



# Green and pleasant

**WITH virtually all my winter preparations complete outside, this month will be about pottering and completing tasks indoors that I have just kept putting off all summer. Now is also a good time to take stock of your house plants. I've probably got over 80 of various sorts inside and if I'm being honest, they do tend to get neglected through the summer months when my garden takes centre stage. Taking care of plants indoors can be a bit tricky. You need to consider so many things, such as lighting and watering. Probably the most common cause of plant death is over-watering. Indoor plants will need water, light and warmth in order to survive.**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**Have you thought about a real Christmas tree for next month? Dare I say, it's not long now and lots of companies are taking orders. I've had a real tree in the house most years as I love the smell. The last few years I've also placed one in the garden with fairy lights on too. I am deliberating over a Fraser fir as opposed to my usual Nordman tree. To be honest, it is not one I had really heard of before. The name drew my attention as my middle name is Fraser. Time this month to make a decision!**

## House plants

Plants acclimatise slowly to different surroundings by changing their leaf orientation and structure. Consequently, it is best if you can try not to move them around, as they may not adapt as easily as you think. An extremely easy plant to look after is commonly called a snake plant, you may also know it as Mother-In-Law's tongue. It has been a favourite house plant of almost everyone for almost always, or so it seems. You will have seen them around, quite often in shopping centres due to their ease of maintenance, they have stiff, thin leaves. The plant is also known as sanseveria and is resilient and, more importantly, can be placed in low light. The added

bonus, they do not require too much water either. So, due to their hardiness, snake plants make an excellent match as a houseplant if you are not too confident. I have several at home, one I only recently acquired. It is a gorgeous sanseveria Victoria or "Whale Fin" and one I've had for several years, sanseveria "Starfish". They both clearly resemble their names to a tee!

## Jobs in the garden

This time of the year it is important to keep an eye on the greenhouse. My heater has kicked in a few mornings too, to ensure plants do not get too cold in there. I am quite surprised at the amount of new growth on hedges and shrubs for this time of year. The ivy at the side of the house is due to be cut back and has lots of new growth! All my bulbs and winter flowering bedding plants are now in, a few in the ground but mainly in containers, and the area outside the kitchen French windows will be a blaze of colour throughout the Spring.

## Blooming in November

Looking good in my garden at the moment is a beautiful coronilla glauca. They can really light up your garden in winter, producing an abundance of lemon-yellow pea-like blooms that really do just keep on coming. Whilst it tends to flower from December onwards, mine has certainly dazzled through some of the summer too. So, this very easy to grow shrub is capable of flowering for nine months or more, making it a worthy hard-working addition to any garden. It is hardy and shows off its sweet-scented blooms against unusual blue-green foliage. In my experience, it is

certainly a very versatile shrub for almost any garden situation, performing particularly well in exposed locations and coastal areas. Its compact, rounded habit makes this tough little performer ideal for patio containers where you really get to appreciate the scent and pretty petite blooms. Alternatively, you can train it as a wall shrub for a spectacular upright display. I've actually got three shrubs, all are located in my beach garden, at the front of the house and take the full force of what the weather can throw at them. You can also cut the stems and brighten up the house during the winter months too.

Another hardy and resilient dazzler in the garden is the plant shown in the header. Pyracantha or firethorn are delightful, thorny, evergreen shrubs grown for their attractive displays of glossy autumn berries in fiery shades of oranges, reds and yellows. The berries first appear in late summer, ripen through the autumn and will stay on the plant until early spring if left untouched. The berries are preceded by beautiful clusters of small white, highly fragrant flowers in June which cover the shrub in a snowy white canvas.

Read more of Geoff's garden at: [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk)

Geoff is a multi-award-winning garden owner, garden writer & broadcaster. Driftwood has appeared 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 2 Royal Garden Parties, in 2018 and 2023. Read the many published features on the garden in national, local and worldwide media, including TV.