

Over the FENCE

...Continued

Come one, come all - we're open for visitors!

By the time you read this, Driftwood will have opened for its 16th summer season on June 1. More than 250 people had pre-booked before then. I was 71 back in April and the older I get, the harder it is to get everything accomplished before I let paying visitors enter. We went away for 10 days to the North East to recharge and visited gardens including Alnwick and Cragside, in Northumberland, and Belvoir Castle.

Once back in Seaford, we put the finishing touches to the garden. While we were away, ITV contacted me to make a short film for the local news and shot it the day after we returned - our third TV appearance this year.

Despite pressure cleaning all the hard surfaces back in early March, the Indian sandstone near the house still needed a touch up before June 1. I also



Geoff Stonebanks

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

delayed dressing the garden with succulents until we were back; last year I placed them in April before a short holiday and they were slightly damaged from cold while we were away. They are all starting to come alive as we have had some pretty warm weather now on the south coast!

Hector, our beloved tortoise, has enjoyed a makeover of his pen with some new turf laid for him to sunbathe on! He always looks forward to the summer visitors who are generally intrigued and say hello.

The *Butia capitata* and the two *Trachycarpus fortunei* were

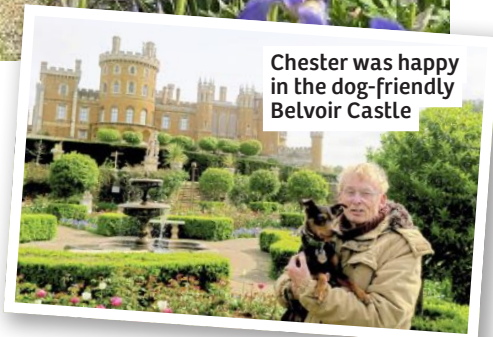
badly burnt by wind through the winter and I had to remove some damaged fronds. The latter are producing some fabulous



Irises are a garden star



Hector enjoys his new turf



Chester was happy in the dog-friendly Belvoir Castle

flower heads which somewhat compensate. I'm sure my visitors won't notice too much.

I've got several roses throughout the garden. 'Susie', an exquisite climber, is abundant with richly coloured flowers in summer and seems to have more blooms on it than usual this year. Meanwhile, in the beach garden, the blue irises are dazzling. A neighbour gave me a small clump 10 years ago, so I don't know its name, but I've created a second clump opposite. They look so good with the yellow of the *Coronilla glauca* behind.

I bought a *Euphorbia cyparissias* at Alnwick Garden and a sanguisorba 'Korean Snow' at one of the National Trust properties we visited. Both have now been planted up in the garden and I hope they will do well.

I've got an orange theme running through the patio behind the house: an orange mirror, many shades of orange parasols and orange seat cushions. So I've bought two new bistro sets in bright orange too. I'm really pleased with the impact they make.

Read more of Geoff's garden at driftwoodbysea.co.uk. Local to Sussex or planning to holiday here before July 31? Why not come see the garden and say hello?



Shooting with ITV



Succulents by the summerhouse



The patio area

My highlight
Beautiful rises in the beach garden.