



# Green and pleasant

**THE month of July is often one of the hottest months of the year and a great time to sit back and appreciate the fruits of your labour by enjoying your garden. It is essential to keep plants looking good by regularly dead-heading and you'll be able to enjoy a longer display of magnificent blooms. Make sure you keep new plants well-watered, using grey water where possible, and hoe off weeds, which always thrive in the sunshine.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**July can also be a holiday month, so remember to take account of them too. Most will tolerate a few days' absence without suffering, but absences of more than a week call for some creative measures to provide valuable moisture in the right quantity. All houseplants benefit from efforts to provide water during holidays, except for cacti and succulents which can tolerate longer periods of time without water.**

## Macmillan Coastal Garden Trail 2022

This year's trail takes place over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th July and an added bonus is the presence of *The One Show's* gardening expert, Christine Walkden, the trail's Patron. She will be present on the

23rd at *Driftwood* from 11am, after performing the opening ceremony there. Why not pop along and meet her, she may also visit some of the other gardens in Seaford during the day too, so check the website to see her movements:

[www.macmillangardentrail.co.uk](http://www.macmillangardentrail.co.uk)

Tickets can be bought online through the website, alternatively buy them in the first garden visited. A day ticket for Saturday or Sunday costs £8, allowing you to visit as many gardens as you can on that day. Individual garden visits cost £3 each. There are 17 planning to open between Brighton and Seaford with many serving delicious refreshments and some selling local artist's work. All the details are on the website.

## National Garden Scheme

Four very different gardens form the Hellingly Parish Trail from 1–5pm, which takes place on the 10th of the

month. Bus 51 from Eastbourne takes you straight there too. The combined admission is £6 with children free. Trail tickets can be purchased on the green near the church.

Over in Chailey, *Bramley* opens on the 22nd July from 1230 to 1630. Entry here is £5 and cream teas will be served too. It is a rural 1-acre garden begun in 2006 and includes an orchard avenue brimming with wild flowers along with grassed areas and bee hives. Full details on both events can be found at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

## Greenhouse

If, like me, you have a greenhouse in the garden it can be very easy to forget how hot it can get in there during the Summer months. A great way to keep humidity up, which helps prevent pests, is to water the greenhouse floor, or damp down, every day! Alternatively, place a large tray of water on the work bench to compensate. It helps to check for aphids and red spider mite and quickly spray with bug killer at first sign of problems. Not always easy, but it helps to keep surfaces nice and clean too so there is less chance of disease spreading. Try and ventilate the greenhouse every day too, even through the night as well so air can circulate and keep your plants healthy. Remember to pick off dead leaves on plants too.

## Looking good at Driftwood

All the time, effort and money invested in the new sunken garden area last Autumn has really paid off for me. You can see in the header how it has now come into its own, bedecked with succulents, ferns and a few fuchsias. I have to confess it looked a bit stark at the onset but once the plants were arranged and the ferns grew, they really softened

the overall look. Chester enjoys sitting there in the sun too. I was concerned that visitors would think that the "wow" factor had gone by not having so many containers of summer annuals. Feedback last month from those who had been before soon indicated that that was not the case. More importantly, it has created a wonderful, more accessible area, close to the house for us all to enjoy too.

## July jobs

I don't have a lawn in my garden but I guess many of you do! High temperatures and low rainfall can take their toll on many green plots but this year we have certainly had the rain so many will be looking lush. Applying a good summer lawn fertiliser following a rain shower or after just watering it can help too. In dry weather mowing less frequently will avoid scalping the lawn. If you have a wisteria in the garden then July or August is a good time to prune after flowering. Focus on the long, vigorous shoots that have grown up over spring and Summer. Cut them back to five or six leaves, or a couple of buds from the base. By doing this you will control the size of the plant and encourage flowering shoots to be produced rather than green leaves.

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.