



# Green and pleasant

**OCTOBER is definitely the time for clearing up – greenhouses, ponds, gutters and water butts may all need cleaning out, if there is any water in them. 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. If you don't already have a compost heap or bin, October is a great time to start one, with all the leaves and cuttings to be disposed of!**

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

**Saturday 31st October is Halloween and the clocks go back on Saturday 25th, giving everyone an extra hour in bed! 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.**

## 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. You can find them for sale everywhere in a large variety of colours. 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.

## Charity fundraising at Driftwood

Little did I know, when I opened the garden gate for visitors, back on 1st June, that the upcoming season would be one of the most challenging in the 17 years since I began, back in 2009. Despite the intense heat, 401 visitors pre booked to see the garden, this number would have higher, but for the cancellations of bookings, ahead of planned visits, due to the high temperatures.

Over 40 people have subsequently written glowing 5 star reviews of their visit on *TripAdvisor*, despite the

immense difficulties encountered keeping it looking its very best. Whilst the first half of the season was slow going, as the final closure date of 2nd August approached, there was a real rush to get to see the plot.

The reconciled income from the garden entry, payment for garden talks and the proceeds from tea and cake sales came to a magnificent £4,502.50 raised for the *National Garden Scheme*, bringing the running total raised for all charities since 2009 to a whopping £186,548.

## 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, image in header. 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. I tend to leave mine for the birds.

## National Garden Scheme

There's a treat in store this month as *Bates Green Garden* in Tye Hill Road, Arlington is opening for the scheme on Sunday 4th October between 10:30am and 3:30pm with entry £8 and children £4. This plantswoman's tranquil garden provides interest through the seasons. See the woodland garden created around a majestic oak tree, the colour themed middle garden and courtyard gardens with seasonal

container displays. It's an autumn joy with coloured stems and leaves of cornus and salix. This naturalistic garden has been owned by the McCutchan family since 1921 and was developed and skilfully planted by Carolyn McCutchan when she moved to the property in 1968. The garden was renowned for its colourful imaginative planting. Since Carolyn's death in 2019, the garden has been undergoing a period of restoration by a small team of gardeners. Full details at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

## 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.

Read more of Geoff's garden at [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk) or follow both him and the garden on social media.

Geoff is a member of the Garden Media Guild and 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.