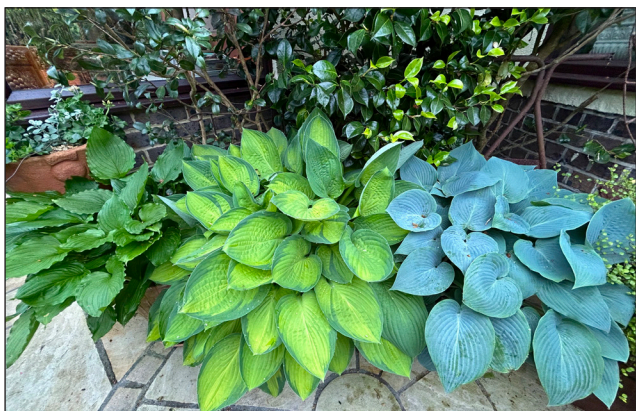
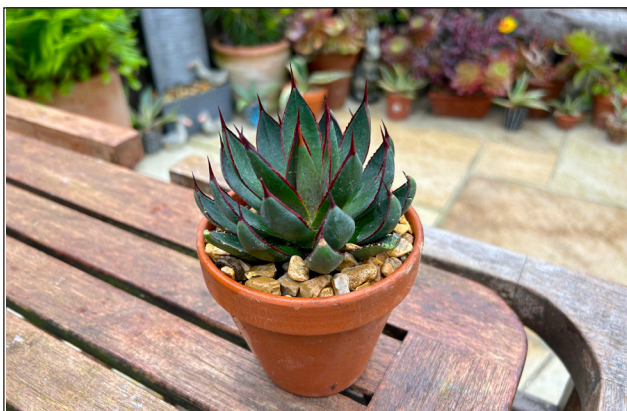


# The Driftwood Garden Diary

with Geoff Stonebanks



Hostas



New mangave praying Hamds



Rose Macmillan Nurse

## It is time to get out and visit some of our wonderful gardens

**I**T has been a good start to my open garden at Driftwood, we have had some visitors every day this past week, with a large group last Monday.

I decided to invest in a couple of new bistro sets for the back patio, and opted for a fab orange to blend in with other accessories in the area, cushions, parasol and metal mirror. They look really great and work well with both the dark coloured railway sleepers and the Indian sandstone patio slabs as you can see. Also new, on the back wall, is a lovely metal mirror, with a honeycomb effect across the glass and 6 metal bees, which was a gift from some local friends last month. The area has taken on a new lease of life this summer, having had the French windows fitted in a garden room last winter, opening out onto the area too.

A lovely new acquisition last month was a plant that actually received third prize in the Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year competition. It is a really interesting Mangave, to add to my ever-growing collection. Praying Hands is an extraordinary departure from the usual star-shaped rosettes. Each dark green, scale-like leaf curls upwards into the elegant form of an artichoke. The tip of each leaf is finished with a maroon spine, each converging at the top where the artichoke comes to a point. It is drought tolerant, requiring just a little watering and can be grown outside all year in areas with very mild winters such as coastal and city gardens, but like most tender perennials, will otherwise need to be brought into a frost-free space over winter. It can be used as a striking focal specimen on its own or combine it with other succulents and tropical bedding.

A lovely rose flowering in the garden at the moment is Macmillan Nurse which was a gift from the charity a few years ago for the monies I raise for them. This is an excellent little shrub rose with large old-fashioned, rosette style blooms of white, occasionally flushed peach, borne in clusters. It is subtly scented and prolific throughout the summer

and autumn against dark green, glossy, foliage. It is an incredibly healthy and rightly popular rose which is shade tolerant and perfect for growing in tubs, making an eye-catching statement.

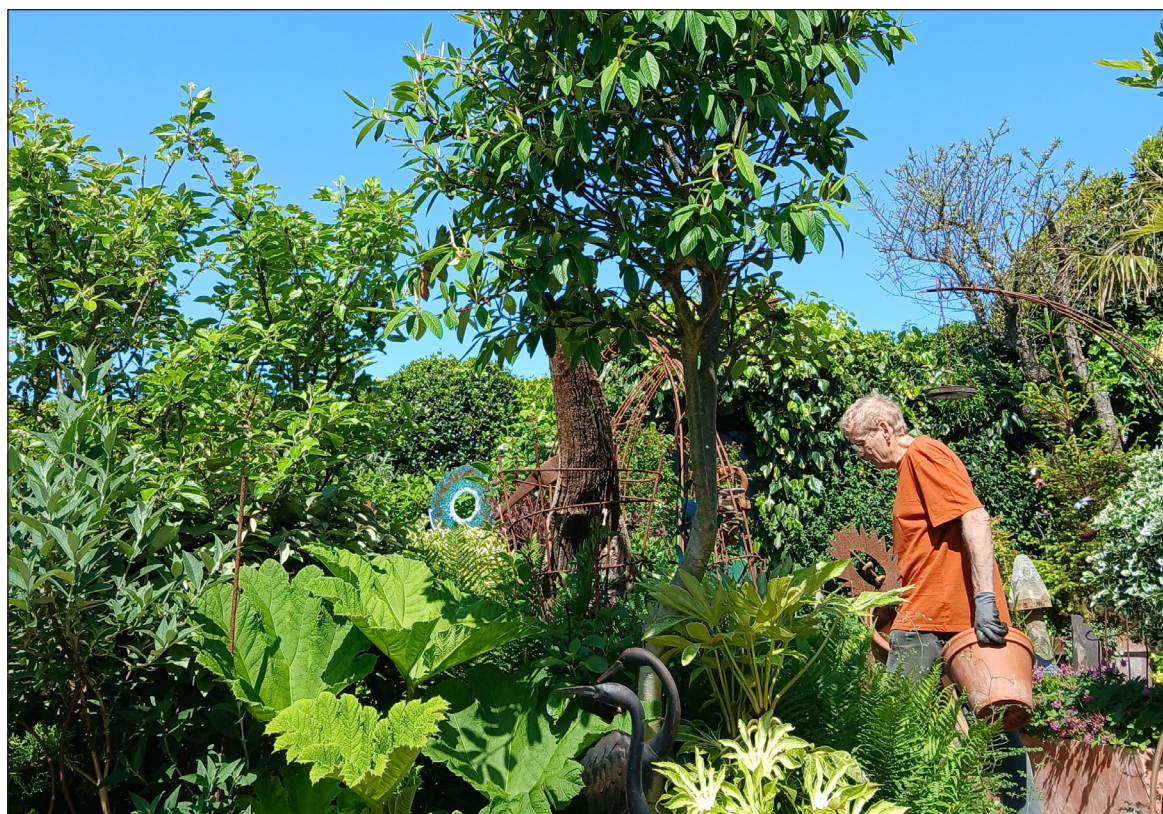
The National Garden Scheme has a number of gardens you could get out to visit this weekend and you can listen to my round-up on the gardening programme on BBC Sussex on Sunday at about 11.40am. Harlands Gardens, comprising 3 plots (numbers 27, 57 and 62) in Turners Mill Road, Haywards Heath opens between midday and 4.30pm today and tomorrow with a combined entry of £5. Go along and be inspired by this trio of small, town gardens.

In Brighton next week, visit the Kemp Town Enclosures, South Garden in Lewes Crescent, on Wednesday from midday to 5pm with entry £6. This unique, historic, Grade II listed Regency private town garden is in a spectacular seaside setting. It endures strong salty winds and thin chalk soil and aims to balance naturalistic planting with a more ordered look. This wonderful five-acre garden combines open lawns, meadows, winding paths, trees, herbaceous borders, and a shaded woodland garden.

New for 2024 is Farleys Sculpture in Muddles Green, Chiddingfold, near Lewes, opening for the scheme today (8th) from 10am to 4.30pm with entry £6. Designed as different themed rooms for sculpture, the garden presents a permanent collection of works alongside works by contemporary guest sculptors. Full details at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

Thankfully, from here on in, all the hard work has been completed in the garden, it is simply a case of maintaining the look daily, by dead-heading, watering and generally keeping the garden looking neat and tidy for visitors until we close on July 31.

I've had three large containers of hosta behind the house for quite a few years now, each with very different colouring as you can see. Sadly, I failed to record the variety of each, so I am unsure of their names, but they look



Working in the garden

wonderful. These shade-loving plants are primarily grown for their beautiful foliage, with leaves in all shades of green, as well as dusky blues and acid yellows, sometimes variegated or flashed with cream or gold, ruffled, smooth or distinctively ribbed. Many also produce small trumpet-shaped mauve or white flowers in summer. Their only down side, hosta are notoriously irresistible to slugs and snails, but are also much loved by gardeners.

I've found that placing the container on a small upturned saucer, set in a larger one, then filling with water and creating a moat, seems to work for me at deterring the pests.

Read more of Geoff's garden at [www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk](http://www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk) or email [visitdriftwood@gmail.com](mailto:visitdriftwood@gmail.com) to arrange a visit before 31st July.



New bistro set