



Green and pleasant

LATE summer progresses into autumn. September is generally a cooler, gustier month than August and the days are noticeably shorter. While you may not have much to do in the bulk of the garden, if you have a fruit or vegetable patch, hopefully you'll be busy reaping the rewards of your harvest. It's also time to get out and start planting spring-flowering bulbs for next year and you can collect seeds for next summer's colour too. Make the most of the remaining warmth while you can!

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

At this time of the year, we can see the garden slowing down. Some herbaceous perennials and annuals have finished for the summer, others such as roses, sweet peas may keep on flowering. Exactly what is flowering when depends on the sort of spring and summer we have enjoyed, but there is plenty of late colour in the garden.

Planning ahead

September is a great month for some forward planning. You can begin to order and plant spring-flowering bulbs now, such as daffodils, crocus and hyacinths, providing glorious colour next year. Maybe think about how you want your garden to look next year. You can perhaps make rough sketches of your flower borders and

vegetable plot. This will help you spot what worked in your garden and what didn't! If you plan to plant new trees and shrubs, doing it now ensures they will grow vigorously next spring. Think back to what didn't work well for you and decide how best to avoid the same issues next year.

National Garden Scheme

This month sees the gardens opening for the scheme slow right down but there are a few you might like to get out to visit. A brand-new opening for 2022 is *Hamsey House*, Hamsey, opening on the 18th September between 1 and 5pm with entry £6. The garden is nestled within the *South Downs National Park*, just a few miles from Lewes. *Hamsey House* was built in 1849. The country garden incorporates an orchard with a wildflower patch, a vegetable and cut flower garden along with many established trees and shrubs. Plants for sale along with refreshments.

A second offering might be *Knightsbridge House*, Grove Hill in Hellingly. The garden will open on both the 7th and 10th of the month from 2pm to 5pm with entry £6. It is a mature, landscaped garden set in five acres of tranquil countryside, surrounding a Georgian house. See several garden rooms and spectacular herbaceous borders, planted in contemporary style in a traditional setting. Full details on both gardens can be found at www.ngs.org.uk

Buddleja

I have a small collection of buddlejas in the garden at *Driftwood*. Known as the butterfly bush, its fragrant flowers are a favourite nectar source for butterflies and bees. These undemanding, mainly deciduous shrubs, deserve a place in every garden with their spectacular displays of blooms and honey scent. Some selections are compact and can be grown in containers. The one shown in the header is one of these, buddleja 'Buzz Magenta' which is a dwarf patio buddleja that won't take over your garden. It will produce flowers the size of usual buddlejas, but the plants themselves are half the size. They are easy to grow and generally problem-free with a super long-flowering period. What's more, they are perfectly proportioned for patio pots and smaller gardens. I also have 'Buzz Lilac', 'Butterfly Heaven', 'Globosa' and a new one called 'Butterfly Candy Little Ruby'.

The 'Buddleja Buzz' series was a revolution in plant breeding and are sold in many garden centres across the country. They come in a variety of colours and flower all the way until October.

What to do with perennials as summer fades?

Some plants look good as they fade, such as sedum where the flower heads hold their own for weeks and

look good with a dusting of frost. Others, such as Hosta look a mess. There is no hard and fast rule about what to do with herbaceous and perennial plants once summer is over.

Some gardeners cut everything back, clearing out the borders, and others leave plants uncut to encourage wildlife and cultivate a less formal look. There is also a halfway house; cut back plants that look a mess, such as Hosta, Crocosmia, Delphinium leaving in place those which still add to the border, at least for a while, which also spreads the work in the garden over the winter months. As with many aspects of gardening, there is no right or wrong it's down to personal preference. I tend to cut quite a lot back in my garden.

Macmillan Garden Trail update

For those readers who joined the *Macmillan Garden Trail* at the end of July, fundraising for *Macmillan Cancer Support* and the *Macmillan Horizon Centre*, we raised an incredible £7,114.61 across the weekend. The 17 garden owners taking part, were very pleased to see two days of brilliant sunshine, instead of the usual weekend of rain and sun. There were nearly 1,400 individual garden visits made throughout the weekend, almost £1,500 worth of tea and cake sold.

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.