



# Green and pleasant

**JUNE brings us the longest day with extra hours of warmth and sunshine. In 2025, the solstice occurs on Saturday 21st, marking the start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. The threat of frost has now long past and we can start planting in earnest. There's certainly plenty to keep you busy in the garden but also plenty to sit back and enjoy! Flowers are blossoming, there's lots to harvest in the vegetable garden, and keeping on top of bolting plants is a priority. Make sure you keep on top of weeding too. Your plants shouldn't have to compete for precious water, light, and nutrients.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**It's a month of daily checking your plants, watering them if the soil is dry, especially those that are newly planted. You need to harden off any remaining half-hardy bedding plants ready for planting out and continue to water your flowering rhododendrons, with rain water if you can. More importantly, get out there and enjoy it yourself. This month also marks, probably the busiest time of the year to visit open gardens.**

## Jobs for June

If you have a greenhouse, it is always a good idea to use blinds or apply shade paint to prevent it from overheating on hotter days. Remember

to open vents and doors on warm days too. If you have hanging baskets and containers growing on in the greenhouse, you can move them into their final positions in the garden.

Wind can take us all by surprise at this time of year, especially where I live, so it is always good practice to stake tall perennial plants early to prevent wind damage. Additionally, as new shoots grow on climbers, such as honeysuckle and clematis, use soft ties to train them to their supports. Towards the end of the month, if your hardy geraniums have finished flowering, cut them back to encourage new foliage and flowers.

Keep an eye open for lily beetle. I have some gorgeous lilies, pictured in header, which dazzle every year in the garden.

## National Garden Scheme

Here are four local gardens you could visit this month. *Butlers Farmhouse* in Butlers Lane, Herstmonceux, opens on Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th from 2pm to 5pm with entry £7.50. The owners are certain you will have fun and enjoy the secret jungle garden, Cornish-inspired beach corners, rainbow border, not to mention the poison garden, all set in six acres of rural Sussex with the South Downs in the distance.

*Farleys Sculpture Garden* in Muddles Green, Chiddingfold, near Lewes, opens on Saturday 7th, from 10am to 4:30pm, with entry £5. Designed as different themed rooms for sculpture, Farleys garden presents a permanent collection of works chosen by photographer Lee Miller and surrealist artist Roland Penrose, alongside works by contemporary guest sculptors. Over the years, giants, goddesses, mythical creatures and Roland's own work has populated the garden, in the company of work by their artist friends.

*5 Coastguard Cottage* at Cuckmere Haven in Seaford will open both days over the weekend of the 14th and 15th, from 10am to 5pm with entry £5. This iconic setting overlooking the *Seven Sisters* will be known to many from a distance, but this plot is rarely seen. It is nestled on the cliff top in the *South Downs National Park* with sea views and planted with native plants, poppies, herbs, vegetables and acanthus.

Finally at the end of the month, on Sunday the 29th, *Hellingly Parish Trail* has eight pretty gardens opening their gates for you to see from 11am to 5pm, with a combined entry of £8. You can find full details, directions etc of all the gardens I've mentioned on the website at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

## Driftwood Garden openings

If you fancy a visit to my garden in Seaford, we are now delaying our "by arrangement" openings until the period 16th June (following my knee replacement on 30th April) through until the 3rd August. To book your private visit and see the garden in all its glory, email [visitdriftwood@gmail.com](mailto:visitdriftwood@gmail.com) There are many water features throughout the plot which add to the tranquil feel the garden offers. As usual, there are plenty of sunny and shady nooks to enjoy your tray of home-made cakes all served on vintage china. We look forward to seeing you.

## 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. 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 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.

Read more of Geoff's garden at: [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk) or email [visitdriftwood@gmail.com](mailto:visitdriftwood@gmail.com) to arrange a visit before 3rd August.

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.