



SRGC

----- Bulb Log Diary -----

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 17..... 27th April 2016



April showers continue, one minute we have blue sky and sunshine the next it is snowing: [click this link](#) to see. I know from watching one of the Ardennes Classic cycle races around Belgium on Sunday that they are experiencing exactly the same weather conditions. There is a giant low pressure sitting over the North Sea dragging all the cold air down from the far north so our temperatures are very low for the time of year.



Despite the weather the plants continue to grow – in the foreground the bright green foliage of *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue' looks so fresh even though it has been out since the autumn. I can see flower spikes appearing on some of the plants I lifted and moved into another bed – this plant does best if you lift and split it every few years; replanting it into some fresh ground enriched with some garden compost gives it a real boost.

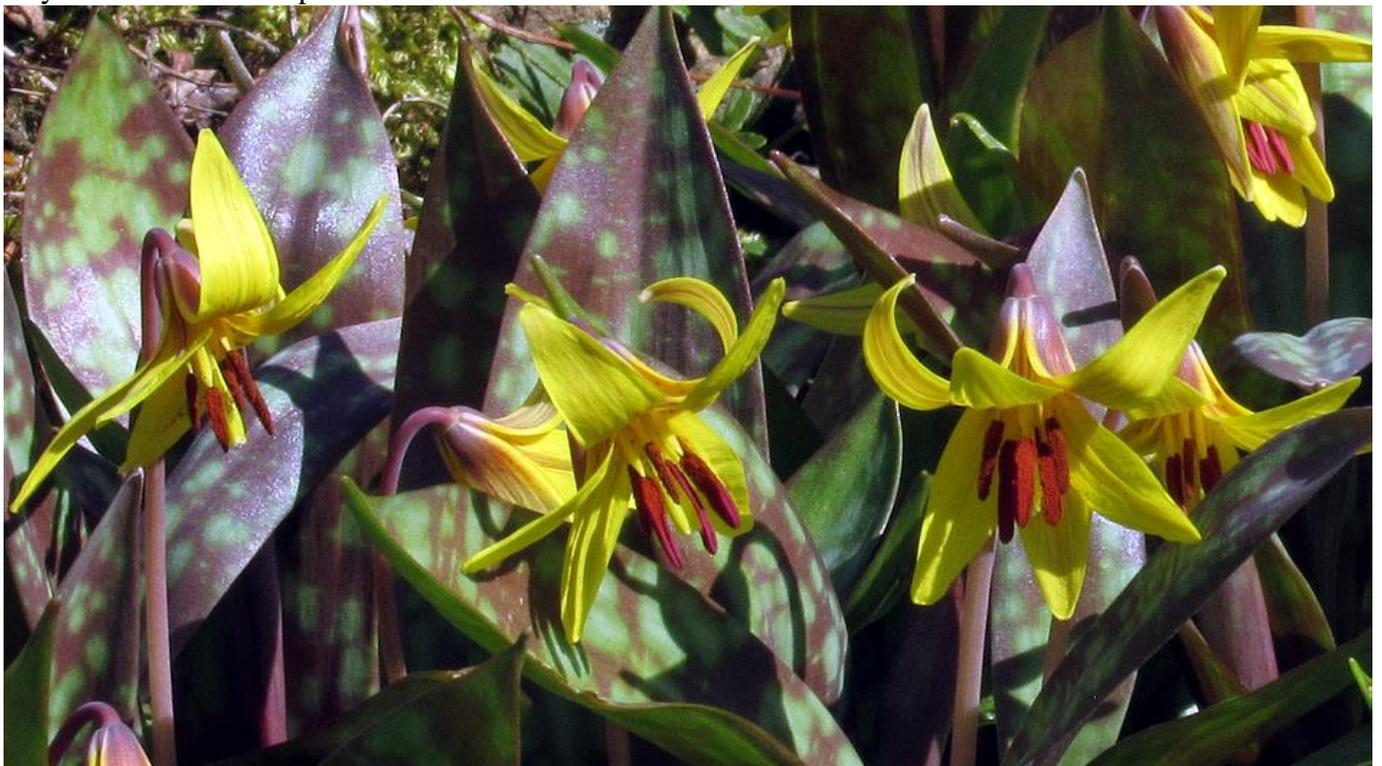


This is the reverse view of the central raised bed shown in the previous picture – I would like to draw your eye down to the planting of ***Erythronium americanum*** in the foreground. This is the stoloniferous form that can be reluctant to flower - over many years it has spread out covering well over a square metre.

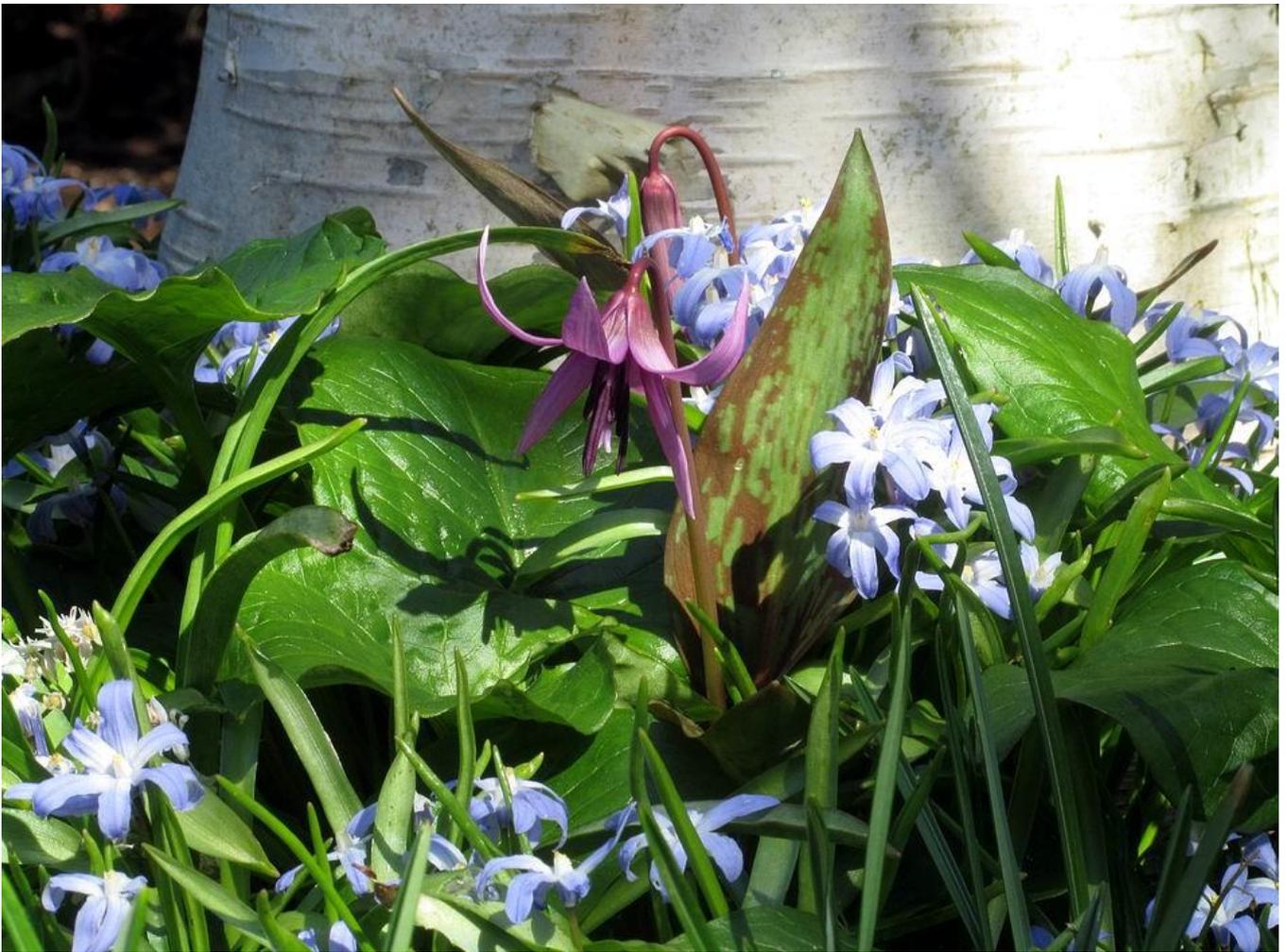


Erythronium americanum

For a long time it produced only single leaves and never flowered then around ten years ago it some bulbs started to produce two leaves along with flowers - this year there are over one hundred flowers in this group so the answer to getting this form to flower may be just to have patience. On the other hand I recently read a study suggesting that in the wild this plant may be benefiting from the mycorrhiza associated with some trees and that could make sense as this group is growing among the root reach of *Betula utilis*, the Himalayan white birch so they may well be joining in this symbiotic relationship.



Erythronium americanum



Further along the same bed **Erythronium japonicum** is one of the plants growing right at the base of the birch tree.



On the higher part of the bed **Trillium rivale** grows at the base of a dwarf Rhododendron surrounded by **Anemone x lipsiensis**, Erythronium revolutum just coming out as Erythronium dens-canis flowers are fading.

Click to view [a Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) looking around this central raised bed.



This is one of the beds that we are reworking; a process that started a year past January when we cut down the five large trees that shaded it. Now the Erythronium that were naturalising below the trees are getting more light we will continue to encourage them and the Trilliums to self-seed all the way through this bed. We will also add other plants now the bed is more open. There is an excitement when gardeners get a new garden to work with and I get that same level of excitement in reworking older areas of the garden where we can retain the best of the mature features as well as making additional plantings.

Among all the pink self-seeding *Erythronium revolutum* appeared a lone white form – this is the first we have ever grown from thousands of seeds – it is now in its fourth year of flowering and sadly showing no signs of increasing.

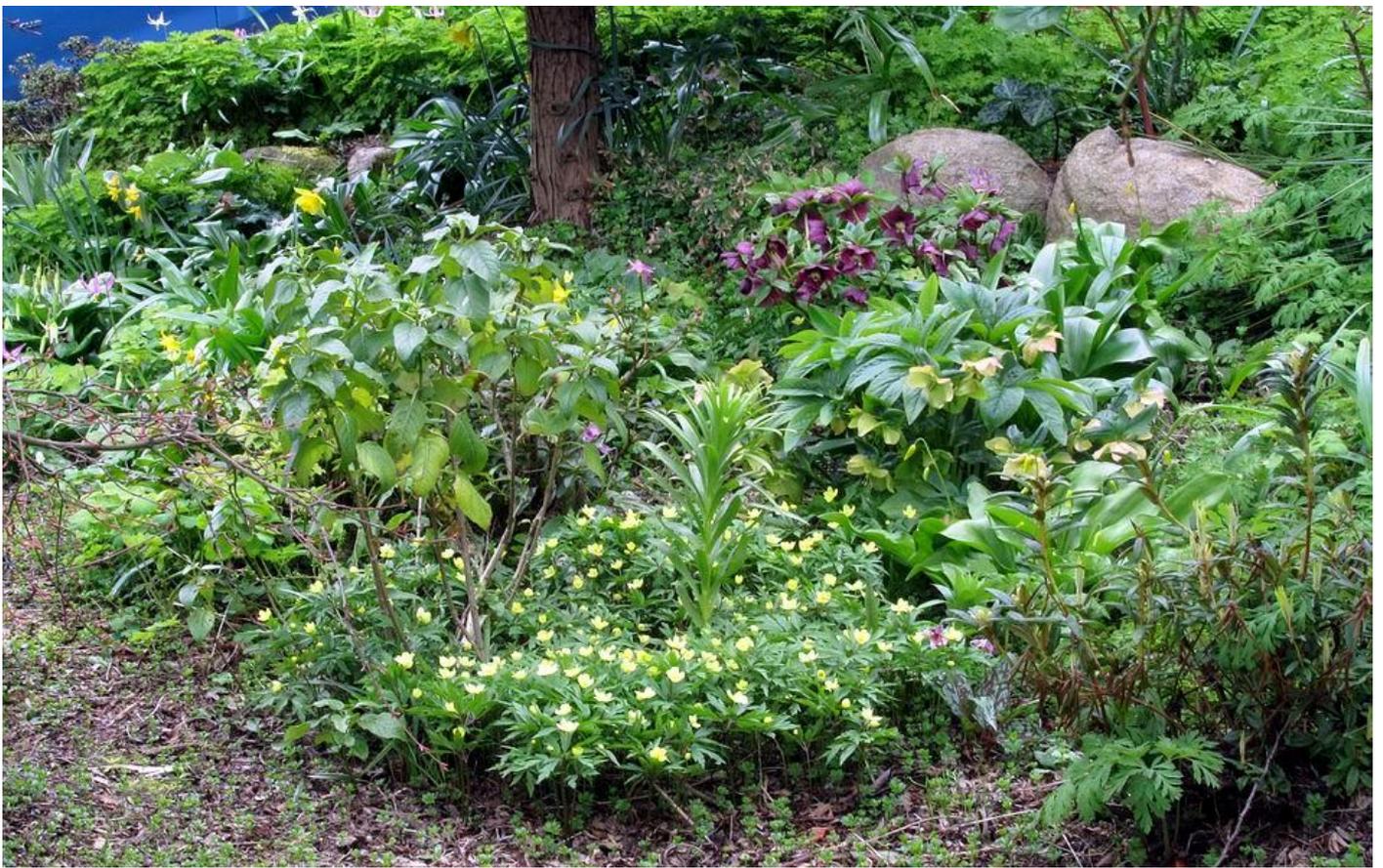




Below the Laburnum tree is where I discovered the first plant of **Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'** I have left some of this original planting in position where it increases nicely.



For many years I have also been scattering seeds of **Erythronium revolutum** in the front drive where they have now become a nicely established and self-seeding colony.



The front garden is north facing and as a result it is always noticeably colder - the plants there can be a week or two behind those in the back garden. The front garden has undergone a major re-working over the last three years as we changed it from being an over grown shrubbery into an open shrubbery with plenty additional planting spaces.



Plants do not need to be new, rare or difficult to bring me pleasure; here we have re-introduced a group of **Anemone blanda** to the front garden which shows the variation in colour and form you get from seed raised plants. I much prefer this mixed planting to a clonal one where all the flowers are identical so I am encouraging this to self-seed and help by scattering the ripe seeds around.



Fritillaria meleagris seeds around the front drive and we are also scattering the seeds in the open parts of the front garden to establish it there also.



In the back garden, here is a group of sessile Trilliums which I find very difficult to name: they could be *Trillium kurabayashii* or *Trillium chloropetalum* I find it increasing difficult to key out these two species in our garden. As these plants are mostly raised from garden seed I suspect what we have is a nice range of garden hybrids.



Erythronium 'Minnehaha' is a wonderful hybrid that forms clumps- one of the parents of this John Walker hybrid is *Erythronium oregonum* which can be seen to the right and behind the clump, also in the picture below.



Erythronium oregonum



Trillium and Erythronium grow in harmony with a carpet of **Anemone ranunculoides**.



Narcissus bulbocodium and Erythronium have self-seeded into the gravel areas of the back garden, also there is **Anemone blanda** - peaking into the bottom left corner.



Rhododendron 'Pintail'

Rhododendrons of all sizes play an important role providing structure in our garden they also bring great colour.



Rhododendron uniflorum var. imperator



I showed this trough a few weeks ago, when the snowdrops were in full flower, when I pointed out the *Sanguinaria* shoot that had pierced trough the wall of the polystyrene trough – now it is in full flower.

Sanguinaria canadensis

I will have to reduce the number of *Galanthus* bulbs this year as the double form of *Sanguinaria canadensis* flowers are struggling to get above the mass of snowdrop leaves.





Erythronium americanum 'Craigton Flower'



I selected *Erythronium americanum* 'Craigton Flower' as a free flowering form and here it has opened its flowers in the warmth of the sunshine.



***Erythronium americanum* 'Craigton Flower' and *Erythronium sibiricum* (krylovii?)**

These two plants are growing in exactly the same conditions so I can compare when the flowers reflex. The flowers of *Erythronium sibiricum* open at much lower temperatures, around 5C, than those on *Erythronium americanum* which needs nearer 10C before they open. It is not just the effect of air temperature – when the flowers are in sunshine they will warm up above the air temperature causing them to open then close quickly as they fall into shade again.



Erythronium sibiricum

I got the seed of both the plant in the foreground and the one behind it as *Erythronium sibiricum*: to me there are obvious differences between these forms, which continue down the seed line, but I will have to do more research and correspond with others before I know what the latest agreed nomenclature is.

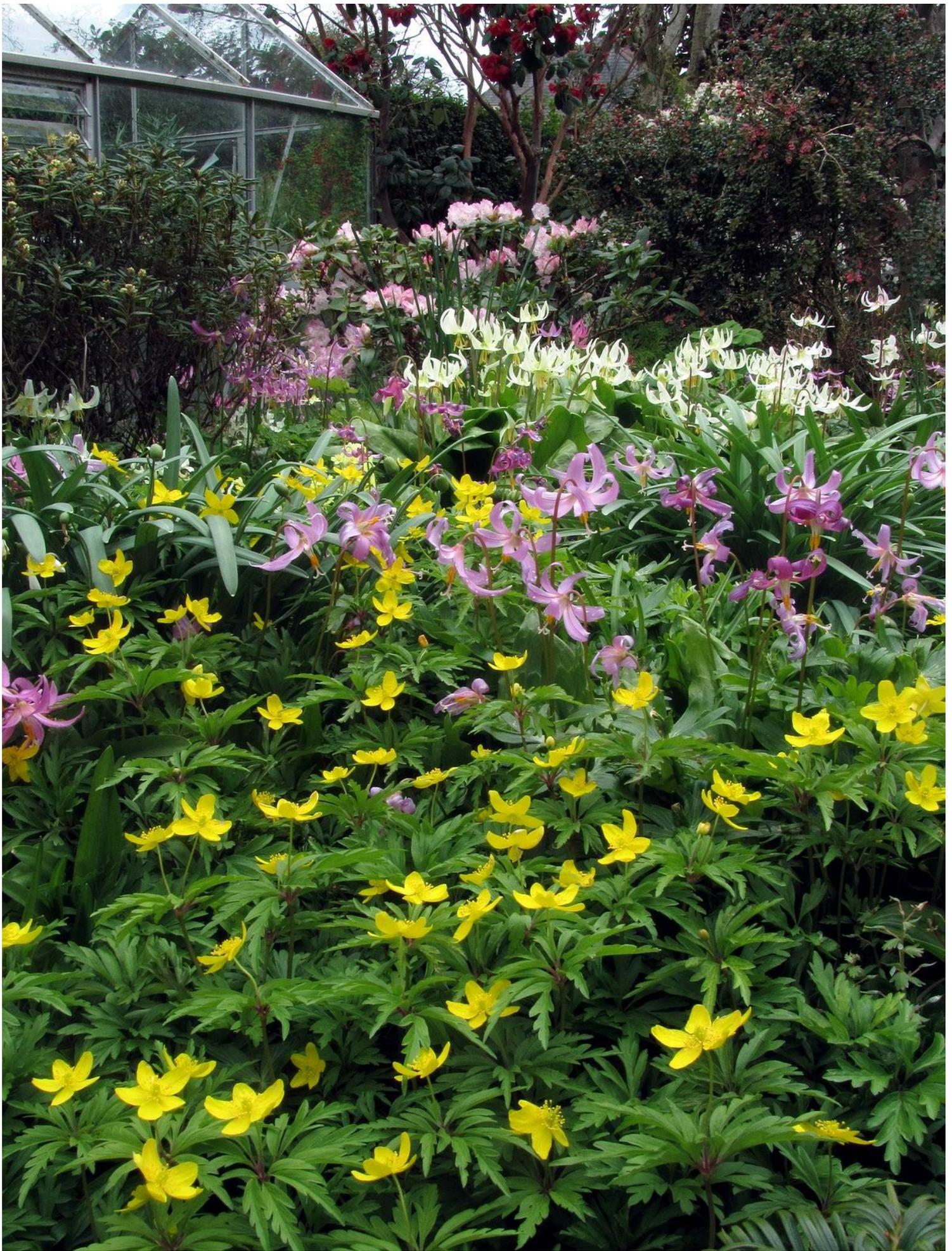


***Erythronium sibiricum* seedlings**

Not knowing the latest correct name of these plants will not deter me from growing them as they are great additions to our garden. I have been sowing most of our own seed ever since we first flowered this plant and here is a pot of last years seed, which was sown as soon as it was ripe, germinating. Below you will see a mesh plunge basket of two and tree year old seedlings – mixed ages because even when sown fresh there will be some seeds that do not germinate until the second spring. This is the form with plain green leaves that I thought had been called *Erythronium krylovii* until I discovered the published paper describes it as white flowered.



***Erythronium sibiricum* seedlings, year three.**



Despite the continuing wintery conditions the plants carry on flowering bringing colour to the garden which we rush out and enjoy whenever the sun breaks through, join me during one of those walks in a second [Bulb Log Video Diary](#)