



Not the picture you may expect for a Bulb Log but I do occasionally take a break from plants and the garden. Last Thursday a friend and I had a day out down the coast to Angus. Our plan was to head 50 miles south of Aberdeen to Arbroath then work our way slowly north up the small coastal roads. While at Arbroath harbour my eye is drawn to



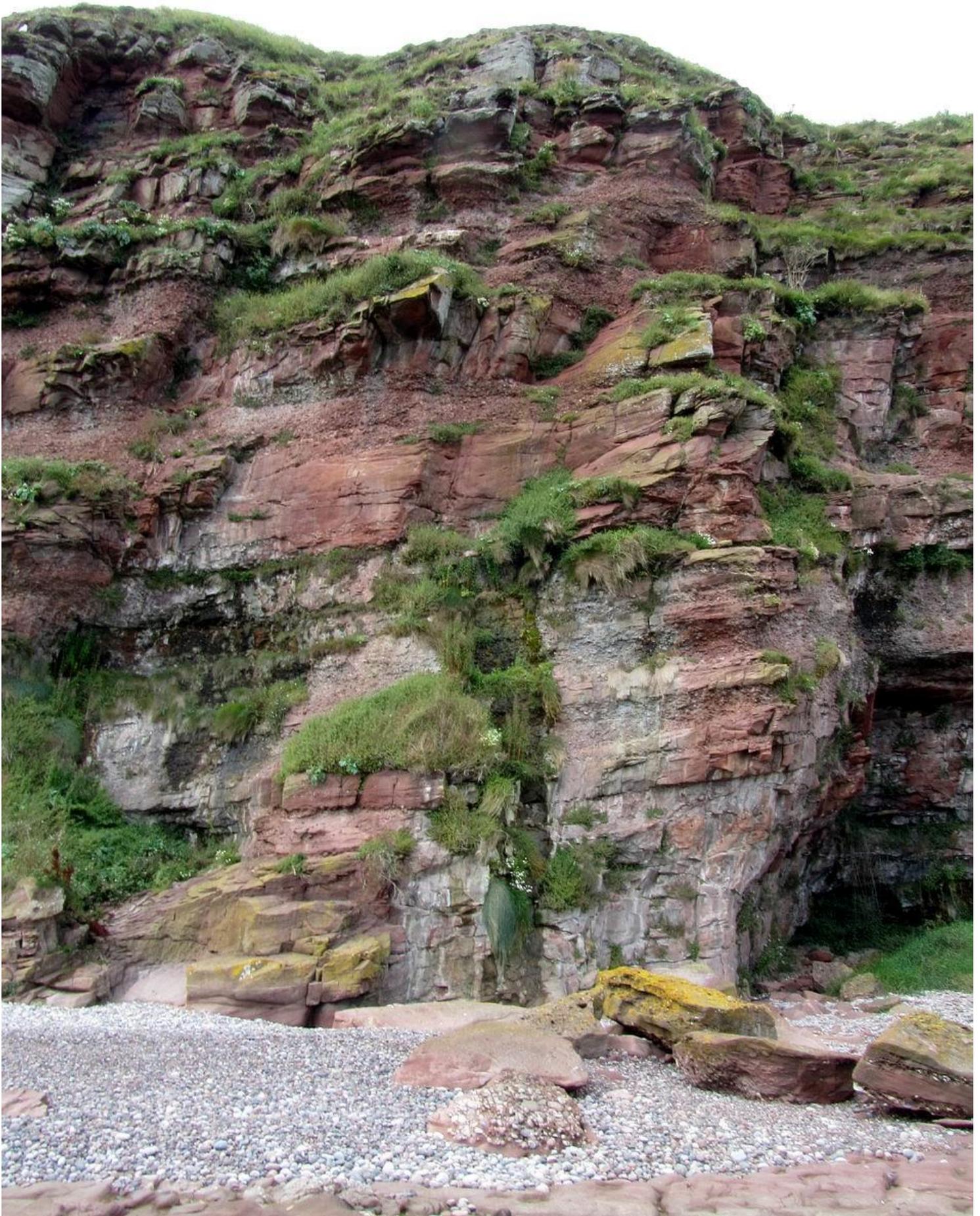
the flora that has found a root hold in the cracks in the quayside wall.

With a common name 'Sea Mayweed' it now has the Latin name *Tripleurospermum maritimum* that just trips off your tongue. The other observation you may notice is that this is not May but then we are quite far north so many plants flower later than their common name suggests.

Tripleurospermum maritimum



Where-ever I go my eye is drawn not just to the overall scene but to details such as these ancient cogs in the wheel that operate the dock gate to hold back the tide and stop the boats keeling over. Isolating such details in a photograph can give you a powerful image full of form and texture.



Cliffs at Auchmithie

My interest in plants arose from my boyhood interest in geology so this day trip was to revisit some of the many geologically fascinating sites of the Scottish coasts such as the Devonian sandstone cliffs to the north of Arbroath. Above you see layers of Lower Devonian conglomerate, (Auchmithie Conglomerate Member) with beds of sandstone with wonderful gravel storm ridges below.



As you move north the shingle beach gives way to an eroded and broken rock shore line with caves, arches and sea stacks. There is a well signposted [Geodiversity Trail](#) along this fascinating bit of coast – click the link to see more.

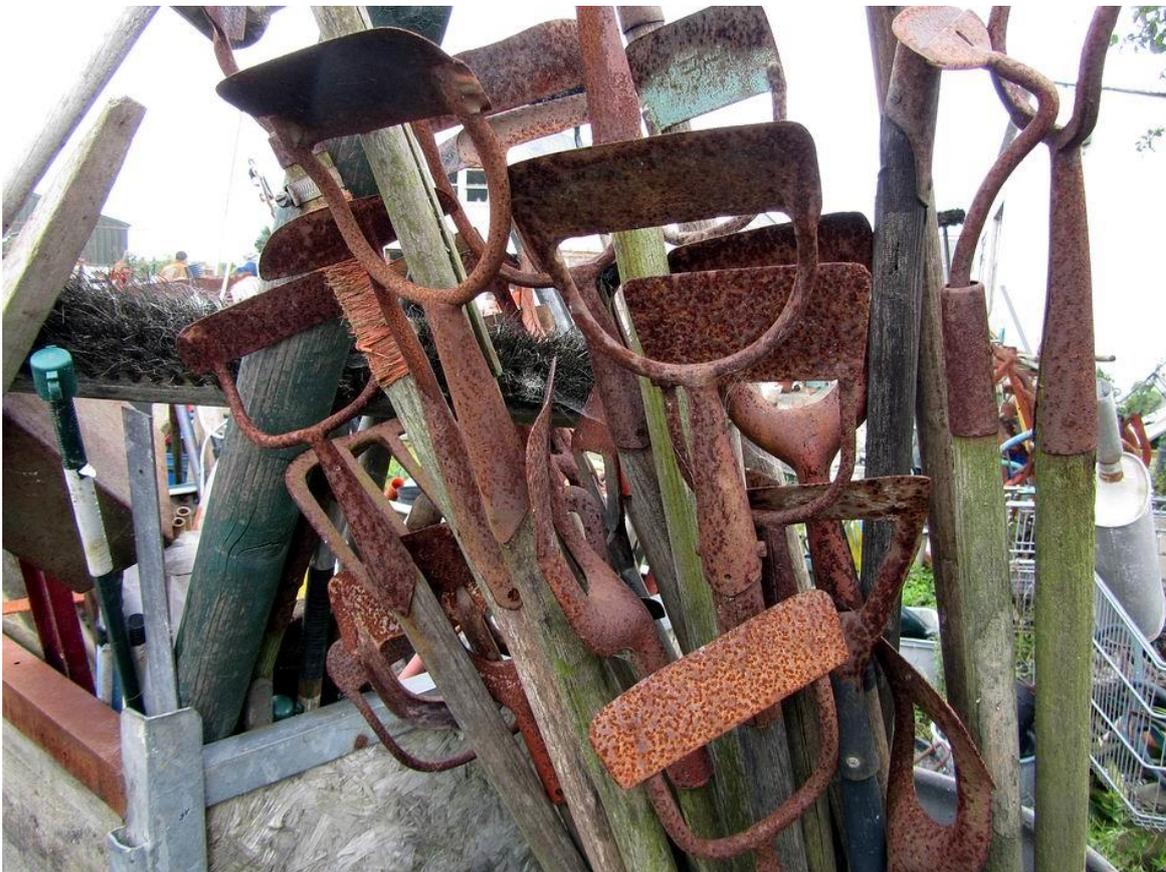


Lunan Bay

A few miles further north the cliffs give way to a [Lunan Bay](#) stunning east-facing beach is backed by sand dunes and framed by low cliffs to the north and south; another fascinating environment full of flora, fauna and history.



A bit further north you come to [St Cyrus](#) with another wonderful beach and sand dunes which are now a Nature Reserve and well worth a visit. Along the road we stopped at a junk yard which had more junk of every kind than you could ever imagine – I was taken by the hundreds of rusting spades, forks and hoes – all for sale should you feel the need.



We do use spades but hoes are banned in our garden – all weeding must be done by hand and we only pull a plant when we have identified it. Many a treasure has self-seeded in our garden which the indiscriminate use of a hoe would have irradiated. Scotland is a wonderful country with so much to offer the residents and visitors alike. We have a rich diversity of culture including horticulture wonderful geology and nature and lovely foods as I can

confirm having enjoyed a lunch, in the But'n Ben, of the famous Arbroath Smokie at its historical home in Auchmithe. If you want to know more about [Arbroath Smokies](#) click the link to download a leaflet.



Colchicum alpinum seed

Back to the garden – regular readers will know how much importance I attach to raising plants from seed and especially collecting and raising seeds from your own garden. Colchicum seed is notoriously reluctant to germinate but I do find that our own seed has a reasonably high rate of success – sowing fresh while the seed is still hydrated may be the answer – soaking stored seed overnight can also help encourage germination.



Colchicum alpinum

The seed capsule shown above can be seen in this pot along with a faded flower that I showed last week – now we have four more flowers – the variation in colours is because these are seed raised plants.



Colchicum alpinum

Cross pollination between different clones will always give you a better chance of getting fertile seed to set.



Colchicum hybrid

These Colchicum flowers have suddenly shot up in the last few days – the ones that we grow in polystyrene boxes always flower a bit ahead of those in the garden.



Cyananthus lobatus

Your eye is taken by the spreading clump of *Cyananthus lobatus*, with *Cyananthus microphyllus* in the background, but to the left of the raised bed you will see the box of *Colchicum*.



Here the same clone of *Colchicum* has shot up almost overnight. On Saturday we showed a visitor around the garden and there was no sign of these flowers less than twenty four hours later I took this picture – I never cease to be amazed at how fast bulbs can spring into boom.

Crocus speciosus

Likewise these, *Crocus speciosus*, are the first crocus to flower this autumn. Even though it is still August we are noticing a distinct chill in the air at nights and this along with the abundant moisture from recent deluges has triggered the start of the autumn flowering bulbs. Heavy rains not only moisten the ground but as the rain is also cold it causes the ground temperature to suddenly fall – hence it is my belief that it is more the fall in ground temperature that the bulbs respond to than the moisture levels. The drop in temperature initiates the roots and the presence of moisture allows them to grow.



Crocus biflorus corms

I am continuing to work on repotting the bulbs and not all the results are good. This pot shows some corms have grown well producing corms big enough to flower next spring while others have broken down into a number of small corms indicating they have suffered in some way. The best part was that this pot also produced a fat seed capsule.





Cyananthus microphyllus

Cyananthus microphyllus is now in full flower, we have a number of seed raised plants in this raised bed so hope for a good seed crop to help ensure that we retain this plant in our garden – there is no better way to preserve plants in your garden than by continually raising plants from seed keeping healthy, young, vigorous plants coming along.



This week we were battered by gale force winds which ripped many leaves and berries from the trees giving the ground an autumnal - look except the leaves are still green not the colours of autumn.



Lysimachia paradiformis* var *stenophylla



Sometimes decay can be as attractive as something in pristine condition - this *Trillium erectum* x *flexipes* seed capsule held erect above the dry brown remains of the leaves tells an interesting story of a plant going into retreat for this season – I will collect and sow this seed in the next few days.



What stories this decaying clinker-built fishing boat could tell I will leave to your imagination but it forms a picturesque background to another plant of *Tripleurospermum maritimum* growing on the pebble beach.....