

Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

I'm getting visitor-ready



Geoff Stonebanks

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



Welcoming robins, not rats!

Bright euryops

I've got poinsettia perfection

Both poinsettias I bought in November 2024 flowered again last year. I'll try the same methods again this year for blooms by cutting it back to a couple of leaves on each stem shortly.

When visitors come from June 1 to August 2, all money raised will go to the National Garden Scheme. The first step to prepare, as always, is to get all the boundary hedges trimmed and in shape. The usual team came and made a great job of it all. The fabulous elaeagnus hedge needed a severe cut back as it took over half the walkway but hopefully it will have new growth before our first visitors.

I do love to feed the birds in winter but I had to stop as it was drawing rats. It's been so cold, though, so I've invested in

a feeder with a drop tray collector and the claim that it's rat-proof! Time will tell, but at least we can feed the pretty little robins again. Night temperatures were -5C some nights but the greenhouse heater maintained 8C in there for all the overwintering plants.

Wind damage to the fronds of the tall palms is a real problem. I used to fleece them but now they've grown, I can't. I've just got the chainsaw out and cut back the outer damaged fronds from them all, including the 6m tall *Butia capitata*. The two gunnera growing in the garden

have been uncovered. Both are in containers; one buried in the ground and one in a blue ceramic pot behind the Corten steel wall.

This time last year I had to start taking all my tender succulents out of winter storage, a month earlier than usual, which was quite risky due to my knee replacement last year. This year, they'll stay for another month in the warm and I'll start taking them all out towards the end of April.

The pretty Brazilian fuchsia has been in the greenhouse all winter. I've been putting it out in the sun on warmer days until it can be left outside all summer. It's known for its vibrant, tubular scarlet and yellow flowers that bloom from late autumn to early spring for colour during the colder months.

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



The butia's damaged fronds are gone



Stunning Brazilian fuchsias



The annual garden trim

My highlight

Clumps of colourful, eye-catching euryops in the back garden.