

# Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

## I'm inspired by a friendly meet-up



**Geoff Stonebanks**

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

As the weather warms up, I've been spending more time in the garden. There's always lovely early morning light streaming across the plot. Last month I had landscapers in to tidy up the garden boundaries, chop tops from trees and complete a few other smaller jobs. A few years ago I'd be having a go myself but my days of climbing tall ladders are long gone!

We recently managed a few days away in Suffolk so I met up with fellow gardener Kate Elliot, with whom I've been friends on social media for a few years. She's head gardener at Columbine Hall, not far from where we were staying in Lavenham. I spent a great morning there with both her and garden owner, Hew Stevenson, being shown around the gorgeous plot, with lots of ideas to take away!

While away, I bought some reclaimed items to use in the garden; an old metal fireplace and



Yuccas and a cordyline have replaced the agaves I lost due to wet weather



I get others to do the hard work these days!

two drainpipe tops, which will become planters once in situ. I've not completely decided on the fireplace's final location but I'm growing to like it against the old railway sleepers with the ivy growing around it.

I'd been impressed with some dogwoods I'd seen while away and decided I had to have one. I bought bright red *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', the Siberian dogwood. It's planted in the back garden where it's clearly visible from the house to

admire in the winter months.

I lost many agaves in the beach garden due to the excessive wet weather. Three have now been replaced with a couple of yuccas and a cordyline.

I've spent time working at the front of the house, cutting back grasses and smaller shrubs to neaten up the beach garden and ensure visitors can make their way around it this summer without tripping up.

Years ago now I bought an unusual plant, *Sinningia leucotricha*, also known as Brazilian edelweiss. It has large, silvery foliage and makes an excellent houseplant. Mine sits on an east-facing bathroom window ledge and has been there for probably 10 years now. It has just started to produce two new stems with gorgeous orange flowers on.

Read more on Geoff's garden at [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk).



*Sinningia leucotricha*

Me with Kate and Hew at Columbine Hall. Right, early morning light on my plot



My highlight

Beautiful *Sinningia leucotricha* is dazzling.