

Over the FENCE

REAL
readers'
gardens!

Putting the garden to bed



Geoff Stonebanks

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

Where has the year gone? It's already that time

when the garden needs putting to bed for winter. Recent strong winds on the south coast have certainly given the plot a good battering.

Last month we escaped for 10 days after a busy summer, renting a lovely cottage on the Chatsworth Estate. Our terrier Chester relished the holiday just as much as we did. We visited the magnificent gardens there, and the rock garden was a highlight. The weather mostly cooperated, which made things all the sweeter.

Returning home, there was plenty to do. This has been the best fruit crop in our 21 years in Seaford! While the old apple tree's



My lovely new hydrangea

Lots and lots of succulents!



Agave babies!

fruit were tiny, the 'Cox's Orange Pippin' gave us plenty of good-sized apples. Most have been poached and frozen for winter or given to friends. The pears were equally successful. The grape crop, small and seedy as usual, is left for the birds to enjoy.

Despite the fierce summer heat, the rain since has made the garden wonderfully lush; it's always a marvel to see the range of greens.

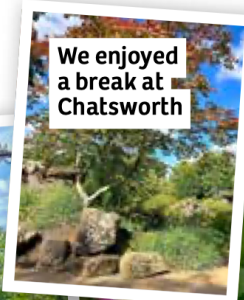
Putting the garden to bed is a laborious business, especially

as I'm still adjusting to my new knee. I've moved all the agave into their winter quarters - the shed for *A. parviflora*, the side alley for the rest, and I've coaxed a few baby plants from the mother plant for future sale.

You can spot me in front of the railway sleeper wall, among the succulents before their winter move. The echeveria 'Red Sea Monster' is particularly spectacular at the moment, with its red-edged leaves and towering flower stems, while the hibiscus and rose 'Susie' are offering late blooms.

Lastly, I've added a 'Raspberry Lemonade' hydrangea in a large container - easy, beautiful and a welcome pop of red.

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



We enjoyed a break at Chatsworth



The garden is looking so green



Bright and beautiful dahlias

My highlight

The stunning dahlia flowers on the back patio.