Charlton, close to Levin Down Nature Reserve.

Hollymount, in Burnt Oak Road, High Hurstwood near Uckfield opens tomorrow too from midday to 5pm with entry £7. This is a new, seven-acre garden on a sloping hillside with four large ponds, a stream, waterfalls, terraced beds, interesting planting, some tropical and wildlife consisting of alpacas, pigs, chickens, ducks and fish. All in a very peaceful setting with some great views.

Finally, there is Peelers Retreat at 70 Ford Road in Arundel which opens its garden gate today, Saturday, from 2pm to 5pm with entry £5. This inspirational space is a delight with plenty of shaded areas to sit and relax, to enjoy your delicious teas. Full details on all four of the gardens can be found at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

I can't believe that I've had two



The photoshoot with Jon Santa Cruz

professional photo shoots in the garden in the last couple of weeks.

Jon Santa Cruz visited to take some portraits of me to try to publish a photo story of the garden and I. He was keen to take some unusual poses, like the one of me reclining on a bench in the garden. Then the Sunday Times contacted me to write a feature in the paper about gardening as you get older and sent another photographer. The whole page feature appeared in last Sunday's edition.

I can now confirm that we have raised £6,244.61 for charity this year through my garden openings, £5,288 for Macmillan Cancer Support and £946 for the National Garden Scheme and £40 for Children with Cancer.

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



Coronilla glauca