



# Green and pleasant

**AUGUST is usually one of the hottest months of the year meaning lots of watering required. Try to use grey water wherever possible, your water butts may be running low despite lots of rain this year. August is traditionally holiday-time, so you might need to enlist the help of friends and family to look after the garden while you are away. When you are at home, take the time to prune Wisteria and summer-flowering shrubs such as lavender once they've finished flowering.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**Most flowers lose their attraction as they fade, thereby spoiling the overall appearance of your beds, borders and containers. Not only does regular deadheading improve the appearance, it also directs energy into stronger growth and more flowers. Once the flowers are pollinated, seed heads, pods or capsules will form at the expense of further growth and flower development.**

## National Garden Scheme

This month there are some lovely gardens to see opening for the *National Garden Scheme*. In Hailsham, *Camberlot Hall* opens on both the 13th and 14th of the month. It is a 3-acre country garden, with a lovely view across fields and hills towards the

South Downs. It has been created from scratch over the last nine years with all design, planting and maintenance by the owner. See the new, part-walled garden and summerhouse and its new planting. Walk the lavender lined carriage driveway, see a naturalistic border, vegetable garden, shady garden and a 30 metre white border and exotic garden. It opens from 2pm to 5pm with entry £6.

On the 20th and 21st, *Butlers Farmhouse* opens the garden gate to visitors in Butlers Lane, Herstmonceux. It is quite a quite a quirky garden, with surprises round every corner including a rainbow border, small pond, Cornish inspired beach corners, a poison garden and secret jungle garden. Great views of the South Downs too. Picnics are welcome and you can enjoy live jazz in the garden as well. It opens from 2pm to 5pm with entry £6.

Over in Lindfield on the 29th August there are a pair of gardens opening with a joint admission, Lindfield jungle, 16 Newton Road and 47 Denmans Lane. The former, a surprising, intimate garden, transformed into an atmospheric jungle oasis planted for tropical effect. The latter, a tranquil 1-acre plot planted for year-round interest. They open from 1pm to 5pm with £6 joint admission.

Full details on all four plots at: [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

## Summer pond care

Ponds are a lovely addition to any garden and can provide a rich habitat for a range of wildlife. However, without care they can soon become an eyesore with overgrown plants, weeds and water that is unhealthy for fish and other wildlife. Occasional cleaning and regular maintenance are required. Water evaporates during windy or hot weather, leading to the water level dropping. The reduced surface area can be damaging for fish, as there's less oxygen available, so top up the pond if necessary. Ideally use rainwater from a butt. If you do have to use tap water and you keep fish, add the tap water gradually in small amounts to prevent the cold liquid shocking the fish in the pond. Installing a water feature to keep the surface bubbling gently is generally a good idea. Floating weeds can quickly cover the surface of a pond if left unchecked, so swirl these out with a stick or use a net to scoop them out. Leave weeds and algae on the side of the pond overnight, so that larger creatures can return to the water.

## Alstroemia Indian Summer

*Alstroemia Indian Summer* is a clump forming perennial with unique chocolate brown foliage and contrasting red, orange and yellow flowers which bloom continuously

from May until the first frosts. They are very exotic looking, also called Peruvian Lily, it is a vigorous perennial with coppery-orange and golden-yellow flowers that are ideal to brighten up the garden. They keep flowering all summer and are naturally hardy to about -7°C. *Alstroemia* likes well-drained soil with plenty of organic matter. They prefer full sun in order to flower well and should be grown in reasonably fertile and well-drained soil. I've had two clumps of them for several years now, one plant originally grown successfully in a large container, but now planted in the ground. You can see the flowers in the header.

## Hedge care

I've been busy this week trimming the many hedges in the garden, mainly *elaegnus*, sea buckthorn and *grissolina littoralis*. All three are really good seaside shrubs but do need to be kept in check, especially the buckthorn. I prefer to trim mine through the summer with secateurs, just cutting off the new haphazard growth so as not to spoil the overall look of the hedge, just using electric trimmers at the end of the open garden season and again in the spring. I do think it makes a real difference as the electric trimmers are quite savage on the leaves. Needless to say, once this job has been completed then a trip to the local dump is required to get rid of all the excess debris.

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

Geoff's garden, Driftwood has appeared on BBC2 *Gardeners' World*, was a finalist in *Gardeners' World Magazine Best Small Space* and a finalist in *Lewes District Business Awards 2018* as 'The Tourist Destination of the Year'. Read the amazing 5-star reviews on TripAdvisor. Amazing feature in *Coast Magazine* and an American magazine, *Flea Market Garden Style*. Read all about Geoff's trips to Buckingham Palace and Royal Garden Party in 2018 and his work for the community.