



Green and pleasant

SEPTEMBER is here, and there's still plenty to be done while you're outside in the garden, assuming we have seen the end of this year's incessant rain. Let's all hope we can be enjoying the last of the year's warmth. If you grow fruit and vegetables then there will be all your crops to harvest which will keep you busy this month. There's plenty of work to do tidying and maintaining plants and equipment as well.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

Like July, August was a disappointing month of very mixed weather, we had so many downpours and gales in Seaford that the garden started to give up. So, maybe we are set for an Indian Summer through September, we can but hope. We will certainly see the nights start to draw in before the dreaded clocks go back next month, so make the most of the month!

Cosmos Cupcake

Back in the Spring I ordered a range of plants online. One of those I chose was *Cosmos Cupcake*. You can see some of mine pictured in the header. They have been so successful, if a little taller than I had expected. Many

visitors have commented on them too. They are very easy to grow too. Cosmos are ideal for border designs and container growing. All of my ten plants were placed in containers and burst up through the other summer annuals planted around them. Interestingly, they have coped well with the wind and the rain too, looking great come rain, shine or drought. If you have not tried them, maybe invest in a few plants for 2022.

National Garden Scheme

As the season draws to a close, the charity has a few gardens still to offer across Sussex. A couple you might like to visit in the area are *Knightsbridge House* in Hellingly, near Hailsham, which will open on both the 8th and 11th September. It is a delightful garden in a traditional setting with contemporary planting. It will open both days from 1pm to 4pm with entry £6. A firm favourite that opens

for the *National Trust*, *Nymans*, has a dedicated day raising funds for the scheme too on the 25th of the month. It is in Staplefield Road in Handcross and opens from 10am to 5pm with entrance £14.70. It has several rare and unusual plant collections of national importance. Both gardens allow children in free and full details can be found at www.ngs.org.uk

Garden tidy up

Towards the end of last month, we were able to get away to Dorset for a couple of weeks, the net result on our return was a very untidy garden. Mine is not the sort of plot you can ask a friend to keep an eye on for you. I set up my automatic watering system to try to keep the garden watered but it does not cover every container in the garden unfortunately. Many of my summer annuals had begun to go over before we left and have now really finished and need to be removed. This month is going to be particularly challenging as I have commissioned some work to be undertaken next month creating a large patio at the rear of the house. My task this month is dig up all the plants I want to utilise in the new arrangement and keep them safe while the work is undertaken. More on this next month.

While tidying up, it is well worth remembering that your camellias and rhododendrons are well watered at this time of year to ensure that next year's buds develop well. Lots of people complain that their buds are dry and fall off in the spring, watering now will help prevent that.

Part of your tidy up routine might include picking off rotting fruits from pear and apple trees, they will spread disease if left on the tree.

Houseplant holiday is over

A good idea this month is to bring any houseplants that you moved outside over the summer months, back indoors, before the temperatures start to drop. I have a large collection of aeoniums, a few cacti and succulents that don't really like the cold, especially the frost. It's a pretty big job in my garden to lift them all and carry the containers back to their winter homes. I've probably got over 70 containers with aeoniums and I try and place as many as I can in the front and back porches of the house. They are such beautiful plants to look at, it always seems a shame to shut them away in the greenhouse! However, any that I can't find room for, have to spend the winter in the heated greenhouse.

As far as your indoor plants go, now is the time to start watering them less as they prepare for the colder months too.

Forward planning

September is a great time to look forward to 2022. Maybe sit down and think about spring bulbs you'd like to have in your plot next year. Spend time looking through catalogues or searching online. It's not too early to even start planting some you may already have. Some easy examples are the good old favourites, like crocus, hyacinth and daffodils. Make the most of the remaining warmth while you can!

Read more of Geoff's garden at: 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.