



# Green and pleasant

**SUMMER is moving on at a pace and is often one of the hottest months of the year. It's the perfect time to sit out and enjoy the fruits of your labour in your garden with family and friends. Remember to keep your plants looking good by regularly dead-heading to ensure you enjoy a much longer display of fantastic blooms. If you've recently put some new plants and shrubs, make sure you keep them well-watered, remembering that you can use grey water as well. This time of year, you can expect lots of weeds, which thrive in the sunshine, so keep on top of them!**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**I can honestly say that I am finding it much easier to maintain the garden this year, after all the changes I have made in the last two years!**

The use of more drought tolerant plants, along with my existing collection of succulents and geraniums has meant much less watering which goes down really well especially in times of drought and hose pipe bans. Visitors have been impressed with the changes and show a real interest in the ideas put into practice. I'm very pleased to say that *BBC Gardeners'*

*World* have commissioned a film to be made here, either this month or next to be broadcast in the autumn, about the drought tolerant planting and use of recycled items in the garden.

## Summer gardening tasks

Here are a few suggestions for jobs in the garden this month. Try cutting lavender for drying, it's best to choose the newly opened flowers for the best fragrance. Once cut, hang up in a cool, dark place to dry. If you are growing dahlias, give them a liquid feed and keep them well watered, tying in the shoots of tall varieties to sturdy stakes as they grow. I've got a few towers of sweet peas, if growing them, remember to water and feed regularly and pick the flowers every few days, as well as

remembering to remove seed pods, thus prolonging flowering.

If you are planning ahead, July is a good time to plant autumn bulbs in pots and borders.

It is really important to feed, water and deadhead your summer bedding regularly, especially those in pots and hanging baskets. Cut back early summer perennials, such as hardy geraniums and delphiniums, after flowering in the hope of a second flush.

## National Garden Scheme

This month, the *National Garden Scheme* has a few local gardens on offer for readers to visit. Across the weekend of the 15th and 16th, between midday and 5pm there are two small gardens to see in Saltdean and Woodingdean. The jungle garden in Rodmell Avenue, Saltdean was created back in 2012 and completely revamped in 2021. Measuring just 65ft x 36ft, but appearing larger, with winding paths that lead you through lush jungle and insect friendly planting. Listen out for jungle sounds along the way, with tea and home-made cakes served overlooking the exquisite planting of exotic plants. Meanwhile, *Baggots Rath* in Crescent Drive North, Woodingdean was created on a challenging site with shallow chalk. The garden looks more mature than its seven years and includes many of the elements that were needed to win the owner eight Chelsea gold medals and twice Best in Show for floral design.

Across in Herstmonceux on the 26th July, between 10am and 7pm, the *Herstmonceux Castle Estate* opens its gate for the scheme. It has formal gardens, woodland trails, meadows and lakes, all set around the majestic 15th century moated castle. Features include an avenue of ancient sweet chestnut

trees and lakeside folly in the style of a Georgian house with a walled cottage garden. The gardens and grounds first opened for the NGS in back in 1927.

## Sea lavender

As summer hots up, so do the plants in the garden. Sea lavender, pictured in the header, is a beautiful summer stunner, many visitors are not familiar with it and often ask its name. Also known as marsh rosemary and lavender thrift, it is a perennial coastal plant that can often be found growing in both salt marshes and along coastal sand dunes. Despite its name, it is not actually related to the lavender plant. The plant creates leathery, spoon-shaped leaves, red-tinted stems, and delicate purple blooms that appear in summer. These plants are easily recognizable as a result of their dense, cloud-like sprays of tiny, paper-like lavender flowers.

They are primarily grown for their beautiful floral displays; though its large green paddle-shaped basal rosette leaves will also create an attractive ground-cover in the early spring, until the plant flowers in the summer. Part of what makes sea lavender a somewhat unusual perennial is that the leaves are so close to the ground, and long flower stems will develop from this grouping of foliage.

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.