



# Green and pleasant

**DECEMBER is generally a quiet month in the garden, but there are probably more things to take care of than you might think. The clocks have now gone back, meaning limited daylight hours and as we fast approach the shortest day of the year, this month's crisp wintery weather can be strikingly beautiful and bitterly cold in equal measure. The Camellia Yuletide in my garden, pictured in the header, still looks good on a frosty morning.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**This month you will need some hard work to keep warm outside, such as digging or tree pruning. Remember to check your winter protection and if you have a greenhouse make sure the heater is working. Once your gardening tasks are complete, maybe you will have time for some fireside garden planning.**

## Driftwood By Sea

It's hard to believe it's almost Christmas and we are nearly at the end of another gardening year. What an incredible 12 months it has been for *Driftwood* too! In September we marked 20 years of living on the south coast and saw four separate

television films broadcast about the plot, *BBC Gardeners' World* and *BBC SE Today* in March, *ITV News* in April and local station *Latest TV* in August. Quite remarkable! Then, in late September I was approached by a production company in Bristol to use the garden for some paid location filming for a new programme on *C4* being broadcast early next year. It was hard to get it looking good for filming in mid-October but we were extremely lucky with a beautiful sunny day which really helped. As part of the new programme format, the team planned to visit beautiful and unique gardens where they gather inspiration to incorporate into the chosen garden designs for the homeowners

involved in the project. The team said that through their research they had found *Driftwood* and thought it would be perfect inspiration for a seaside garden that is being designed. Watch this space! There is a 2-page feature on *Driftwood* in the December issue of the national gardening magazine, *Modern Gardens*. It's almost four years now that I have been writing this monthly gardening feature in *Bournefree* too, how time flies.

## Christmas is coming

When I think of Christmas and the garden, for me the top two things that come to mind are holly and ivy. They are two of the very traditional and stereotypical decorations for this time of year. So, if you have any growing on your plot, why not gather some and hang around your doorways and window frames to really give your house the traditional Christmas look this year. I remember, way back in my childhood in the 1960's, my parents had a pub in Oxfordshire and I would decorate it for Christmas with sprigs of holly and ivy cut from the garden plus some mistletoe we'd be given. I'd sometimes spray the foliage in gold and silver and use the mix to intertwine around the bar canopy or behind the pictures on the wall. You can also add small glass baubles or other Christmas decorations from them to create a great natural look in the house. They are both perfect for some Christmas inspiration from the garden. I have a few berries on my holly bushes this year and they look so pretty, it almost seems a shame to cut the sprigs off.

You can also cut branches from conifers or fir trees in the garden to create that naturalistic look too. If you have any seed heads or

faded hydrangea flowers from the garden, these too, can be sprayed gold and silver, to add to the more conventional Christmas decorations.

## Will we get snow?

I love sculpture in the garden all year around but in the Winter, with a bit of frost or maybe a fall of snow, it can transform the garden into a mini magical kingdom. Most of my pieces are rusty metal which really catch the snow as it falls or a range of wooden wheels, not to mention a few garden gnomes too! Other pieces are metal spheres and cone plant supports which all look equally as impressive. Even if it there's no snow this Christmas, it doesn't need to stop you having your very own snowman. I recently saw one made out of a series of different diameter terracotta plant pots, each turned upside down, one on the other, and then painted white with a cute face and decorated with a scarf. It is also a great way to make use of any excess garden pots. This could be the perfect chance to engage any younger members of the family to enter into the festive spirit and to be creative in the garden.

Wishing a very Happy Christmas to all my readers!

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

Geoff is a multi-award-winning garden owner, garden writer & broadcaster. *Driftwood* has appeared twice on *BBC2 Gardeners' World* and was a finalist in *Gardeners' World Magazine Best Small Space*. See the amazing 5-star reviews on *TripAdvisor*. Read all about Geoff's work for the community, appointment as a *Coronation Champion* and trips to *Buckingham Palace* including two *Royal Garden Parties*, in 2018 and 2023. Read the many published features on the garden in national, local and worldwide media, including *TV*.