

Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

New features for a new year



Geoff Stonebanks

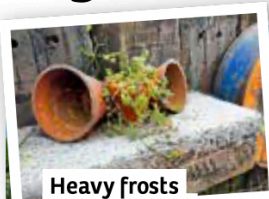
A seaside garden in East Sussex that opens for charity, featuring sculpture and reclaimed objects.

The final area of the back garden to undergo a major redesign has been the pond area by the shed.

It's my 70th birthday this year so it's important to make the garden an easier space to maintain. Last spring the pond was filled in and a new raised pond sited on a new patio in its place. Enter the beautiful corten steel, circular pond, which has now been installed complete with fountain.

I designed the area myself and shared the sketch with a local landscaper, who created the railway sleeper work in 2021. He's so good at translating my images into reality. A gorgeous curved corten steel wall has also been installed between two new dwarf brick walls. An electrician has put in a new light fitting that sheds a beautiful light across the patio after dusk.

Another new feature is a small steel gabion. I had many pieces of rock and slate around the garden, so I carefully rescued them and arranged them inside the gabion. I'm in two minds whether to get



Heavy frosts look so pretty



The new corten pond and fountain



My amazing echeveria 'Red Sea Monster'

a cushion for it to use as seat or simply use it as a display bench for succulents. Time will tell!

An integral part of the project was to create another way up the garden. A small set of steps now links the centre of the plot with the new patio. Two large gunnera plants are secreted behind the brick and steel wall and two large fatsia 'Spider's Web' plants have been moved to the side of the steps and look great.

I've had an echeveria 'Red Sea Monster' for several years but it's never thrown up such large flower stems until now. It's been spending winter in the back porch. The flowers look so pretty.

Throughout the building work the beach garden had to be used as the area for preparing cement and storing materials, so resembled a building site. It's now restored to its former glory, ready for our summer openings from June 1 until August 11, with all visits by arrangement only.

Recent really cold spells have turned the garden into a winter wonderland! The heavy white frosting always looks magical on the sculpture and railway sleepers.

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



Fatsia japonica 'Spider's Web'



Sunny blooms of Coronilla glauca

My highlight

The beautiful yellow flowers of coronilla bring a splash of sunshine to January.