



BULB LOG 16.....20<sup>th</sup> April 2022



Ground cover



Spring is advancing quicker than I can keep up with: so many flowers opening. The growth of the plants carpeting the ground is spreading out hiding the bare ground under a multi textural tapestry, in shades of green, with foliage of many shapes and forms through which flowers are rising and opening among or above this sea of green. The growth is happening so rapidly that the difference from morning to afternoon is significant never mind the day to day changes.



The blue flowers of **Scilla rosenii** currently make a strong statement on the rock garden bed, taking their turn in the limelight in a bed full of bulbs - there are even a few rock garden plants still to be found.



Notice how these Muscari, Narcissus and Hepatica are not growing isolated as 'specimen' plants but forming part of a balanced community that uses every bit of ground. Selecting what plants to grow together is a process of using some common sense in selecting those that have a similar growth rate – there is also an element of trial and error so if you plant something that takes over at the expense of its neighbours it has to be removed. These are the plants in growth now however the same space is utilised by other plants that grow before or after giving a seasonal sequence.



A small Narcissus cultivar looks and grows so much better rising through the green carpet with companionable plants.



We have applied the same planting style in the bulb house sand beds where we get a sequence of flowers, over many months, each taking their turn to put on a floral display through the green jungle.



**Narcissus 'Angel's Whisper' and Muscari sp.**



***Narcissus obesus*** flowering through the green carpet in the bulb house.



***Narcissus* cultivar** flowering through a green carpet in the garden.



**Anemone ranunculoides** is one of the many carpeting plants that we utilise in the garden.



I find inspiration all the time in nature such as these *Anemone nemerosa* I spotted this morning flowering in a nearby wood among the twigs and branches.



Different plants but a similar scene with **Erythronium revolutum** flowering among the twigs and branches in the garden.



A cultivated form of **Anemone nemerosa** spreading out among other spring plants.



The **Anemone ranunculoides** with its yellow flowers form the carpet on the right while **Adoxa moschatellina**, spotted with its tiny flowers, provides some gentle ground cover on the left.



You will rarely find **Primula elatior** flowering alone in nature they are nearly always growing through and with other plants, even if it is just grasses, here it is joined by **Erythronium revolutum** and **Corydalis malkensis**.





**Anemone x lipsiensis 'Pallida'** is another of the wood anemones that once established will spread out to form a low carpet of foliage topped by its pale primrose yellow flowers – here it is growing in deep shade under a Rhododendron, trees and a large hedge.

### **Anemone blanda**

Many of the plants, such as *Anemone blanda*, seed around most successfully in the gravel areas surrounding the paving slabs. These gravel areas were never originally intended to be for plants but we could not ignore what nature and the plants were showing us.





The Corydalis formed an early ground cover but it will soon retreat underground making way for a whole host of other plants.



Sometimes gardening is a process of trial and error where actions can have knock on consequences bringing new problems for which we have to find solutions. You may notice that compared to most of the garden there is a lot of bare ground showing around the bottom of the tree in this picture. The reason the ground

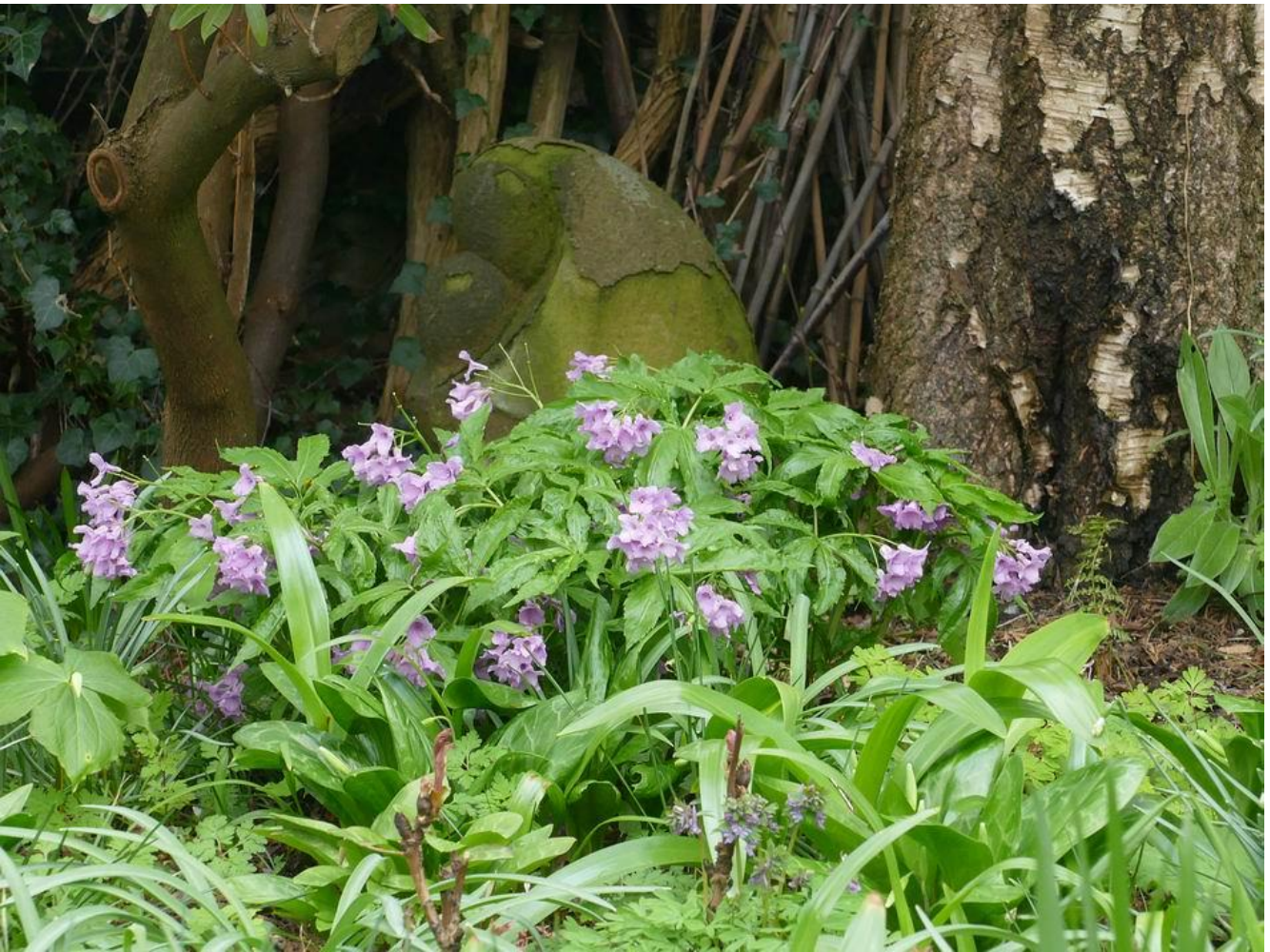


is bare is that I hang one of the bird feeders in that tree and the feeding birds drop bits of the sunflower hearts which encourages ground feeding birds to forage around and tidy up the bits - this was never a problem before Covid!



Once Covid struck and the town was in lockdown people no longer ate their lunch and snacks in the town centre so all the scraps the town pigeons used to feed on disappeared, causing them to spread out to the edges of the town where they found the food source below our feeders. We never had pigeons before but I have noted there are now large number of them in the

neighbourhood and they don't just drop in and eat delicately, like the small birds did, instead they are constantly tramping about, flattening and destroying the emerging growth. Now the pigeons have found us I can't stop them coming unless I stop feeding the birds which I have no intention of doing, so I have to find a creative solution to this problem. As you may notice I have tried various barriers of wire mesh to protect areas or individual plants but that just drives the pigeons to crush a wider area as they tramp around the barriers. With that in mind I am thinking of re-landscaping the areas below the feeders and planting it with tougher plants able to withstand this onslaught.



**Cardamine pentaphylla** is a great plant for dry shaded areas it is very easy to propagate by dividing the knobbly root in autumn – this display was established by planting a few bits of root in this dry shaded area, at the base of a birch, tree last autumn.





Walking round the garden is a bit like walking through time as **Corydalis solida** flowers, long over in sunnier parts, can still be seen in the cooler shaded parts of the garden.





The buds and leaves of **Jeffersonia dubia** are a deep purple/red colour when they first emerge along with some **Erythronium revolutum**.



In the same area I spot the shoots of **Jeffersonia diphylla** along with a **Fritillaria** and more **Erythronium**.



A population of *Dicentra* gives good ground cover to associate with taller growing plants such as *Trillium*.



***Trillium erectum***



The next sequence of images illustrates some of our varied plantings that need no words to describe them.



**Spot the foliage?**

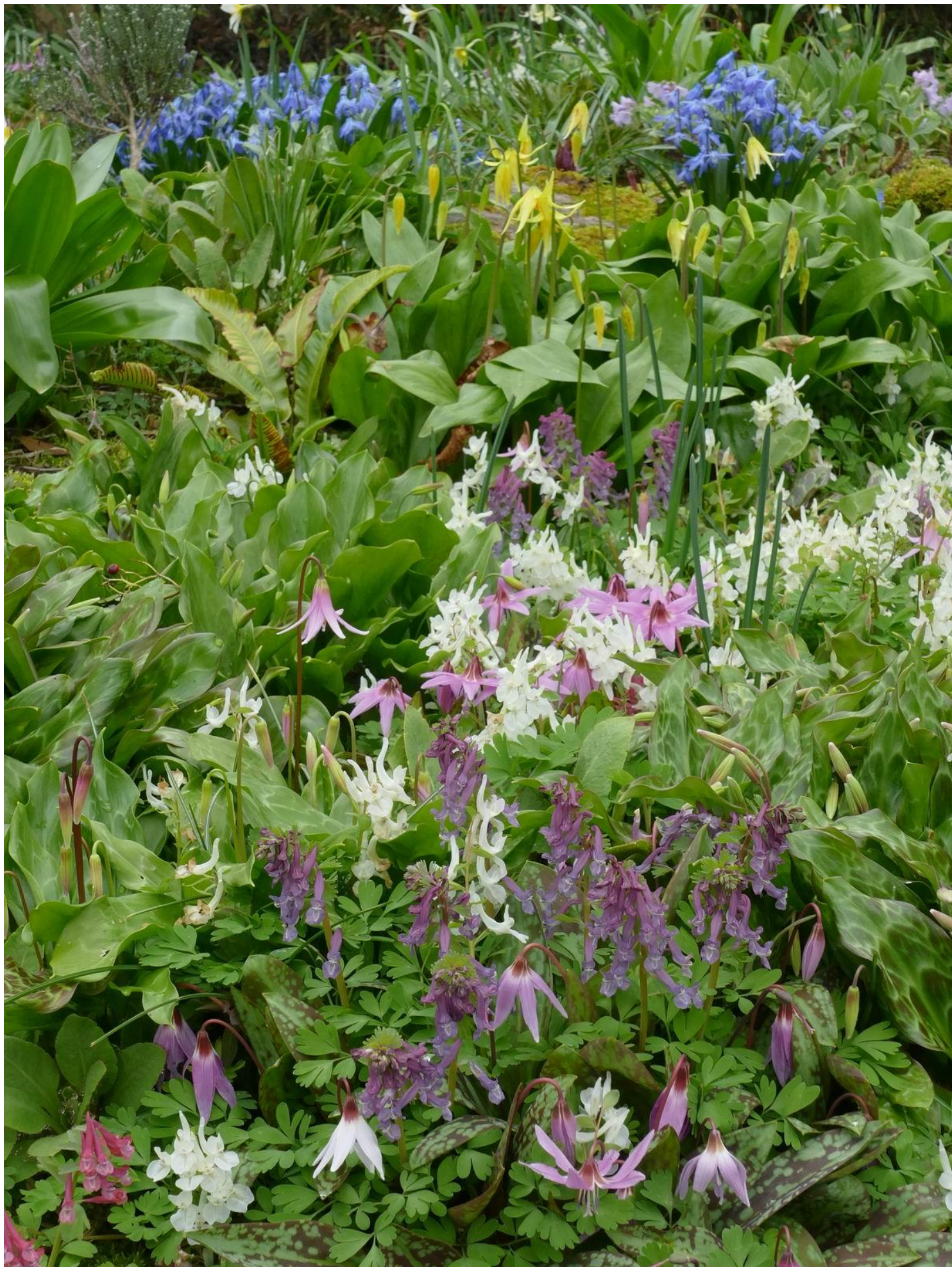




Flowers and leaves



Erythronium season is getting under way: here a hybrid flowers through some silver Cyclamen foliage.



There is a sense of transition as the early flowering plants start to make way for the next wave which will be dominated by the Erythronium - if you want to see and hear more join me on my latest [Bulb Log Video Diary](#).....