

Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

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Biting cold but still beautiful!



A frozen rose still looks stunning



Geoff Stonebanks

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



A frosty morning in the garden

Last month saw us experience some pretty relentless, bitterly cold weather here on the south coast, not to mention storm Eowyn. There were some very heavy frosts and temperatures down to -5C, although the tops of the railway sleepers always look beautiful with a frosty coating.

Last month saw the annual garden maintenance of the house and garden boundaries completed by a local landscaper on an extremely cold day. Among the varied tasks, they removed a sea buckthorn tree which had started to fail last year and become an eyesore. The area looks much more open now without it, especially with the ivy and next door's bay trees well



Hydrangea heads are hanging in there!

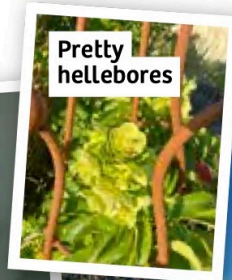
trimmed behind. I was amazed to see two stunning flowers appear on the 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' climbing rose last month as well. It had been so mild and no sooner had they flowered than we had our first really heavy frost, but they still looked really pretty frozen. Also appearing just before the frosts hit was the first of the pretty camellia flowers. I've had my *Camellia japonica* 'Nuccio's Cameo' for over 30 years now; I brought it from my North London garden 20 years ago.

Thankfully, it's right behind the house and didn't really get too much impact from the frosts.

Also surviving the frosts is the gorgeous *Mahonia media* 'Winter Sun'. It seems to have flowered relentlessly, well before Christmas and still has plenty of yellow flowers on show.

The dried flowerheads of hydrangea 'Limelight' are still holding on. Back in autumn I cut back hydrangea 'Vanille Fraise' and brought some of the stems into the house. They were in water at first, then I let them dry out, and they look pretty good in a vase now in the garden room mixed with a few other dried flowers.

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



Pretty hellebores

A more tidy space now the sea buckthorn has gone



Dried hydrangeas look great indoors too



My highlight

The stunning flowers on the *Helleborus argutifolius* plants in the beach garden.