

Over the FENCE ...Continued

Garden glam is still about



Sculptures bring year-round interest

At this time of the year, I'm always grateful for the sculptures I have scattered across the garden. No matter how good or bad the planting looks at any given time, they really help to lift the view. The glorious stainless steel fish juggling balls is a firm favourite, and the splash of yellow afforded by the wing tip of a Boeing 737 laying on the gravel really show how this can work.

We've had a tremendous amount of strong winds, beginning with storm Bert in late November right through December, and the garden has taken a real battering. Thankfully there's no real damage to date, other than some badly burnt fronds on the tall palms at the back. A sleety/snowy hailstorm a few weeks ago left part of the



Geoff Stonebanks

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

garden looking very festive. To be honest, I really like to see snow in the garden as it looks so magical sitting on the metal sculptures.

Late last month we had a few days away and stayed not too far from West Dean Gardens in West Sussex. It was bitterly cold but very bright and sunny. My favourite part of the visit was to slowly walk through the many greenhouses and take in the beauty of the large collection of succulents and temperate plants.

It always amazes me how wonderful the beach garden looks through the winter months; the bright colour pops of the almost fluorescent buoys

Buoys make the beach garden still pop with colour



The Temperate House at West Dean Gardens

help too. Nonetheless, it took a battering from Bert!

I recently treated myself to a small monkey puzzle tree. I used to have one for many years but sadly lost it about 10 years ago, so I finally decided to give one another go. It will start life in a large container until it gets too big.

A relatively new grass growing in the garden is *Miscanthus nepalensis*. I bought it over a year ago and this is the first time its pretty stems have risen up and graced the garden. Its spikelets turn a beautiful bronze colour at this time of year.

I've had to be very circumspect about what I'm able to do over the next year or so, as I need a new left knee! It's caused me real problems over the last three months, so I've not been able to fleece everything as usual outside. The one plant that is covered, though, is the white bottlebrush close to the shed, with



Euphorbia and hydrangea are a contrasting mix

three carefully wrapped fleeces around it. Inevitably 2025 is going to be challenging, especially after I've had the operation. Although I'm not holding out too much hope, I'm keeping my fingers crossed for the operation sooner than later so it won't impact on my planned garden openings through June and July.

I love the mix of *Euphorbia characias* and hydrangea close to the front door. The blend of the silver-green leaves of the former contrast well with the fading blooms of the latter. Also looking great in the back garden are the dazzling stems of the red dogwood growing behind the Corten steel pond. They, too, contrast well with the ferns growing behind.

Read more of Geoff's garden at driftwoodbysea.co.uk



My new little monkey puzzle



A pretty passion flower



My highlight

The long spray of pretty passion flowers going strong despite what the weather has thrown at them.