

Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

A very warm welcome to all!



Geoff Stonebanks

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



Pretty white bottlebrush



Persicaria 'Purple Fantasy'



What an honour!

This year, all monies raised from visitors will go to the National Garden Scheme, for whom we've currently raised almost £35k over the years.

In May I got an email from a travel company in Lithuania in Lithuania, wanting to bring 32 visitors to Driftwood. They came on the scorching Bank Holiday Monday. I delivered my garden talk aboard the air-conditioned coach and the guide interpreted it. I had some very positive feedback on how much they loved the garden.

We officially opened for pre-booked visitors only at the start of the June, and we'll open through until August 2, so if any readers are visiting Sussex this summer, do email visitdriftwood@gmail.com to book a visit. I was over the moon to receive

my 2026 Travellers' Choice award from TripAdvisor before we opened and to top that, another UK gardening magazine listed Driftwood as one of 11 of Britain's most extraordinary coastal gardens that every garden-lover should visit. Pretty impressive when you look at the other gardens in the list.

As a youngster I loved seeing glass terrariums with plants. I've bought two; the first I assembled myself and I was so pleased I bought another one with a bonsai tree inside. They look wonderful in the office overlooking the garden, bringing the outside inside! I had some small Japanese figures from moss gardens I used to create as a child back in the early 1960s, a Geisha woman and a man with two pails, so they're in the displays too.

For my birthday in April I treated myself to a *Dasyliirion serratifolium*, ideal for



Terrariums, Japanese style



Dasyliirion serratifolium



Lithuanian visitors enjoy the shade

a dramatic accent. It looks great next to the Corten steel wall.

Many stems of red valerian in the beach garden look good now. It pops up everywhere but I simply pull it out if it's in the wrong place. Delicate yellowy-white flowers on the tall white bottlebrush are impressive; the only problem is they attract equally pretty but slightly destructive chafer beetles.

It was so cold in parts of May, after I put the succulents out in the garden, that it will take some time for them to recover. They just need plenty of warmth and sunshine. There were too many of them to fleece them and even if I had, strong wind would have blown it away. Thankfully, I don't think there's any long-term damage. There was quite a lot of rain too, which made the garden look very lush indeed.

Read more of Geoff's garden at driftwoodbysea.co.uk or follow both him and the garden on social media.

My highlight

Tiny and delicate flowers of the persicaria 'Purple Fantasy'.