

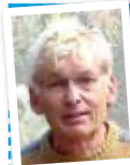
# Over the FENCE ...Continued

## Gardening on a deadline!

I'm on a very tight schedule now to get the garden ready for visitors in June. The date of my knee replacement has been confirmed for late April, so everything is to be done beforehand as I'll be out of action for about six weeks. To make matters worse, I've had carpal tunnel confirmed in my right wrist, so gardening jobs are getting more difficult. For the first time ever I've had to resort to getting help in to do the power washing of the patios and hard surfaces, as holding the gun was not that easy.

Back in February I was given a large bunch of roses for Valentine's Day. They looked fabulous for about 10 days but then started to fade. I decided to take them out of water, tie them together and hang them upside down in a dark, cool space to dry out. You can see several weeks later they look great, living their second life as a vase of dried flowers.

A couple of years ago, while on holiday on the Isle of Wight, I bought a gorgeous agave 'Kichijokan' from the shop at Ventnor Botanic Garden. It's a stunningly compact and



**Geoff Stonebanks**

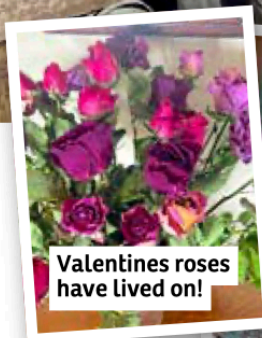
**A seaside garden in East Sussex that opens for charity, featuring sculpture and reclaimed objects.**

imposing-looking succulent with ferociously red-spined leaves. It has produced some small babies at the base of the plant which I've successfully removed and planted up, though I'm in for a wait before the rosette forms as they are slow growers.

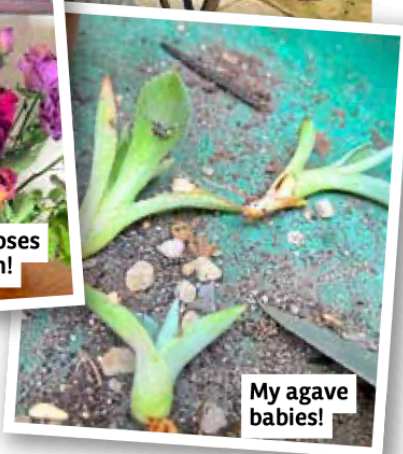
As part of the process of getting ahead in the garden, all the agave that were overwintered under cover were placed out in the garden last month. They bring the beach garden alive and look great dotted around, with the smaller ones displayed against the railway sleeper wall. All the succulents in the heated greenhouse will need to come out before my operation too, which is a risk as there might still be a chance of frost. I've already taken them all out individually, tidied them up and repotted where needed.



I've had to wear a wrist support while I get on with some jobs



Valentines roses have lived on!



My agave babies!

I've carefully tended all the aeoniums in there too, removing the dead lower leaves that naturally occur through winter and repotting some. A few had broken off and have now been potted up to create some new plants. Come the last week of April, I can just lift them out of the greenhouse and place them in their summer homes in the garden.



Hyacinth blooms

With my ever-growing obsession with succulents, I've just written a new garden talk to deliver to clubs and horticultural societies next year, titled *Succulent Obsession*. I've already received three bookings in 2026 to present it so that's good.

**Read more of Geoff's garden at [driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://driftwoodbysea.co.uk) or to book a visit between June 1 and August 3, email [visitdriftwood@gmail.com](mailto:visitdriftwood@gmail.com)**



Part of the plot on a warm day in March



So many succulents in the greenhouse

### My highlight

The gorgeous hyacinth flowers popping up around the garden outside the kitchen's French windows.