

Over the FENCE

REAL readers' gardens!

Spring stunners and a tidy-up!



Geoff Stonebanks

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

At this time of year the patio comes alive with stand-out displays and last month camellias took centre stage. I've got six shrubs in both pink and white that really brighten up the area. All mine have been planted in containers including one called *Camellia japonica* 'Nuccio's Cameo', which came with me from my house in London 20 years ago.

As I've got older, I've decided climbing ladders to trim the garden boundaries probably isn't wise! A local landscaper has been doing the job for me; thankfully they picked a dry day but there were some very strong winds blowing!

The house front has a 15-year-old *Elaeagnus ebbingei* hedge, which is perfect for an exposed seaside garden.

This pretty camellia moved with me to Driftwood 20 years ago!



A hedge, trimmed back



This euphorbia is a showy plant

It's grown rather large so had about 45cm taken off the top and the sides trimmed so it's easier for me to maintain through the year. I'm sure many sparrows will still nest in it.

I have two large clumps of *Aloe striatula*, an incredible and very hardy succulent. I love never having to fleece it in winter and in summer, its pretty yellow flower stems resemble yellow hot pokers.

Many bees are already gathering pollen from nectar-rich plants here, particularly *Helleborus argutifolius*

and *Euphorbia characias*; the latter can reach up to 1.5m. I bought several plants a couple of years ago and now have some beautiful flower stems on show. Sadly, those at the front are a bit beaten by winter gales but those at the back are really pretty.

I've begun tidying up fallen debris from gravel beds and sweeping up the patios. I'll pressure wash all the hard surfaces so they are sparkling for my summer openings. I'm pleased I have almost 100 people booked to see Driftwood through June and July - let's hope we can beat last year's number of 500!

Read more at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk.



A busy bee!



My spring tidy up started a few weeks ago



The view down the garden

My highlight
The truly stunning camellias - I love them.