



BULB LOG 14.....6th April 2016





Erythronium dens-canis

This plunge basket of *Erythronium dens-canis* displays a wide range of variation in flower shape and colour as well as flowering time - the earliest to flower were the very dark ones I showed a few weeks ago and those are now over, others are still emerging. They were raised from our own garden seed and it is this variation that makes me so keen on raising my plants from seed – I much prefer these mixed plantings over a clonal group not just for the variations but also because pollination between mixed clones will always give a better chance of seed setting.



The extremes of those that are in flower just now range from the one on the left which is almost white, with just a pink tint, to the darker one on the right which is not as dark as those that flowered a few weeks ago.



Erythronium dens-canis



The sequence of images above shows the variation in petal shape and colour as well as the variations in the markings around the central zone. I have loaded a related [Bulb Log Video Diary](#).

On the left is a clonal group of **Erythronium dens-canis** and I was attracted by the backlight shining through the leaves like a stained glass window.



Erythronium revolutum

Not all seed raised bulbs display such an obvious range of variation – this is a pot of second generation seedlings the parents of which were from wild collected *Erythronium revolutum* seed and so far all the offspring retain the paler leaves and pink flowers of the parents. I did take the time to pollinate these only within the original plants.



Erythronium hybrid



Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'

When you grow a lot of Erythroniums in a relatively small area, as we do in our garden, cross pollination is inevitable and as a result many hybrids appear - one of the best selections we named 'Craigton Cover Girl'. The willingness to form clumps was one of the reasons that we named this form - this group has formed from a single bulb planted five years ago.



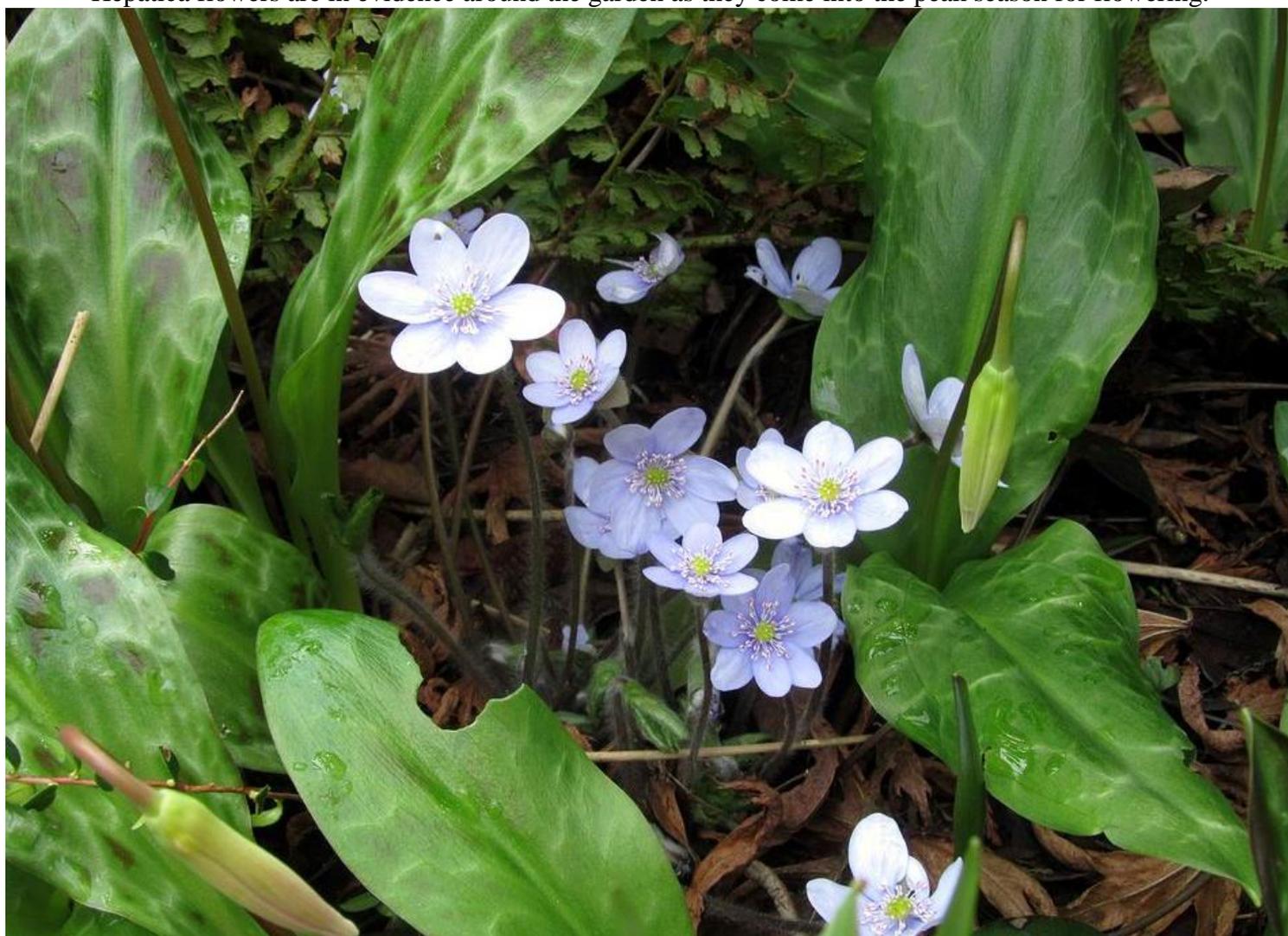
Erythronium plunge bed

The small Corydalis and Hepatica planting between the path and the plunge continues to improve and I am happy to see many seeds, shed last year, are now germinating here.



Hepatica x schlyteri

Hepatica flowers are in evidence around the garden as they come into the peak season for flowering.



Hepatica transylvanica



Hepatica 'Millstream Merlin'

This plant brings back fond memories of the late David Boyd who generously gave us this beautiful form.

David was a great grower who shared both his knowledge and his plants around and that generosity was also displayed in the legacy he left to the SRGC which will be used to further share knowledge and love of plants.





Hepatica pyrenaica

Not all the hepatica forms and hybrids set seed but many like *Hepatica pyrenaica* will, when established, seed around.



Allium and Peony Stems

We should appreciate our plants at every stage of growth not just when they are in flower: these emerging stems are every bit as decorative and interesting as the flower. On the left is an *Allium* species, raised from seed, which has very hairy leaves: it is growing in the bulb house and will flower for the first time this year. On the right is the very colourful new growth of *Paeonia cambessedesii* in the rock garden bed.



This is one of many self-sown seedlings from ***Paeonia lutea* var. *ludlowii*** that are growing all around the large parent plant. This one will flower for the first time but for now I can admire the beauty as the leaves and flower buds emerge from the bud then grow on to full size.

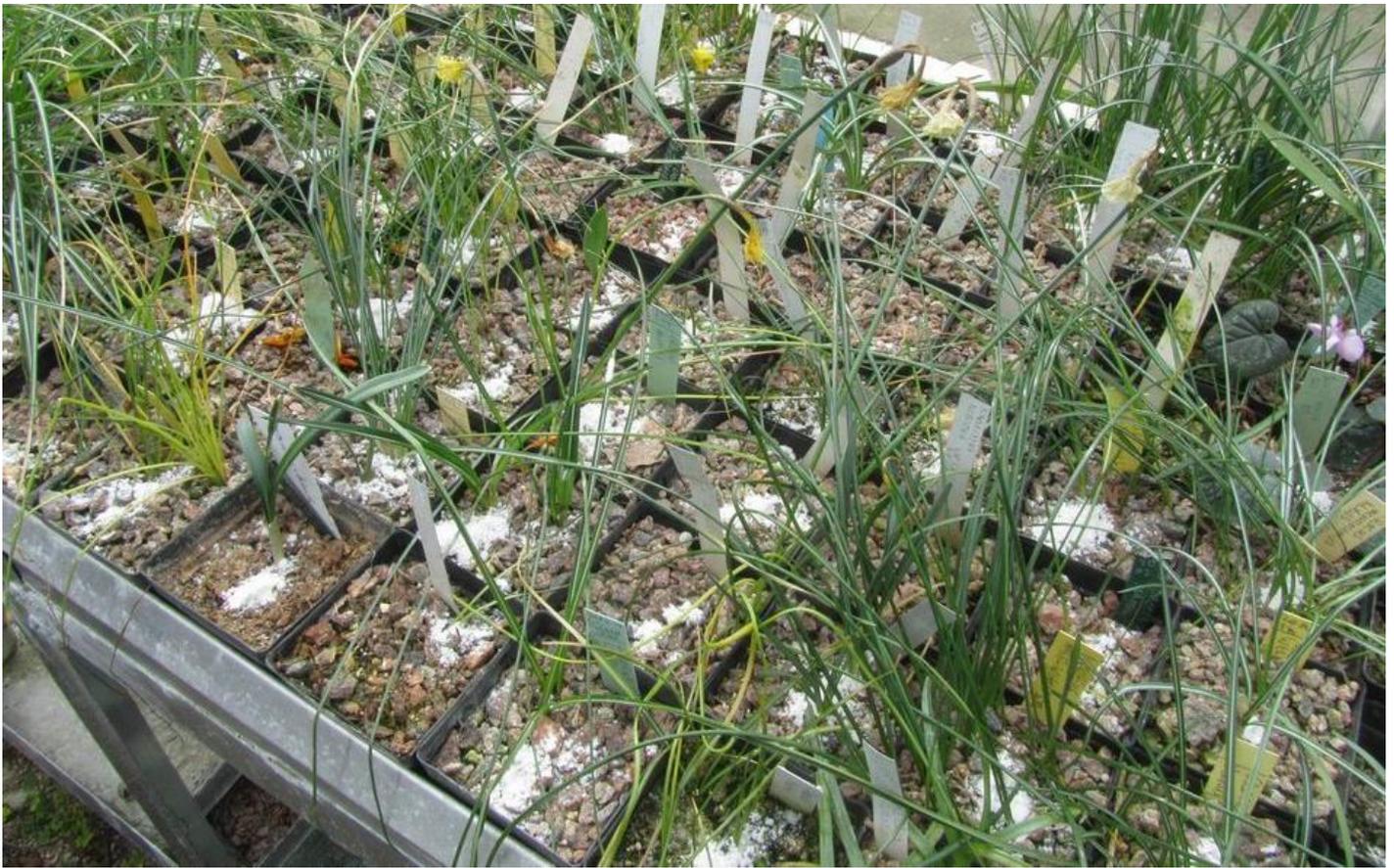


Bulb House

Growth in the bulb house looks very lush now with the majority of the bulbs having achieved full leaf growth. The bulb house is beautifully scented by the flowers of **Corydalis nudicaulis** which will soon fade but then we will enjoy the scent from the blue **Tecophilaea** flowers which are just starting to open. The end wall is covered with the climbing **Tropaeolum tricolorum** which will produce a succession of flowers for many weeks to come.

Narcissus confusus bulbs are just coming into flower while **Galanthus 'EA Bowles'** has been in flower for well over seven weeks already.





7cm pot plunge



Feeding with Potassium supplement



Now the bulbs have completed their leaf and stem growth they have no further need for nitrogen so I will switch my feeding to a potassium supplement - this is the main nutrient the plants need to form next season's flower buds which will be forming now as the current flowers are fading. I simply sprinkle a small amount of the white powder onto the surface of each pot then water it through – if the bulbs stay in growth long enough I will add a second dose in around four to six weeks' time.



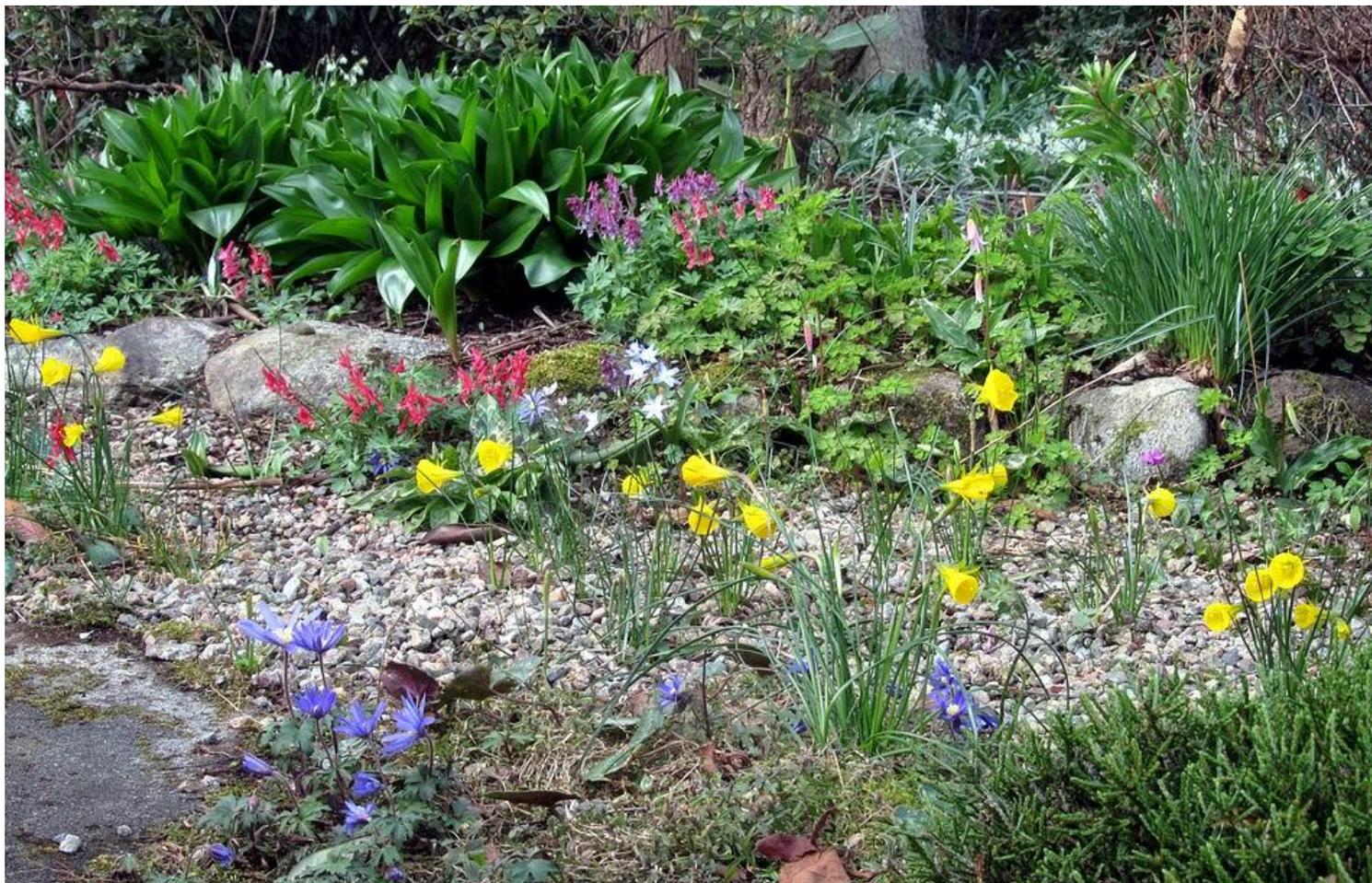
Beyond the lush growth of the bulb house you can see that the beds outside are just as lush with **Corydalis malkensis** and **Corydalis solida** in full glorious flower.



Corydalis malkensis and Corydalis solida



A long time ago I used to carefully collect all the seeds from our plants then sow them carefully in pots but as the number of plants we had increased over the years we got more and more seed and I discovered the easiest way was to allow the plants to self-seed. This could be seen as the lazy option or, as I like to think, the wisdom of a mature gardener learning from nature.



All the plants growing in the gravel have self-seeded including the ever expanding colony of *Narcissus bulbocodium*. See more in this [Bulb Log Video Dairy Supplement Self Seeding.](#)



Narcissus bulbocodium

We can all learn from nature and I will be giving a talk “Nature - the gardener’s tutor” on just this subject to the SRGC Edinburgh & Lothians Rock Garden Group at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th April -meetings are held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Entrance from Inverleith Row).



Narcissus minor



While some of the Galanthus flowers are now past, this one has just reached its peak of flowering.



**Anemone
ranunculoides
'Hagerte'**

Apparently it was after the nuclear fallout from the Chernobyl disaster that a lot of *Anemone ranunculoides* mutations were found, including this one. The first difference I noticed was the doubling up of the leaf forming a central ruff of leaf like structures the smallest of which were tinged with yellow, now the flower has developed I see it is a double.



Anemone ranunculoides 'Hagerte'

For some reason this one ended up in the bulb house so has flowered that bit earlier than a number of other forms I have. This will be the first time they have flowered for me so I am looking forward to seeing the other variations.



The self-sowing theme continues all over the garden including around this grouping of *Trillium rivale* where if you look carefully you will spot lots of seedlings from newly germinating to three year olds.



Spring colour

You will see more of this colour if you join me on a walk in this [Bulb log Video Diary Supplement Walk 02/03/16](#)



I will leave you this week with **Corydalis solida** and **Hepatica nobilis** seedlings - two of the plants that are flowering so well in the garden just now.....