



Green and pleasant

JULY is often one of the hottest months of the year and a great time to sit out and enjoy the fruits of your labour. Remember to keep your plants looking good by regularly dead-heading, by doing this you'll enjoy a much longer display of blooms. Keep new plants well-watered, using grey water where possible, and hoe off weeds, which will thrive in the sunshine. The month brings long, warm days that will continue late into the evening, creating the perfect time for pottering around in the garden after work, maybe hosting barbecues, and enjoying your beds and borders as they reach their peak.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

Water plants deeply, allowing the water to penetrate the root area as this promotes stronger and deeper root growth, making plants more resilient to heat stress. Try and water in the early morning or late evening to minimise evaporation. It is also best to avoid frequent shallow watering, as this will encourage shallow root growth and make your plants more vulnerable to the heat.

Roses

Although I am not a great lover of roses, I do have a few in my garden that look pretty good including Macmillan Nurse, King

Charles Coronation rose, Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Susie.

Roses are a classic and instantly recognisable plant, ideal for almost every style of garden. They flower abundantly from early summer in a choice of colours including pastel shades of pink, peach, cream or snowy-white; vibrant yellow and gold; orange, crimson or red. Many roses are fragrant. Some types flower in one flush of blooms while others flower all summer long. Some have colourful fruits (hips) too. They come in a range of forms, from traditional shrubs and climbers to miniature plants for patio containers. Care is easier than you might think, anyone can grow them successfully. Plant your roses in a sunny location with good drainage. Fertilize them regularly for impressive flowers,

water them evenly to keep the soil moist and prune established rose bushes in early spring. Watch for diseases like powdery mildew or black spot.

National Garden Scheme

This month, there are three garden trails open for the scheme in and around Eastbourne. First up there is the newly formed Langney and Willingdon trail, open on Sunday 14th from 1pm to 5pm. One new garden in Willingdon joins two other gardens that have opened before. The gardens at 36 Jellicoe Close and 16 Hardy Drive are both developed on land reclaimed from the sea and 6 Pashley Road, the tea venue, is a large urban garden backing onto the South Downs.

Over in Ditching there is a brand-new trail of six gardens opening on the 6th July from 11am to 5pm. *The Horticultural Society* was established in 1822 and is one of the oldest in the country. The love and passion for gardening is evident in the gardens opening. Discover different planting and design styles, from formal to country gardens plus the smaller gardens, packed with colour and plants. Each garden has its own feel, united by a love of bees, birds, butterflies and wildlife.

Six gardens make up the Bexhill on Sea trail on Sunday 7th July, from midday to 5pm. This delightful trail, includes two brand new plots for 2024, 2 Ravens Close and 13 Thornbank Crescent. Across the trail see beautiful gardens, some laid to lawn with beds and a large variety of perennial and annual plants. Don't miss the Gaudi inspired steps set in a mature cottage garden surrounded by trees and shrubs.

Please check the scheme's website for full garden details at: www.ngs.org.uk

Mangave

In the header you can see a collection of spiky plants in containers arranged on the patio. These are Mangave, a fairly new addition to my collection. They are a relatively new phenomenon, which is a cross between the genus Manfreda and Agave. These rare hybrids combine the best of both worlds: the better growth rate and the interesting patterns of Manfreda, and the habit and refinement of Agave. With their awesome colours and bold silhouettes, they really strike a pose! These unusual succulents form fleshy rosettes of evergreen spiky leaves edged with soft spines. Displayed as a collection they make a stylish design statement as you can see. Their strong symmetry and glowing colours form dramatic living sculptures which instantly capture attention. They are fast-growing, drought tolerant, low maintenance and hardier than Agave, plus they come in a fabulous array of colours and forms. In very mild coastal and city gardens, these tender succulents can be grown outside all year but are probably safer kept under cover. A recent one I acquired, called Praying Hands, won third prize in Plant of the Year at Chelsea this year.

Read more of Geoff's garden at: www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk or email: visitdriftwood@gmail.com or call: **01323 899296** to arrange a garden visit.

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.