

Presents add cheer after frost bites some plants



The poor damaged agaves

We've experienced some of the worst frosts I can remember since moving here in 2004. I decided to plant the larger *Agave americana* in the ground last spring on the basis they were getting too difficult for me to carry and put under cover each year. Sadly, several haven't come through the bad weather unscathed. They've got too wet and are rotting. On the upside I still have many babies taken from them that I put safely under cover, which can adorn the beach garden again this summer.

Some potted ones, like the *Agave ovatifolia*, have coped better. I'm going to have to rethink what I do next winter as covering them may be difficult due to the excessive wind that hits the garden from time to time and it will just get blown away.

I'm feeding the birds, despite the worry of debris falling and encouraging rats. I consciously placed the feeding tray right at the top of the garden and used seeds in a suspended tray rather than fat balls in a holder. So far so good, and we've not seen any evidence of vermin yet!



Geoff Stonebanks

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

In the colder weather I have to confess to staying indoors to keep warm. But there's plenty to keep me occupied there, too. A large collection of tillandsia occupy a corner of my office and look pretty neat. I bought an *Aloe zebrina* several years ago and have managed to create six



Tillandsias look good in my office



My mother bought me this lovely corten bird bath



This *Agave ovatifolia* somehow survived the big freeze

additional plants, and the one in the bathroom is ready to shed many new babies again.

I've spent time checking plants in the greenhouse and back and front porches and the small Brazilian fuchsia is starting to produce beautiful yellow flowers. It's an exquisite winter-flowering shrub with two-tone, tubular flowers.

I received a couple of perfect Christmas gifts to go in the garden. My mother bought me a gorgeous corten steel bird bath to dress the new patio area by

the shed. The other gift was a delicate but fun small bee bath, which will sit on the railway sleeper shelves through the summer months. It came all the way from British Columbia. I'll choose a spot where it's protected and shady and where I can keep my eye out for bees using it!

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



The lovely little bee bath



Beautiful blooms on the Brazilian fuchsia



A winter scene in the beach garden

My highlight
My new bird bath and bee bath.