



BULB LOG 05.....3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021



*Rhododendron uvariifolium*

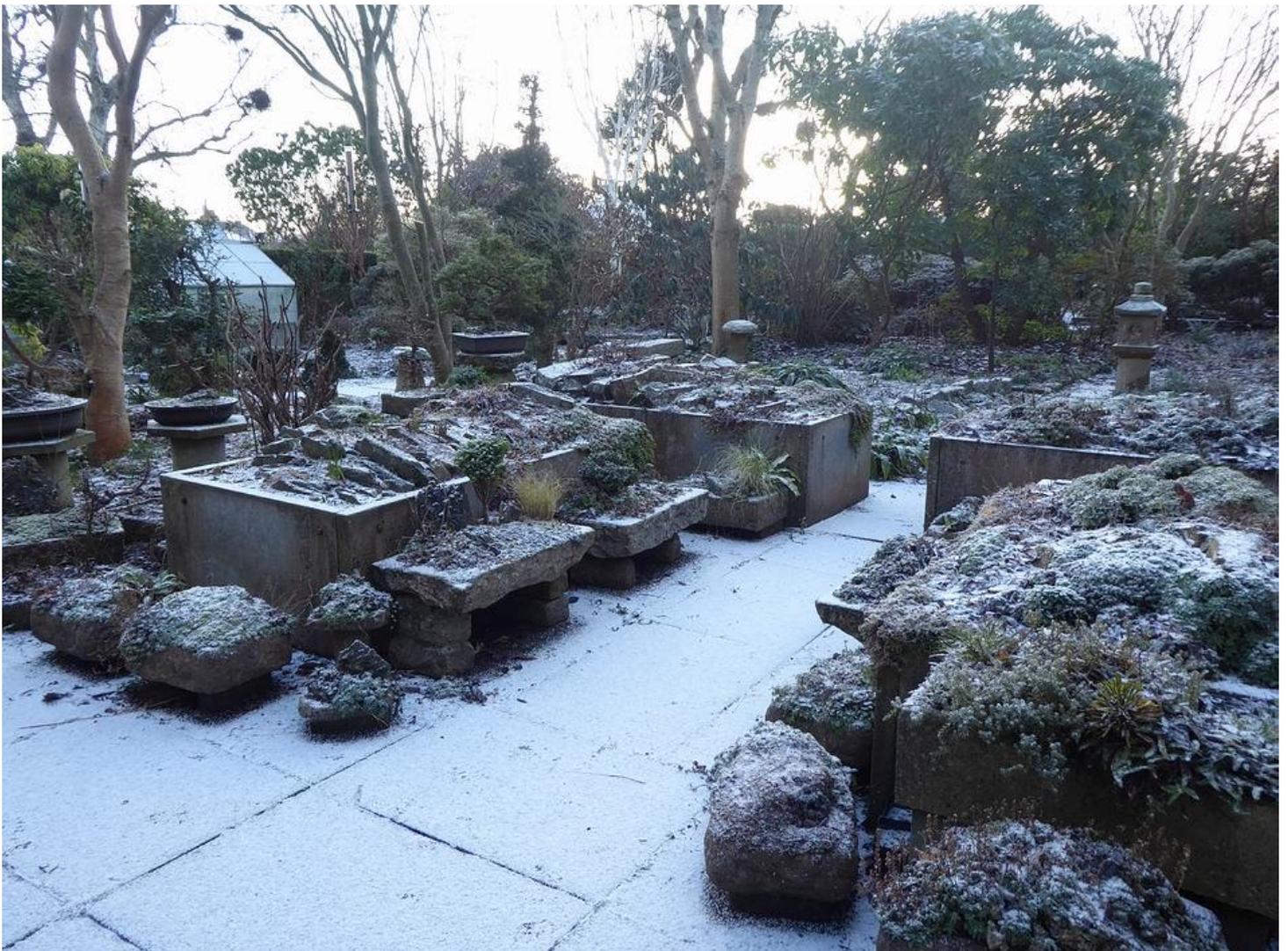


In our anticipation of a floriferous spring our attention is often drawn to the shoots of the early bulbs, many of which have already pushed through towards the light, but these flower buds of **Rhododendron uvariifolium** have also been slowly expanding through the winter in preparation of revealing their precious colourful contents sometime in April.



Nearby the dark green upper surface of these *Rhododendron elegantulum* leaves glisten in the sunshine which also highlights the decorative tan indumentum that covers their backs – the slowly swelling flower buds are also in the spotlight.

Once again I have not been able to get much work done in the garden this week because it has been frozen or wet. However we get good views looking through the windows so we can keep an eye on what is happening from the comfort of the house. I did consider using only pictures taken from the house this week however I was tempted outside - but only after donning my thermal outer layers. The bulb houses are still full of flower despite being frozen but as I possibly overdosed some of you on Narcissus last week I decided to give them a miss and look around the garden where no matter what time of year or the weather I can always find subjects of interest.



Even on a dull day a frozen rock garden has plenty to attract my eye such as the troughs and slab beds dusted with snow makes them seem even more like mini landscapes.



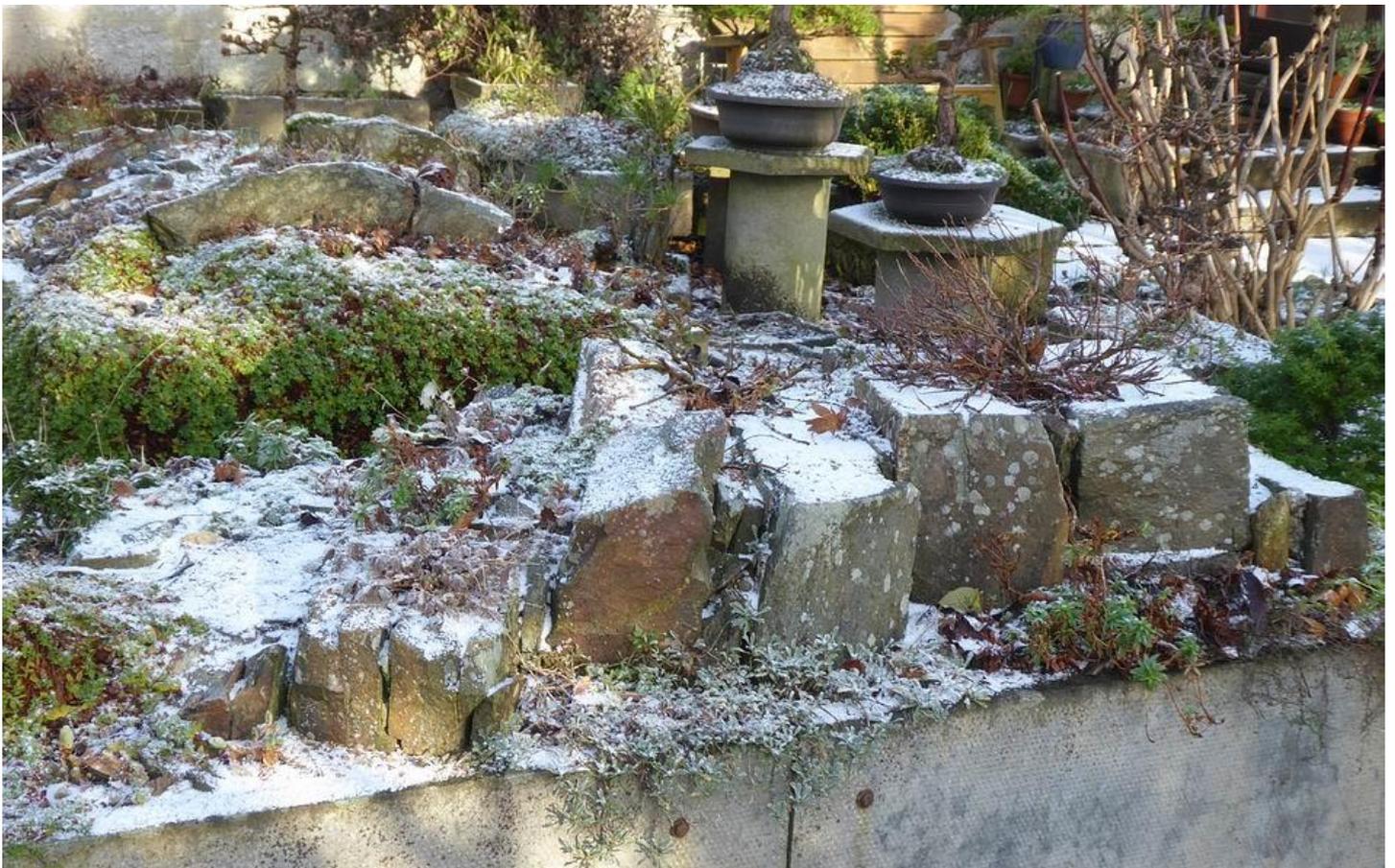
The added contrast of the white snow emphasises the contours and faces of the rockwork which have an attraction by themselves even when there are no plants in growth.



The early signs of growth of small bulbs are appearing among these rocks laid to form crevices and mini cliff faces.



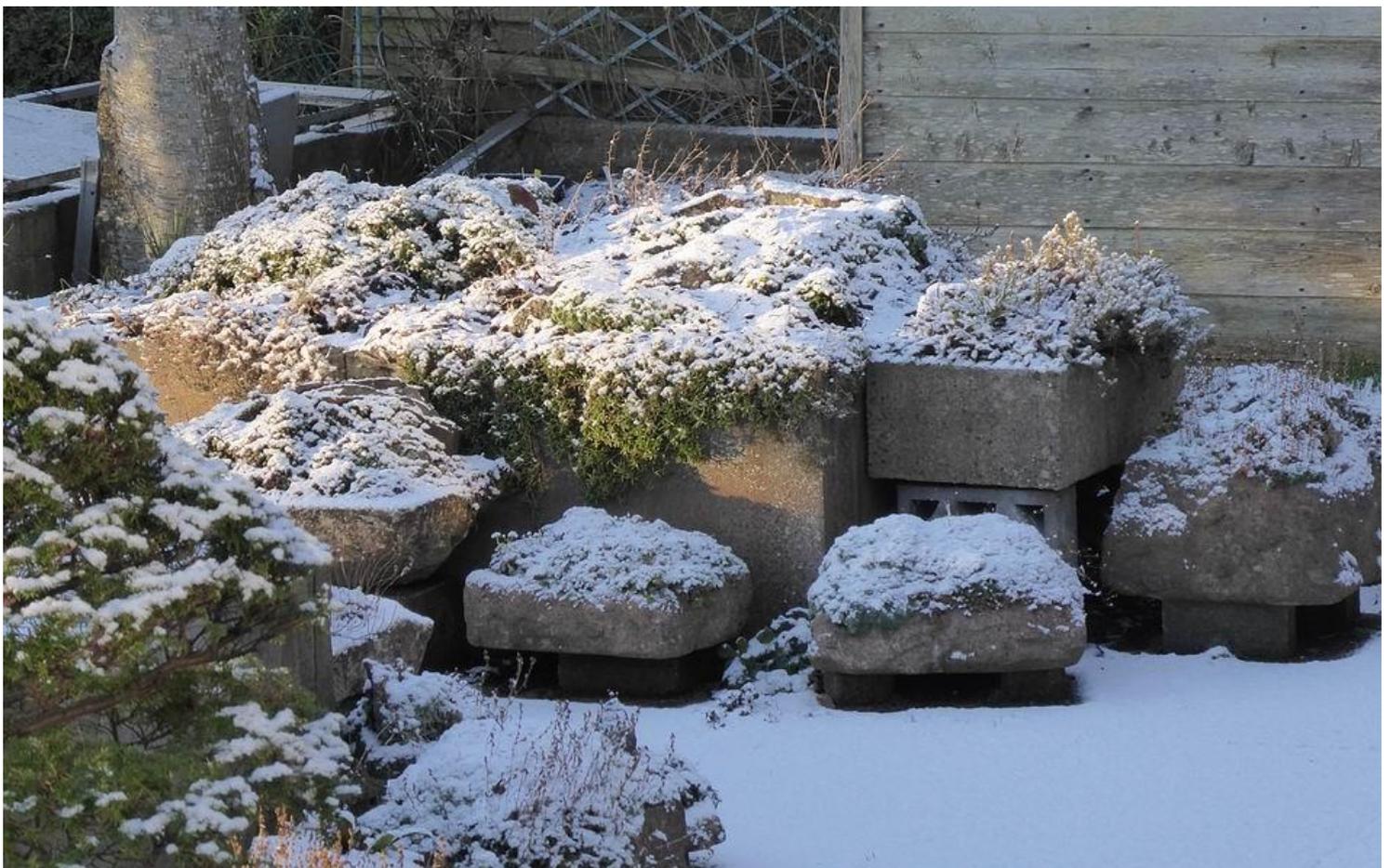
A small collection of dwarf willows are growing among the large rocks that form some of the crevices on this bed.



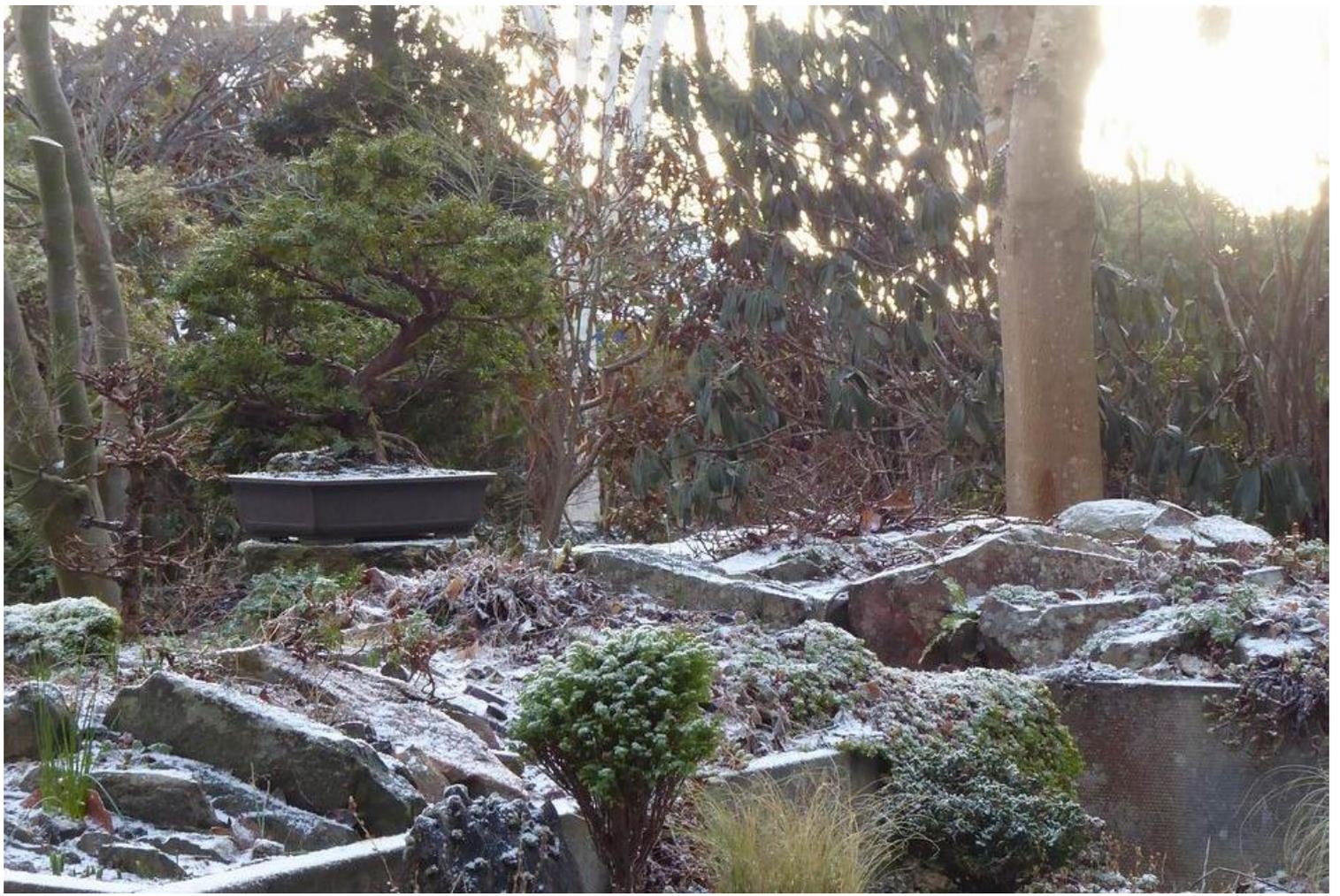
Reverse view showing the crevices provide vertical as well as horizontal planting spaces. When landscaping with rocks be brave and use some large rocks to anchor the landscape.



Saxifrages covered in snow and ice viewed in the cold light.



A low shaft of sunlight illuminates part of the bed making the contours more visible.



From some positions our beds and troughs combine to appear as a single landscape.



Even in a single bed the crevice style landscaping offers changing views as I walk around.



Slab bed.



A cluster of pink flower buds expanding on *Helleborus x smithii* seem anxious to get the flowering season going.



*Celmisia mackaui* looks very cold in the freezing conditions with its leaves flopping over but by the time I walked around to the other side of the bed a shaft of sunshine pierced the cold – see below.





Galanthus and Narcissus (below) flowers are already in bud and will soon be in flower.





Ferns and grasses combined with the dried remains of some *Erythronium* and *Fritillaria* seed heads catch my eye



This scene will be familiar to regular readers because it is often featured to illustrate the changing colours of the seasons – not long ago it rose through a carpet of the bright red fallen leaves now it is dusted with snow.



This is the view that I see from my work area and it is constantly changing not just by the season but also by the second, especially in the winter when the low sun highlights fall on different areas offering fleeting moments.



At one point some light is reflected into the dark area at the base of a large birch tree where the snow highlights on the sculpture and ferns help them stand out from the shade.



Sculpture and ferns.



View towards the raised wall.



Dwarf pines growing at either end of the raised wall.





This is what the dwarf Rhododendron bed looks like after 35 years of growth - for a number of years after they were first planted we would regularly lift and pot them in full flower to spend a day on a show bench before being returned to the bed.



Looking down on the cloud pruned tree in the front garden the light dusting of snow highlights the tiers.



I will leave you this week with another image of the snow topped Rhododendron buds ready for the spring.....