



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BSLB LOG 06:.....14th June 2023





The garden as shown on the cover picture has gone through a number of seasonal changes since last month's Bulb Log, the most noticeable being the emergence of the leaf canopy. But first I want to take you on an exploration of the local nature which is the main influence on our garden. Hopefully you will see how we adopt a planting style based on what I see in this picture of Bluebells and Wild Garlic in a local wood. We do draw from a wider range of plants from across the world but more and more I find the local wild flowers especially at this time of year very appealing.



Primula vulgaris (Primrose) and **Allium ursinum (Wild Garlic)** are the main subjects growing here at the base of a large tree but take note how they are growing among many other plants including grasses not alone surrounded by bare ground. The Primula grow so well here even during the long dry periods we sometimes get at this time of year much better than they would isolated in a garden bed. Dense ground cover planting shades the ground, reducing evaporation, creating its own moist atmosphere

supporting the plants during dry periods. At a higher level the tree canopy has a similar effect which we can physically feel as we walk around going in and out of shade. Combining both the tree and ground level cover provides the plants maximum support.



Allium ursinum (Wild Garlic)

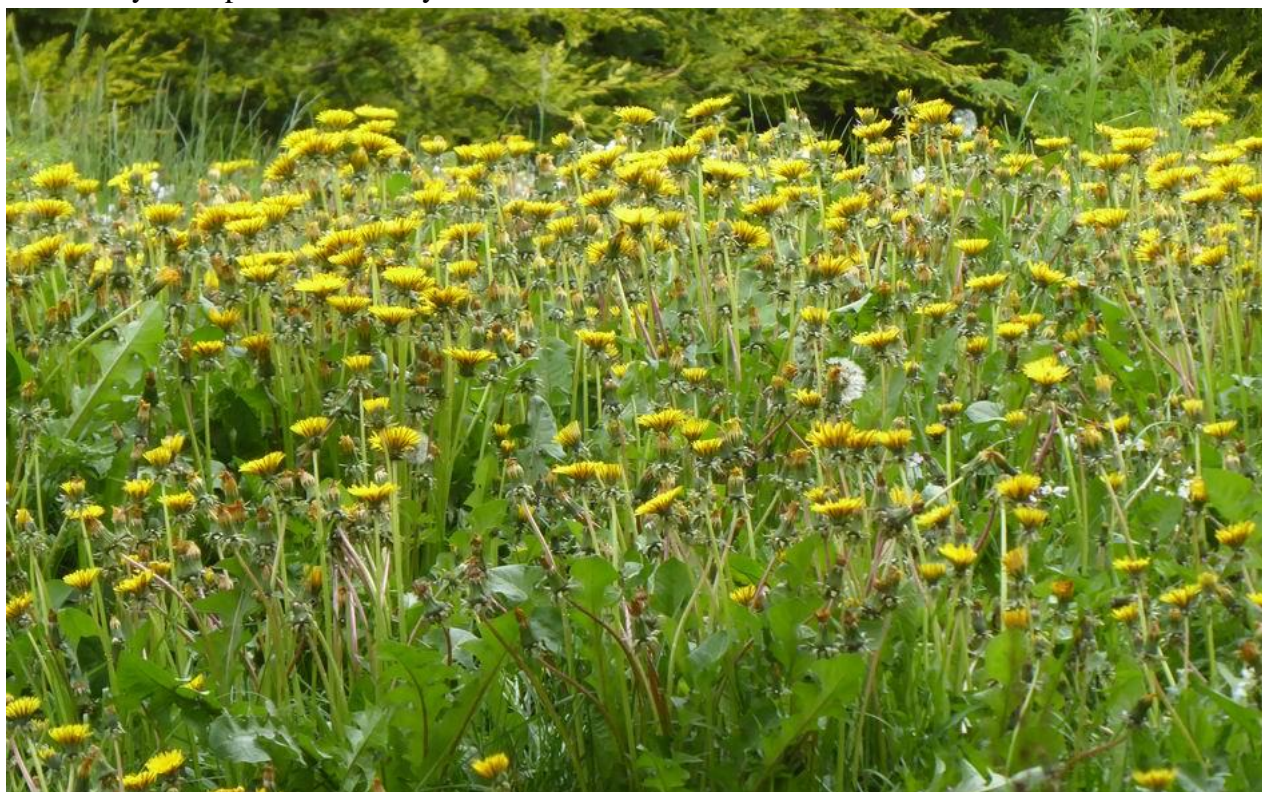
Nature does not like bare ground as the green carpets shown in these pictures show.



At the other side of the dyke **Myrrhis odorata** (Sweet Cicely) is the first of the Umbelliferae to flower.



Alliaria petiolate (Hedge Garlic) is growing here along with **Allium ursinum (Wild Garlic)** and others. I don't like using the weed word - to me it is more a state of mind than a definition of a plant - but I do recognise that some wild flowers can be invasive and disruptive to natural habits when introduced to a foreign land but where they are native they form part of the ecosystem.



This mass planting of **Taraxacum officinale (Dandelions)** are growing in a fenced off building site, which is waiting for planning permissions, but for now it is a haven for wild flowers providing a welcome food source for the birds and insects. We need these

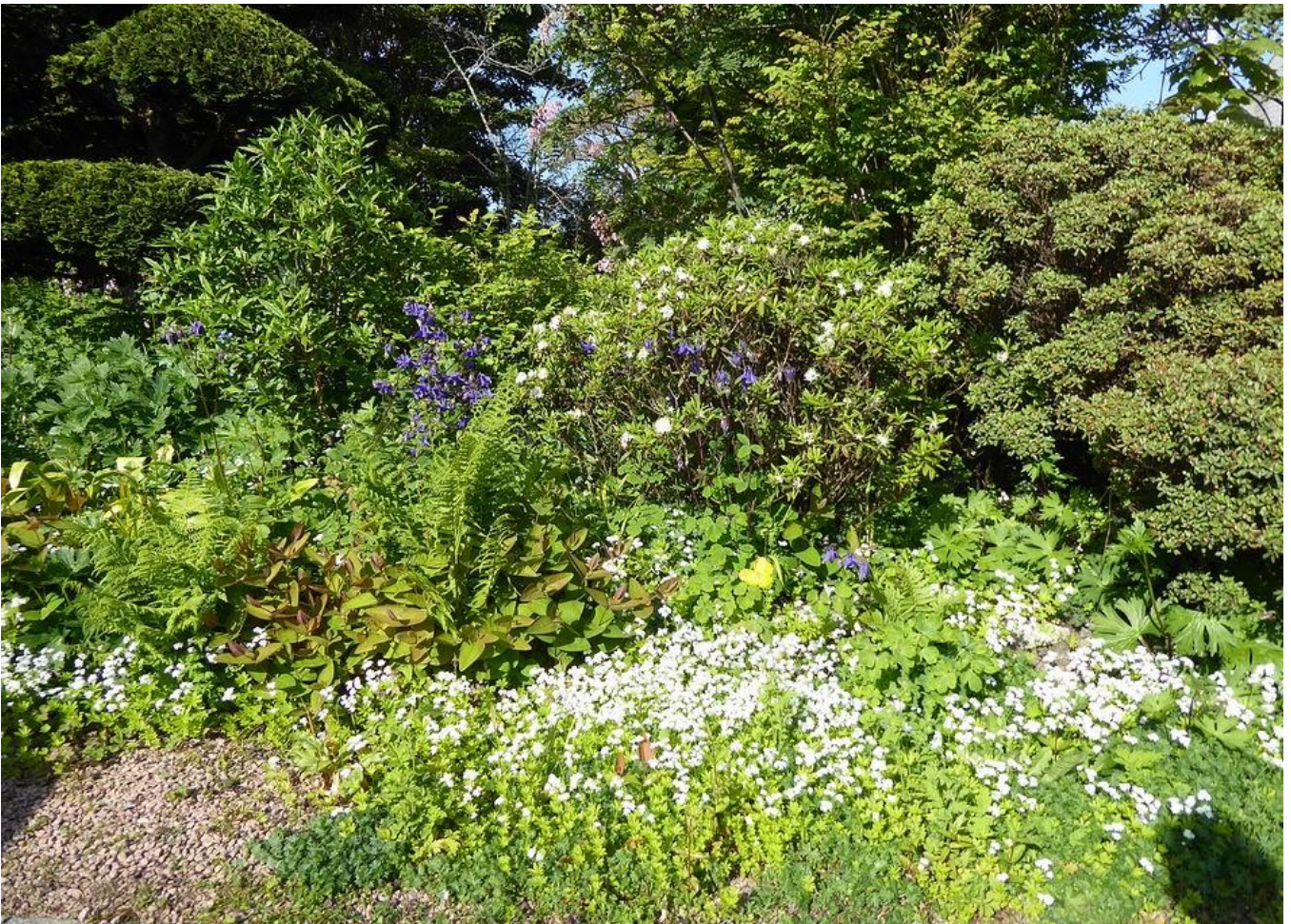
wild areas for nature and I am pleased to see that the gardening world is slowly adopting a more relaxed attitude to these wildflowers to the extent that some so called 'weeds' were shown in some of the Chelsea show gardens to great effect. For all the plants I am showing in this sequence of pictures ask yourself if a plant that looks as good as this, comes free, grows easily and is beneficial to wildlife why should we not grow it rather than spending a lot of money on plants that are not native, often challenging to grow and possibly short lived?



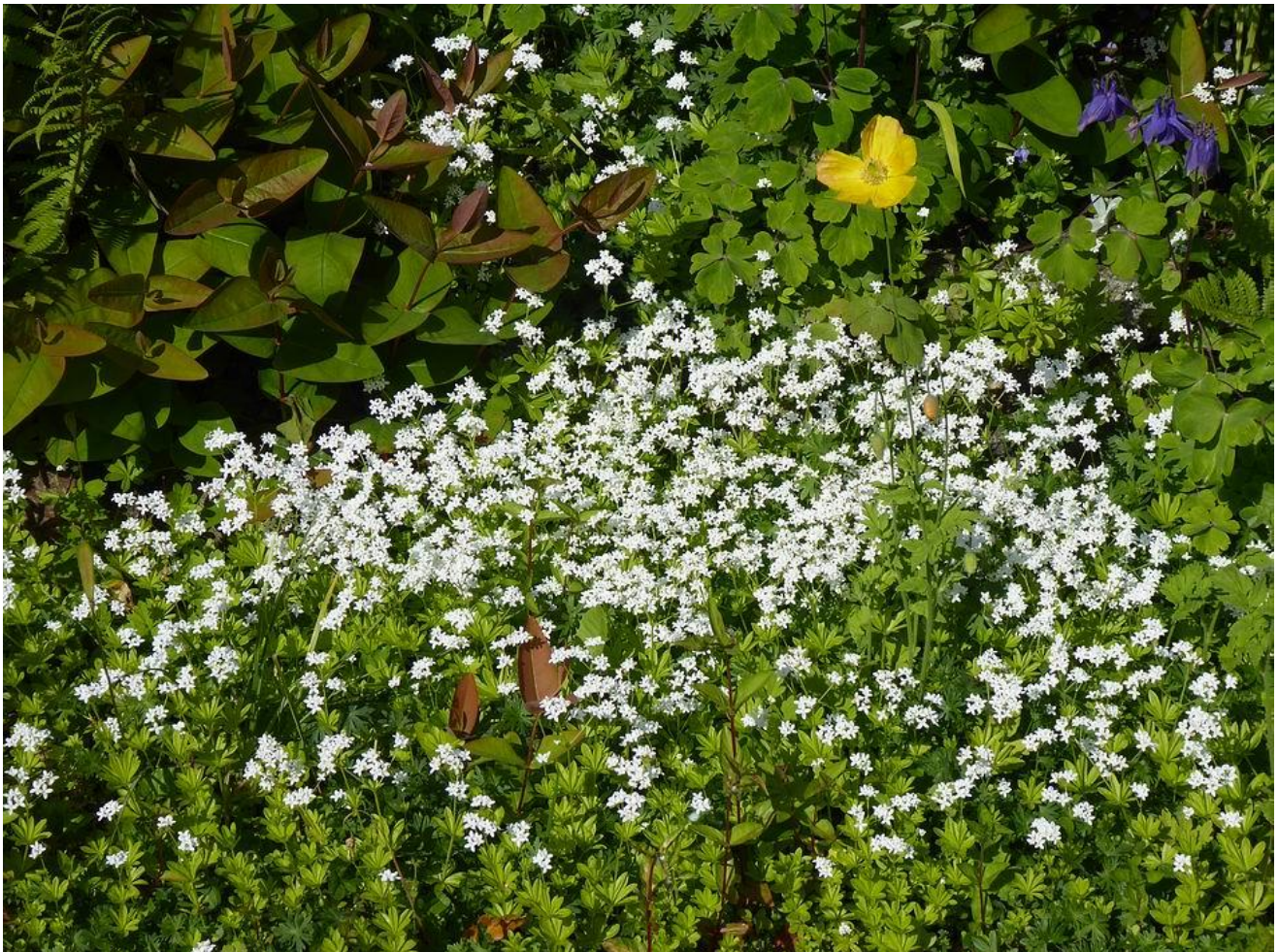
There are probably enough Dandelions seeds at this one site to fill every garden in the area but they are enjoyed by the Goldfinches and other birds but 'some will fall on stony ground' and will not survive.



I could not get through the fence to confirm which of the buttercups this is but I suspect it is *Ranunculus acris* that is creating this stunning mass of shiny yellow flowers – what a feature it could make in a garden.



Arriving back home I am greeted by the front garden with its nature inspired, ground covering, sequential planting.



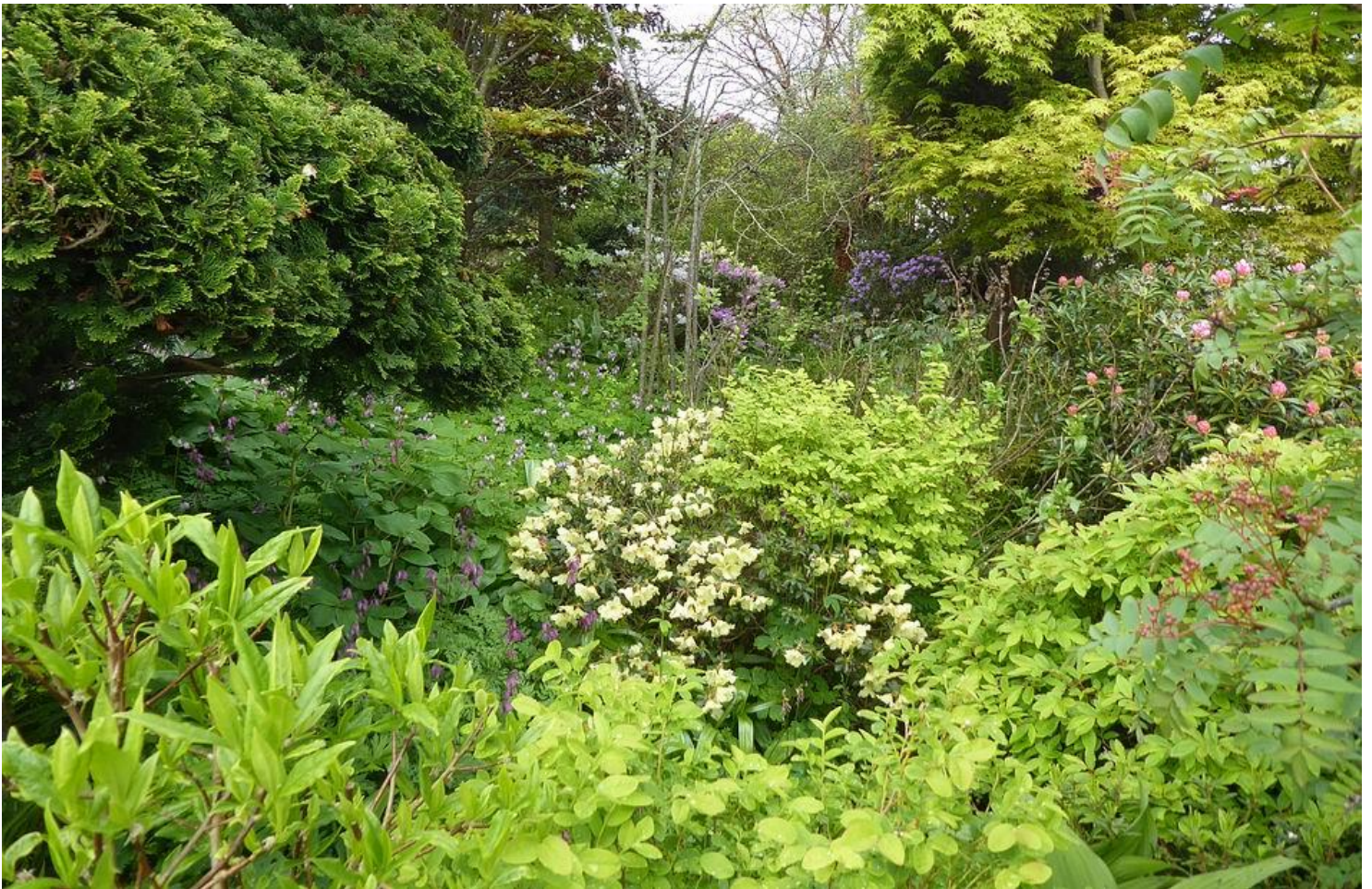
Galium odoratum is the most decorative and amenable of this genus for the garden where its low growth spreads out, forming a wonderful soft green ground cover through which all the other plants grow successfully and at this time of year there is an additional spectacle as it is covered in a froth of white flowers.



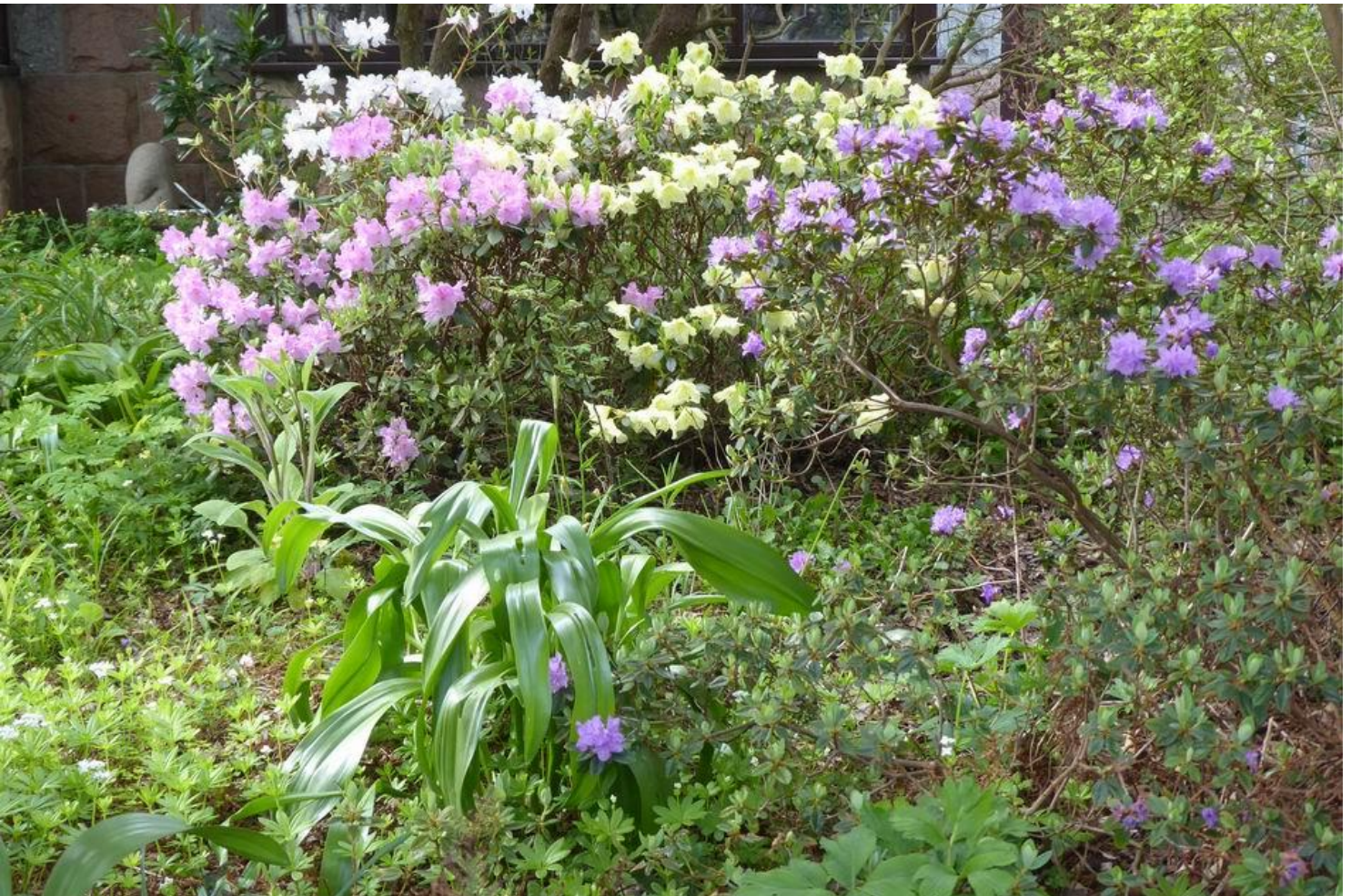
Using plants from around the world we imitate what we see in nature covering the ground in plants so that the earth is no longer visible.



A number of Peony's join in the mix.



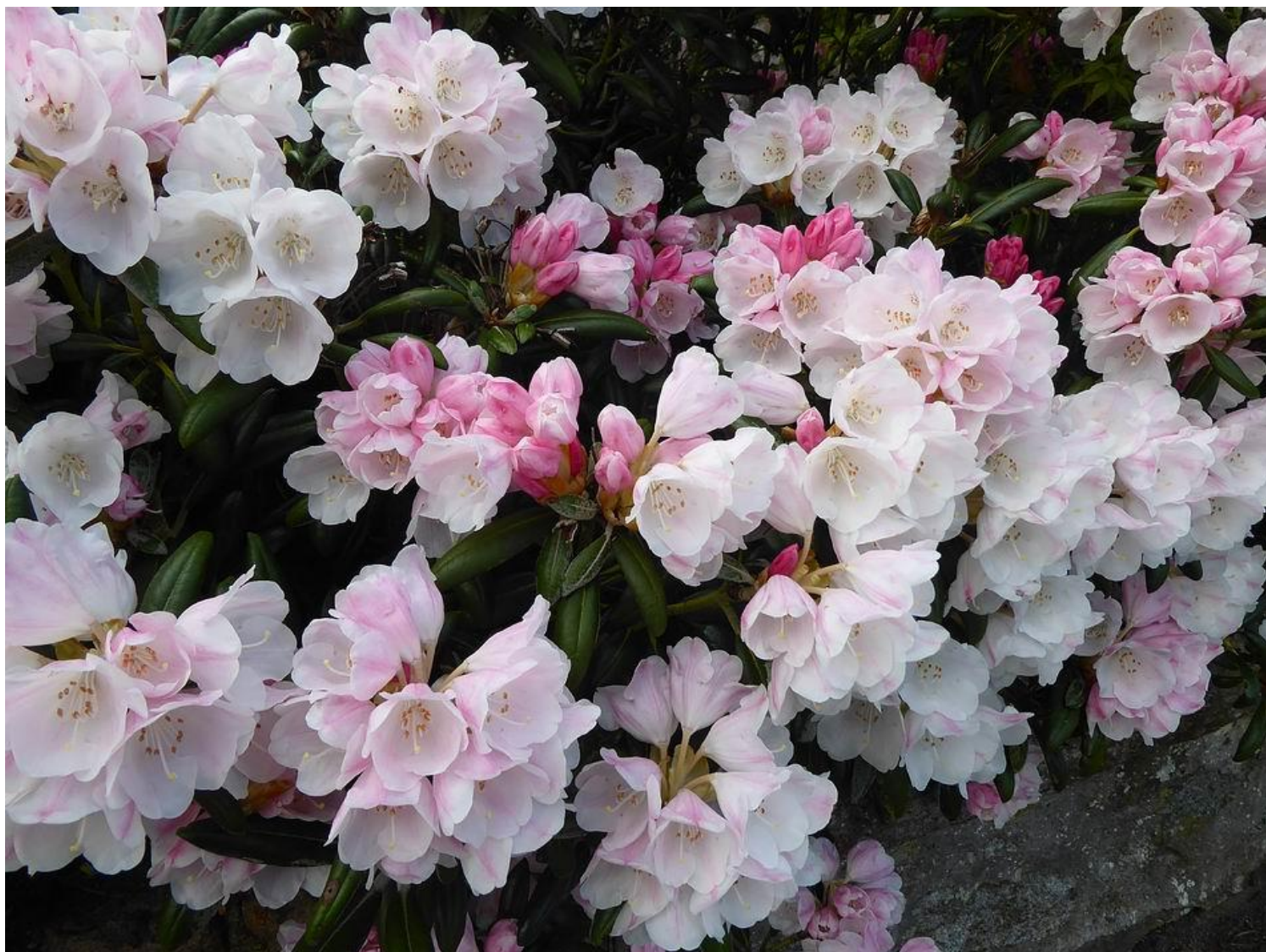
Still in the front garden, trees and shrubs including Rhododendrons provide the taller structural plants rising up in tiers over the shorter plants and ground cover.

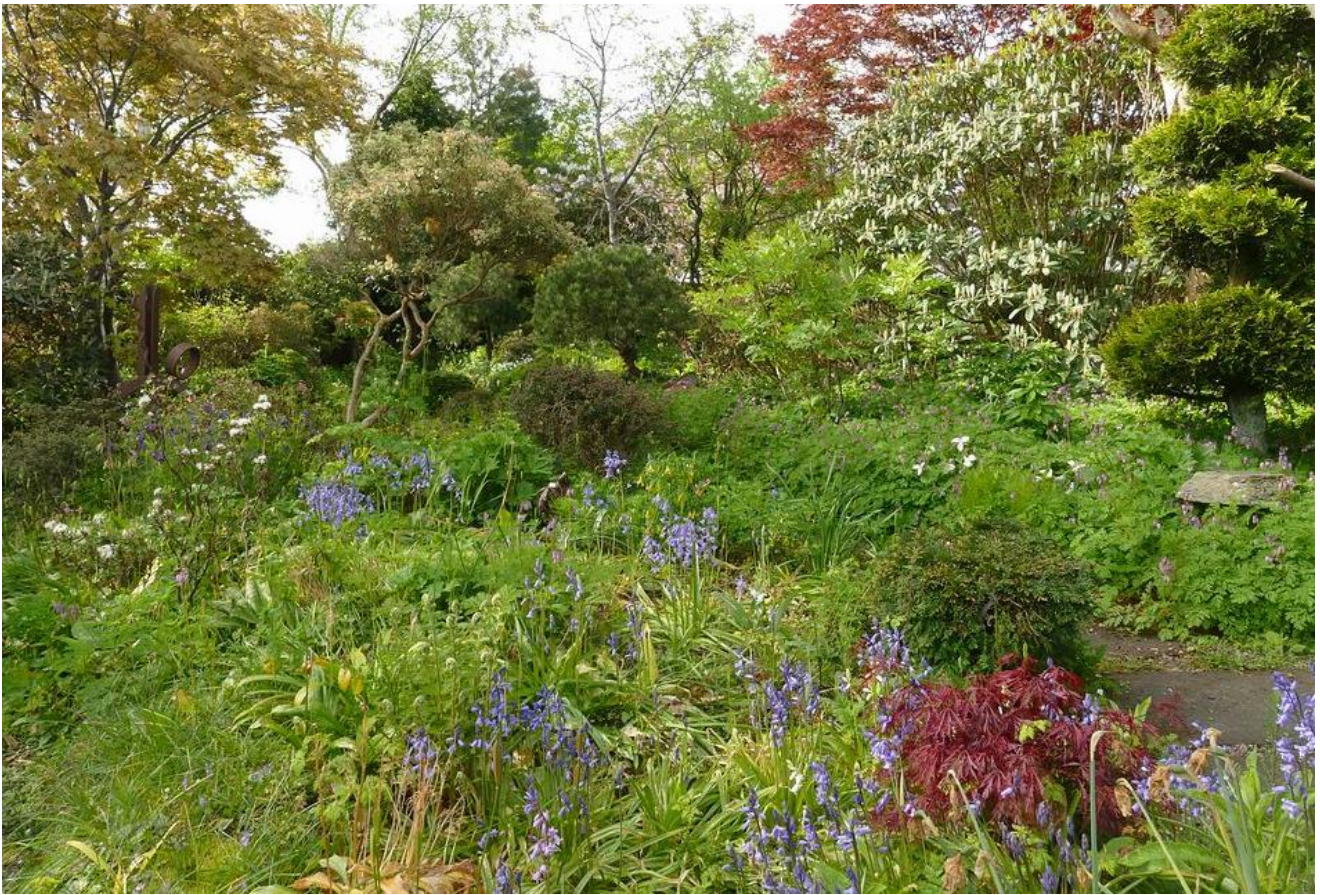


Rhododendrons

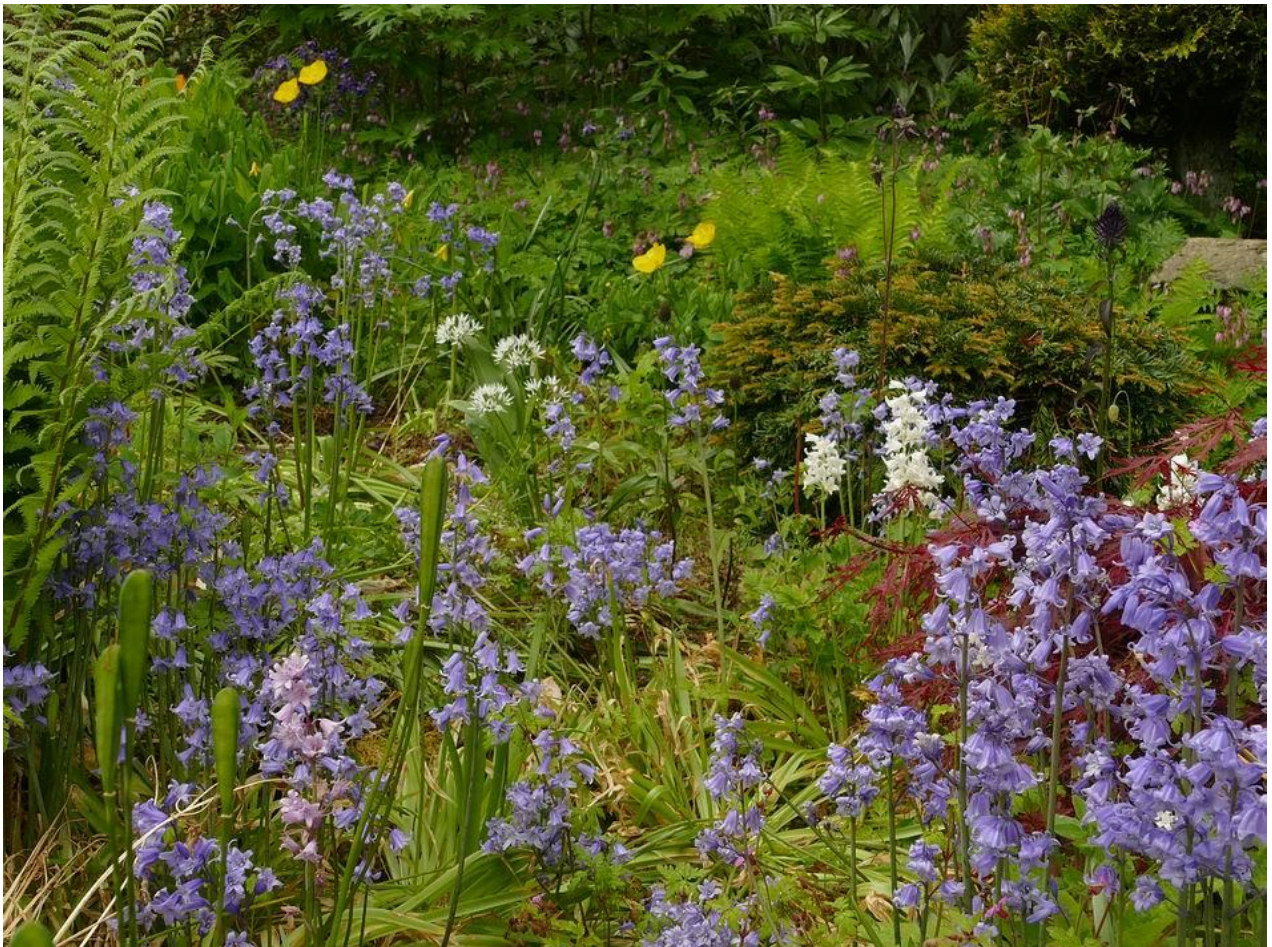


This large sprawling forty year old **Rhododendron yakushimanum 'Koichiro Wada'** will need to be cut back where it spreads out over the wall encroaching over the pavement.





Moving to the back garden; there is a significant change with the emergence of the leaf canopy. Below the trees and shrubs the Bluebells flowering in this area represent at least the fourth wave of flowering in our seasonal sequence taking over from the many early flowering bulbs which have or are in the process of retreating underground.



The Bluebells, a mixture of **Hyacinthoides hispanica**, **Hyacinthoides non-scripta** and intermediate hybrids grow so well that they are often described as weeds but they provide excellent colour and a food source for pollinators. We prevent them from becoming a problem by plucking the stems off after the flowers fade to prevent them seeding around too much in addition we also lift and thin out the bulbs from time to time.



Picking up the colour theme a line of Bluebells leads your eye towards **Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'** on the left above and in the picture below is in full bloom.



Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'



The wonderful dark leaves of **Sinopodophyllum hexandrum** (syn. **Podophyllum**) will age to green but for now the red/brown colour contrasts well with the green leaves of *Lilium pyrenaicum* and a *Galium aparine* a plant that is less welcome than its decorative relative, *Galium oderatum*, growing in the front garden.



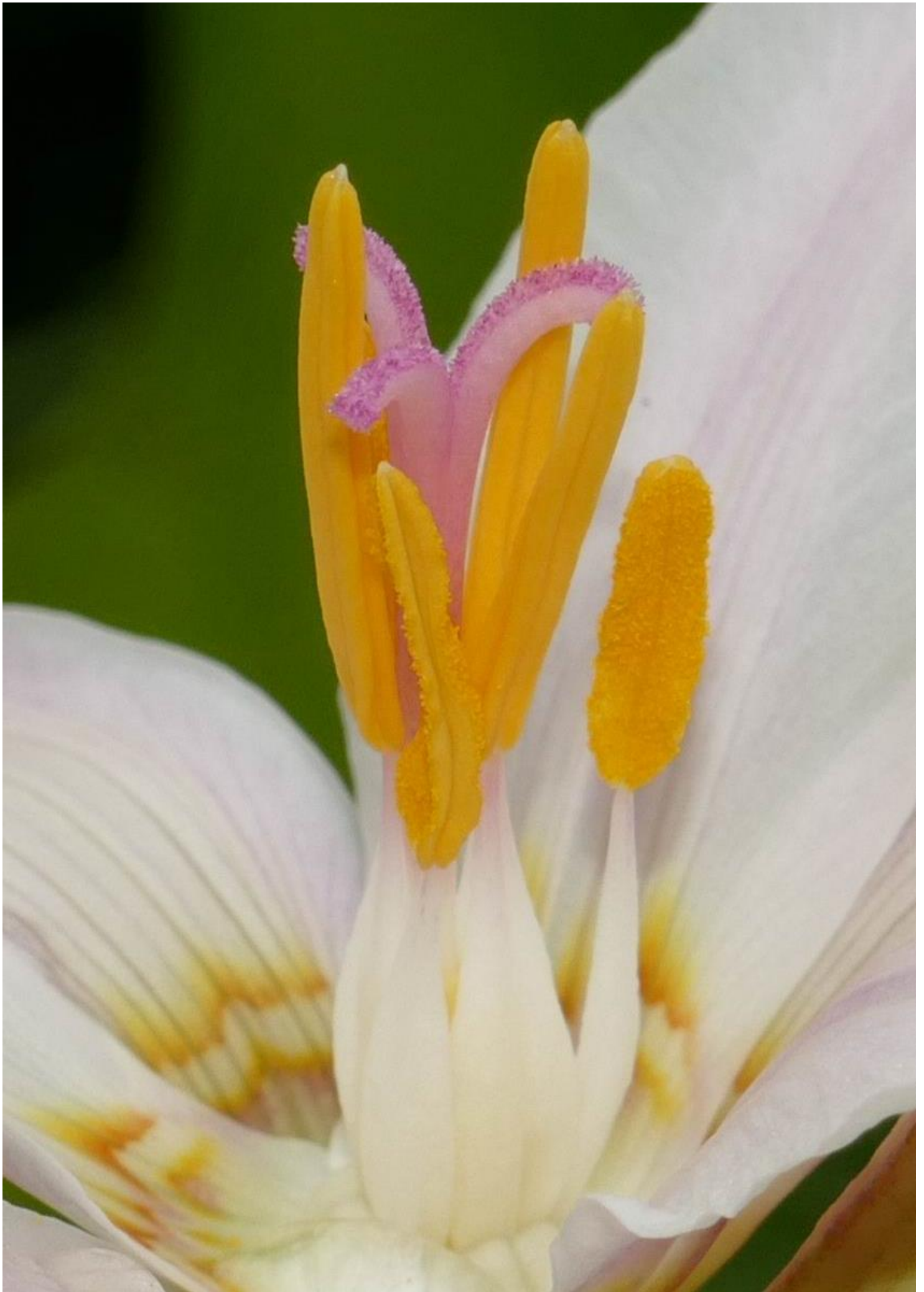
Uvularia grandiflora



Erythronium oregonum hybrid



Every year since I first noticed this self-sown *Erythronium oregonum* seedling its flowers have faced upwards like its close relatives, the tulips. Its petals range from white to pink in colour with central yellow brown zonal markings. The bit I really love, seen better in the large picture below, is the yellow and pale purple colour combination of the anthers and style – which suggests *Erythronium revolutum* as the pollen parent.



This combination reminds me of the colour field paintings one of my favourite artists - Mark Rothko.



The yellow flowered **Erythronium grandiflorum** along with **Erythronium elegans** are among the later flowering erythronium species.



Erythronium montanum and some later forms of **Erythronium revolutum**.



The flower colour is now gone from the *Erythronium* plunge bed where for now the green of the leaves dominates – these will soon turn yellow as the plants retreat triggered by the extending day length and temperature increases.



At the other side of the path this bulb bed has gone through its seasonal change, turning into an herbaceous bed. Towards the end of the summer the herbaceous plants will die back just in time for the autumn flowering bulbs to flower and so the sequence continues.



Galanthus, Eranthis, Leucojum, Crocus, Corydalis, Fritillaria and Narcissus are some of the early flowering bulbs that live and flower in this bulb bed before making way for the herbaceous - still to come are autumn flowering Colchicum and Crocus and eucomis among others!



Highlights such as this **Trillium flexipes/erectum hybrid** emerge through the mass of foliage.



Fritillaria pyrenaica



Fritillaria camschatensis



I never cease to be amazed by the sheer mass of leaf growth that, fuelled by rain and the soil, fills the garden every year. We replace that goodness by composting all the old growth and returning it as a mulch when the ground is bare in the winter. Soon the greenery will be studded by the next wave of flowers some of which I will share next month.



Rhododendron fortunei



Trilliums growing in the shade of the trees and rhododendrons help extend their season.



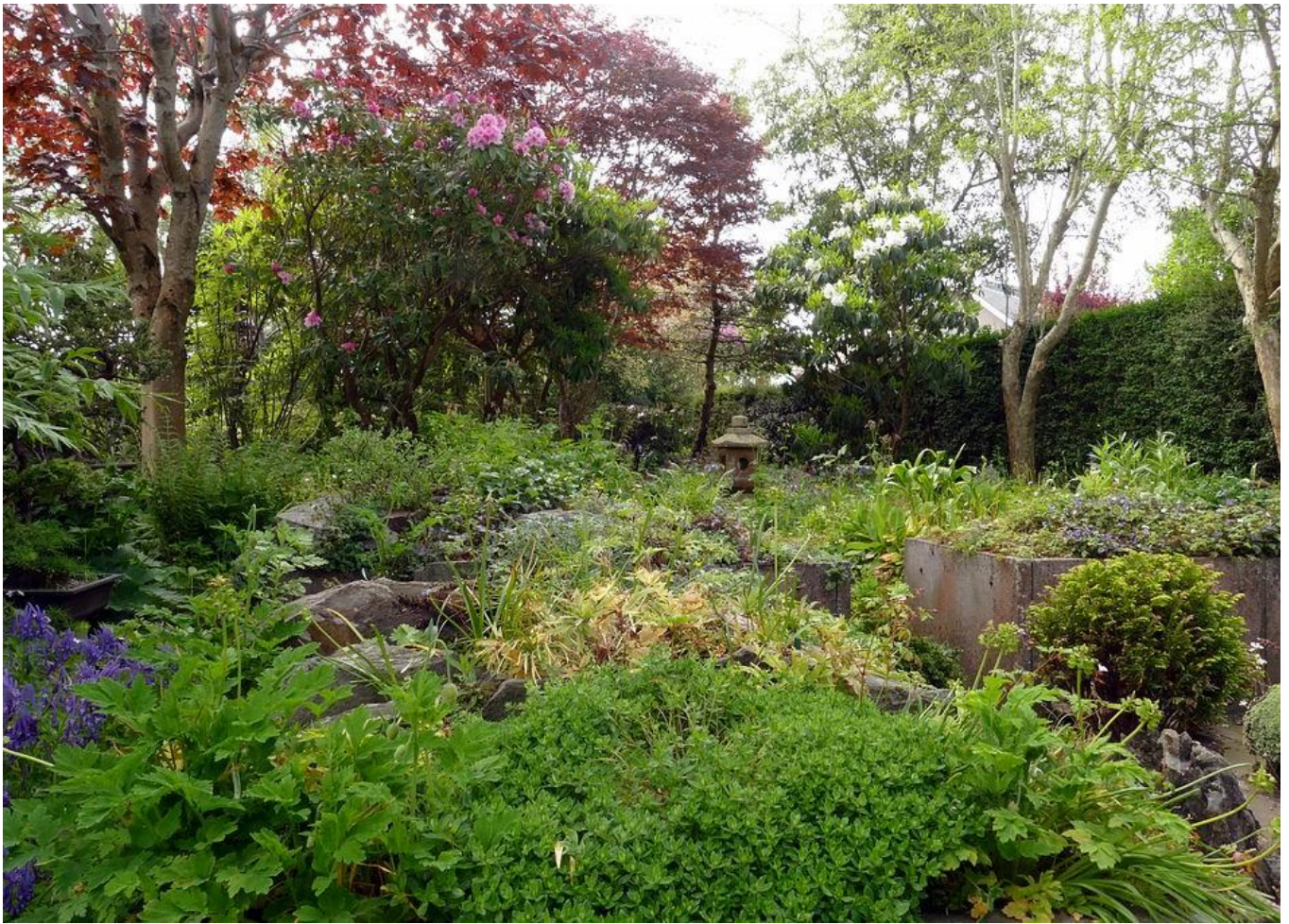
Earlier in the month we enjoyed the flowers of various forms of *Anemone nemorosa*.



A few rock growers such as **Haberlea rhodopensis** enjoying the moist conditions. They are perfectly adapted to withstand the dry period we are currently experiencing. During droughts their leaves may shrivel and look dead, only to revive when moisture returns.



A wee Viola that comes free and many may 'weed out' but we are happy to let it seed around - it probably originates from a plant of *Viola labradorica* we planted many years ago.



Between the trees above and the leafy ground cover plants spreading over both the rock garden and woodland beds it is a month that started with mass flowering of the bulbs, turning increasingly leafy as the days passed.





I will round off this month comparing again the busy planting style of our garden (above) with another scene from nature pictured on my daily walk (below).



Roe deer among the *Anthriscus sylvestris* (Cow Parsley).
I love them both but which one would I welcome into the garden?