



Green and pleasant

OCTOBER is definitely the time for clearing up – greenhouses, ponds, gutters and water butts may all need cleaning out. Wooden garden furniture will need covering or storing for the winter and terracotta pots may need bringing inside, so that they don't freeze and crack. Tuesday 31st October is Halloween, if you have children, you may have a go and creating lanterns from pumpkins purchased at the supermarket or perhaps you've grown some yourself! They look great displayed in the garden or by the front door. Alternatively, you could purchase some vibrantly coloured gourds, like those shown in the header and use decoratively around your home or garden.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

The clocks go back on Sunday 29th October so be sure to set your clocks back one hour! For many, the gardening season stops, as the nights draw in, leaving much less time to work outside! Alternatively having to do much more in a shorter space of time. It's probably the latter that applies to me, as I always seem to find something that wants doing.

Falling leaves

Autumn is a beautiful season in the garden, with many perennials, shrubs and trees providing some

stunning colour. But once the leaves have fallen, they will need clearing up, especially from lawns, where they will smother the grass, and from paths and patios, where they may become slippery. It's also a good idea to remove leaves from gravel, otherwise it will become messy. You can make the sweeping and collection process a lot easier by using a combination of different tools and methods, but I favour doing it all by hand in my garden, due to its size and layout.

Chrysanthemums

A very common plant to have in the garden at this time of year is the ever-popular chrysanthemum or "pot mum". They are perfect to

be placed in containers and bloom well into autumn and beyond. Care of container grown mums is relatively easy. You may want to repot it as soon as you get it home to give it room to grow. If you are careful and keep it well watered, you should be able to enjoy their blooms throughout the autumn months and possibly even the next spring. You can see a yellow one at *Driftwood* in the header.

Charity fundraising at Driftwood

This year at *Driftwood*, I have been able to hand over £5081 to *Macmillan Cancer Support*, along with a further £801 to the *National Garden Scheme*. A grand total of £5,882.94 raised in 2023. Thank you to all those who visited and supported my charity fundraising, we'll do it all again in 2024 in June and July only.

National Garden Scheme

October is the final month of the year to see gardens opening for the scheme. One on offer not far from Eastbourne, in Arlington, is the lovely *Bates Green Garden* in Tye Hill Road which will open the garden gate on Sunday 22nd October between 1030am to 4pm, with pre-booking essential, adult entry £6 and children £3. Autumn tones are provided in abundance by the many mature trees and shrubs within and around the farmhouse. The *Winter Garden* is positioned so that the low rays of sun make the most of the coloured leaves and stems of the many cornus, with bulbs and plants grown for interest. Tickets at www.ngs.org.uk

Grape vine

If, like me, you have a grape vine in the garden you've probably got a bit of a crop on it by now. I've

got two in my garden that are not really there to provide the fruit, as weather conditions can vary so much each year. I've used them as good cover for garden buildings, so fruit is a real bonus. This year there is a plentiful supply of grapes but they are all rather small, but have ripened nicely. In the past I have turned it into grape jelly which has gone down well. There would never be enough to make wine, but they can also be turned into a delicious drink.

Triming ivy

A job that I've been doing recently is to tidy the side entrance to the back garden. The fence is covered with ivy, a plant which I love. I'd rather see the ivy than a bare fence. However, it can be very vigorous, so needs cutting back a couple of times a year to make it more manageable and avoid fall outs with my neighbours, who are not so keen on it. This Summer it seems to have grown more than ever as it has taken a couple of days to really trim it back and then have a local company remove all the debris. It certainly makes a huge difference to the light coming into the kitchen window once completed and keeps my neighbours happy to boot!

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 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.