

Over the FENCE

...Continued

I'm a real garden fixer!

There have been two fairly important jobs completed in the garden recently. The summerhouse, paid for by my Dad who passed away in 2007, appropriately named Dad's Place, needed renovation, especially the double doors and the two windows facing the brunt of the bad weather that regularly hits the garden. A carpenter replaced the base of both doors along with the sills, and he put in two new windows. It looks as good as new now, don't you think?

Then there was the beach garden. Last autumn, new neighbours moved in and they understandably tackled their very overgrown front garden. Sadly for me, though, the extreme cut back given to the boundary between our two plots left my beach garden somewhat exposed. Hedging, once thick, was now sparse in places and you could see right through to your garden. I needed a quick fix. I already had a single line of old railway sleepers running in front of my hedge, so I bought seven more and had them fitted on top of the existing ones, filling the



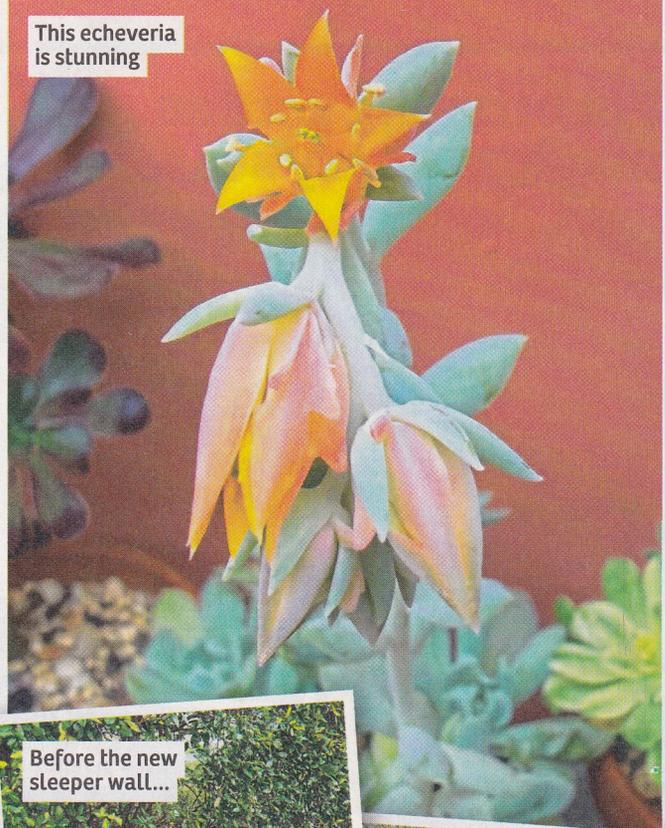
Geoff Stonebanks

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

gap beneath my hedges. The area beneath the large tamarisk tree was particularly bad, so I got the team who helped me to build up the sleepers to four deep. This has really solved the problem and the sleeper wall looks great, dressed with some marine objects and some of the old marine rope I have, which used to tie up the ferry in Newhaven. Hopefully in a few weeks the remaining gaps, higher up in the hedges, will have filled out with some new growth.

It's been a few years since I've had a fabulous echium flower in the garden; they haven't survived the last couple of winters in the ground with protective fleece. So, last autumn I lifted the two largest growing and potted them up in the greenhouse.

They're doing well - hopefully they'll be happy



This echeveria is stunning



Before the new sleeper wall...



...and after!

going in the beach garden this spring.

One of my very favourite succulents, mainly because it's so hardy, is *Aloe striatula*. I have two large plants in the back garden and two much smaller ones in the beach garden. They can get tall and leggy but cut them back in autumn and they'll soon reform and look good the following year. I love the pretty yellow flowers that appear each summer too,

and they make a great feature through the winter months.

I protect my agaves under cover to stay dry in winter but I planted two out in the chalky gravel garden in 2022 and they've more than doubled in size. Sadly, that same year three very large specimens got too wet and rotted.

Two plants flourishing are the pot of snowflakes with their pretty white bell flowers and green spots, along with *Euphorbia characias* whose flowers are starting. They truly look dramatic once in full bloom.

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



Snowflakes are so pretty



I love hardy *Aloe striatula*



With the refurbished summerhouse, honouring Dad

My highlight

Echeveria flowering well - the one pictured looks delicate but it's a show-stopper!