



# Green and pleasant

**THE month of March sees the opportunity for us all to appreciate our Mother's with her special day falling on Sunday 14th. The customary way of doing that has always been to buy her flowers or a plant. I doubt other ways of celebrating will be possible again this year but we will have to wait and see. Another celebratory day, St Patrick's Day, falls on the 17th too.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**Garden Centres start to fill up with starter and plug plants giving us hope that warmer times will be on the horizon soon. Don't forget that Easter pops up before the next issue comes out, just after the month closes, often seen as the real starting point of the gardening year!**

## Mother's Day

What colour flowers should you buy to celebrate Mother's Day? All the experts say that green represents the protective nature of mothers, while yellow alludes to their optimistic outlook towards life and for their children. Pink (flowers above) captures their compassionate and nurturing side and red focuses on their passion and empowerment drive. Take your pick in relation to your own mother. If you google the

most preferred flower to give on the day, it turns out to be the carnation. Mother's Day and carnations are inseparable so it seems. Tulips with their array of colours and lovely fragrance work well and lilies are always show-stopping and bound to make your mum smile on the day.

## Positive planning

Gardening really begins in earnest for me this month. There are just over 12 weeks until I plan to open Driftwood to the public for the 2021 season. I will have to review that decision later in the year, once we all know how the situation with the pandemic develops. Nonetheless, I am gearing up to open. The winter months have not been kind with extensive winds and there is much to do. A key task this month, will be to pressure clean all the paths and patios. Due to a torn Achilles tendon last year, I was not able to complete any of these tasks, the difference should be very clear to see, as the patios and paths are really dirty! To be honest, it

is not a job I enjoy, but one that needs doing before all the garden ornaments and furniture are taken back out of winter storage. It can take me over a week to accomplish in stages, from the top of the garden, right through to the drive at the front of the house. This year, I have invested in a brand-new machine so have high expectations.

## Garden wildlife

Spring is in the air which means that a whole host of wildlife, some helpful – and some less so – will be heading for the garden. The aim has to be to attract the friendly ones and discourage the not so friendly. Aphids can be a real nuisance, so to have insects that love to feast on them would be a bonus. Among the best are ladybirds. You can make a simple nest for them by placing a bundle of bamboo or cow parsley stems somewhere protected, such as the nook of a tree. If you have a damp shady corner in the garden, simply leave a pile of leaves to break down and this will create a home for the frogs, toads, newts and centipedes all of which keep slugs and snails under control. Another great asset is to plant a wildlife hedge, I've got holly in mine and it helps serve as a nesting place for birds who also keep pests such as slugs and snails at bay.

## National Garden Scheme

In March the scheme will have a limited number of gardens that are planning to open for local visitors only. Up to date visitor information can be found through their website, [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk). The situation is very fluid and circumstances may change in line with government restrictions, so it is best to log on and check what local visits are available. A new addition this year, is offering "live" online talks and full details on how to join them can be

found online too. Let's hope more freedom will be allowed for us to enjoy their gardens later in the year!

## Plug plants

Something you might want to consider for your own garden, is to order some plug plants now. You can buy them in local garden centres or, I like to buy online too. They're generally sent at just the right time for planting, and with step-by-step instructions. You don't even need a greenhouse to grow them on, a sunny back bedroom or windowsill will be enough. When you pot them up, add some easy feed or plug boost, so your plants get the very best start. And, another little tip, give the tips a pinch a couple of times while the plants are young, this will make them nice and bushy, with more flowers!

## Time for a change

If, like me, you have a number of containers in the garden, why not move them around in the spring. I have a collection that are transferred to the area behind the house, which provides a degree of protection from the harsh winter weather, in the autumn which now need to be relocated out in the garden again. It is always refreshing to place them somewhere different, thereby creating slightly different vistas for returning visitors to enjoy.

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.