



Green and pleasant

JUNE 20th is the longest day of the year and we all hope that the extra light and warmth will encourage the garden to put on an exuberant burst of growth. That aside, it also means weeds will start to sprout up from seemingly nowhere. Try and keep on top of them by hoeing regularly in dry conditions. Flowers should be blossoming and maybe you have lots to harvest in your vegetable garden. You can harden off any remaining half-hardy bedding plants ready for planting out. Prevent your greenhouse from overheating by remembering to open vents and doors on warmer days and try to check plants daily and water them if the soil is dry.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

If garden visiting is up your street, then June is by far the busiest month of the year for beautiful gardens that open up for charity, notably the *National Garden Scheme* and other local charities. Check out my selection for the *NGS* below and don't forget, if you wish to visit my own garden, pictured in header, perhaps having seen it earlier in the year on *BBC Gardeners' World*, you can call me on 01323 899296 to arrange or email visitdriftwood@gmail.com

National Garden Scheme Gardens

There are many beautiful gardens opening for the scheme, in and around Eastbourne, this month. Firstly, there is the newly named **Eastbourne Central Garden Trail**, which offers four gardens in Eastbourne town centre on Sunday the 2nd June, all within walking distance of each other. The gardens open between 1pm and 5pm, with entry £7. The four plots are 51 Carlisle Road, Dittons End and Hardwycke, both close to each other in Southfields Road and a new garden for 2024, which last opened for the

scheme back in 2005, *Chelmsford Lodge* at 12 Granville Road.

Over in Muddles Green, Chiddingly, **Farley's Sculpture Garden** is a brand-new venue for 2024, on Saturday 8th June between 10am and 4.30pm, with entry £6. The garden presents their permanent collection of works, chosen by photographer Lee Miller and surrealist artist Roland Penrose, alongside works by contemporary guest sculptors.

Just north of Hastings, in Broad Oak & Brede, **Waterworks and Friends** open the garden gate to two gardens, 4 Waterworks Cottages in Brede and *Sculdown* in Broad Oak. The date, Saturday 1st June between 10.30am and 4pm with entry £6. An opportunity to visit two unique gardens and discover the Brede Steam Giants 35ft Edwardian water pumping engines, and Grade II listed pump house located behind 4 Waterworks Cottages.

Over in Seaford on Sunday 2nd June there are ten assorted gardens opening in the town between 11am and 5pm. Combined entry to the trail will be £8. Maps will be available in each garden. 10 Clementine Avenue is brand new for 2024. Please note this is not a walking trail. Full details on all the addresses and other details can be found in the Sussex booklet or online at: www.ngs.org.uk

Tropical Influence

If, like me, you want a little tropical influence in your garden, then why not invest in a thoroughly hardy plant like *Aloe striatula*. It is an evergreen succulent with bushy, scrambling stems. It can be grown under cover or outdoors! The stems and leaf sheaths are striped light and dark green. Yellow racemes of flowers with protruding orange stamens are produced on

spikes 40cm high in summer. They always remind me of mini bananas, once they have turned yellow! I have two large specimens, both in the ground in the gravel garden at the back of the house, one either side of the central path up to the summer house. Indeed, one had got so big last year that I had to cut it back last Autumn and masses of small new growth has now emerged on the woody stems. They need no winter protection in my garden! They originate from South Africa and look pretty amazing planted with palms and grasses. Outdoors protect from excessive winter wet by ensuring very sharp drainage and plant in full sun.

Garden tasks for June

As well as enjoying your plot this month there are a few jobs to be getting on with too. Something I'm not very good at, as I get impatient and want to plant summer annuals, is to wait until spring bulb foliage has died back naturally before cutting back! If you have sweet peas, start to pick as soon as they flower to encourage more growth. As new shoots appear on climbing plants such as honeysuckle and clematis, make sure you tie them up, to train them where you want them to grow! Any hardy geraniums in the garden will benefit from a cut back after flowering to encourage more to follow. This month is the time to pinch out the tips of fuchsias too thereby creating a more-bushy plant and more blooms.

Read more of Geoff's garden at: 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.