Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

Garden jobs nearly beat me!



Geoff Stonebanks

A seaside garden in East Sussex that opens for charity, featuring sculpture and reclaimed objects.



The pear proved resilient



I'm loving my aster Island Series 'Barbados'

Frequent flowering 'La Villa Cotta'

The past few weeks have certainly tested me. On October 20, I had steroid injections in both wrists, after a painful summer. I've been wearing strong wrist supports to keep gardening possible, but it has been tough. Moving the small oleander from the centre of the garden to the sheltered side alley – away from salty winds – proved particularly tricky. Thankfully, the sack barrow was a godsend!

Emptying and reorganising the summerhouse for winter was equally challenging. Everything had to be cleared out and furniture stacked, so the sculpture and garden bits could be stored safely. At least the weather stayed dry, which really helped.

The biggest job was shifting all the succulents into the heated greenhouse. Carrying them up the garden and fitting them in felt like an epic jigsaw. You can imagine my horror when I returned a week later to discover the left side in ruins after a trestle table leg collapsed – smashed pots everywhere! Quite a few choice words were said around Bishopstone that day. In the end, only eight terracotta pots were lost and, after a lot of salvage work, every plant survived – albeit with some needing drastic pruning and repotting.

Despite the challenges, last month's mild weather meant we could still enjoy evenings on the patio, lights glowing beautifully at night. Fruit crops were mixed, with both apple trees failing to produce anything worth having, but the pear tree gave a modest harvest. Colour came from the electric blue of plumbago, the coppery orange, recurring blooms of rose 'La Villa Cotta', and masses of orange berries on the pyracantha by the door, paired with erigeron.

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Relocating the oleander for winter



The patio's still so pretty at night



Disaster in the greenhouse!

My highlight

Aster Island Series 'Barbados' – simply stunning.