



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 03.....20th January 2021

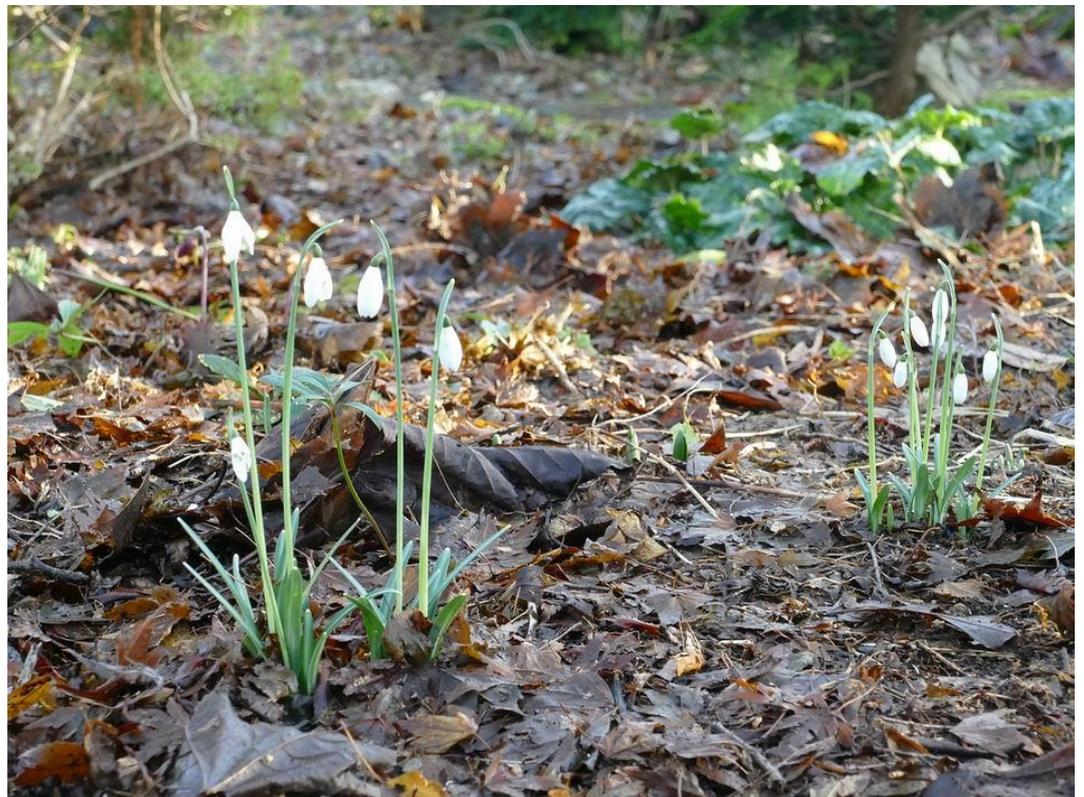


Snowdrops and winter sun



There are positive signs in the winter garden with the flowering of the first snowdrops these, along with the many shoots that are starting to emerge, herald the arrival of a new year of growth, excitement, experimentation, learning to look forward to. The garden is constantly evolving so when the annual cycle begins again the garden is not starting from exactly the same place but is one year on, plants and the gardeners are older.

We have always applied organic mulches to many of the beds in the form of garden compost, shredded and composted prunings and clippings and leafmould. The composting area is in the



south east corner of the garden and in previous years we carried all the garden waste to the different compost heaps then some months later carried it all back to spread on the beds. Now I am much more inclined to make smaller piles of freshly shredded material under shrubs around the garden from August onwards. As the material in the heaps breaks down the birds do a great job of spreading the compost scattering it as they seeking the many tasty morsels that have populated the decomposing material. We are also much more relaxed about leaving the leaves from our trees on some of the beds to form a woody soil with a natural appearance with the snowdrops.



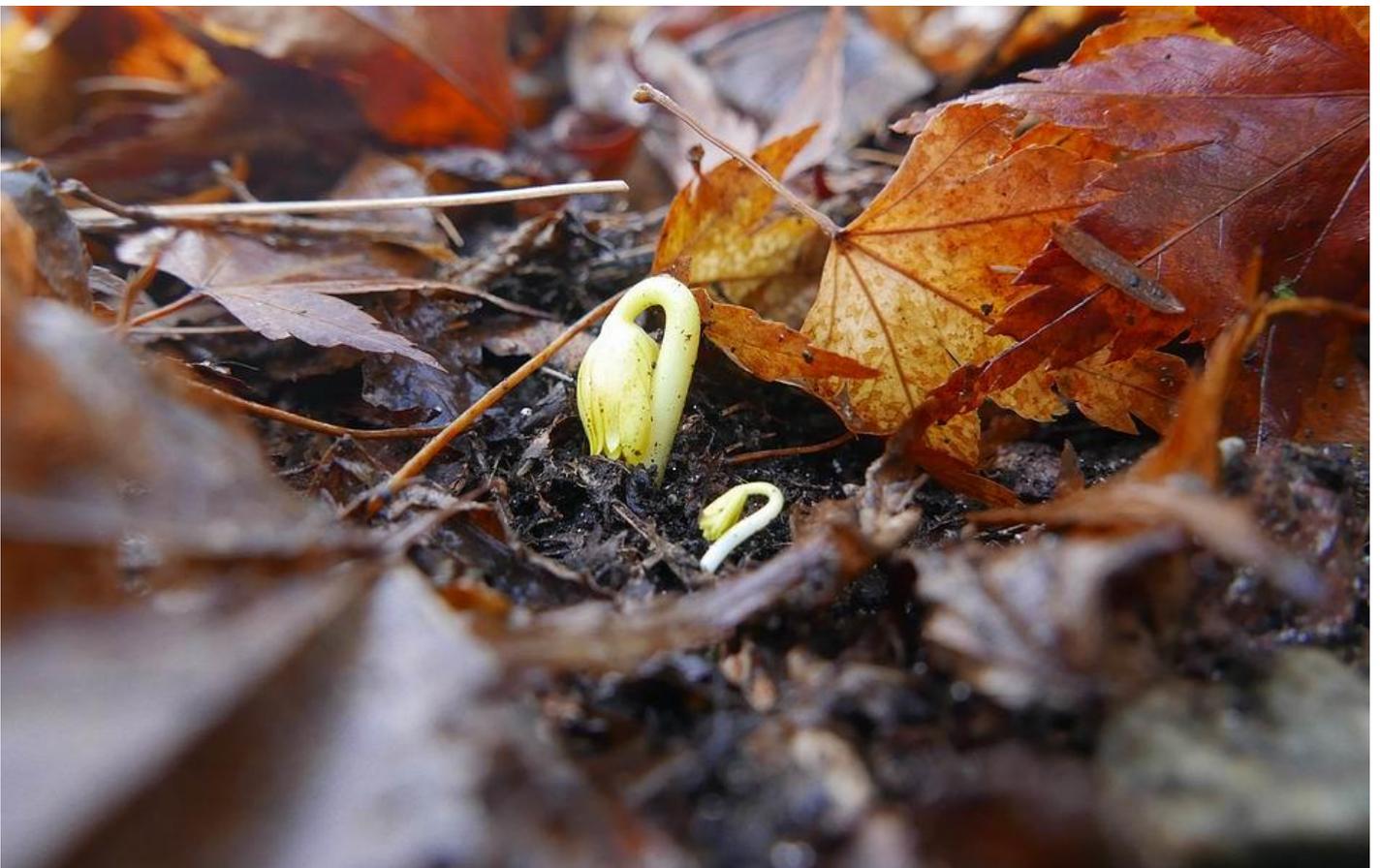
With so many shoots starting to appear I need to get in to remove the old Helleborus leaves while I still can.



Now the old leaves are removed this year's flowers can rise up along with the many other bulbs that are just pushing through.



Helleborus flower shoots pushing through the natural leaf mulch.



Eranthis hyemalis shoots are also pushing through the cover of fallen leaves these early growths are often exposed by the Blackbirds as they search through the mulch around while foraging for food.



Mosses grow readily in our climate and I find myself torn between letting it grow over the rocks or removing it.



Here in the cobble bed it is obvious that the moss is more inclined to grow on certain types of rock with some completely covered while adjacent ones are free from the growth.



My decision is that I do not want moss to grow in the cobble bed so I regularly remove the green cover.

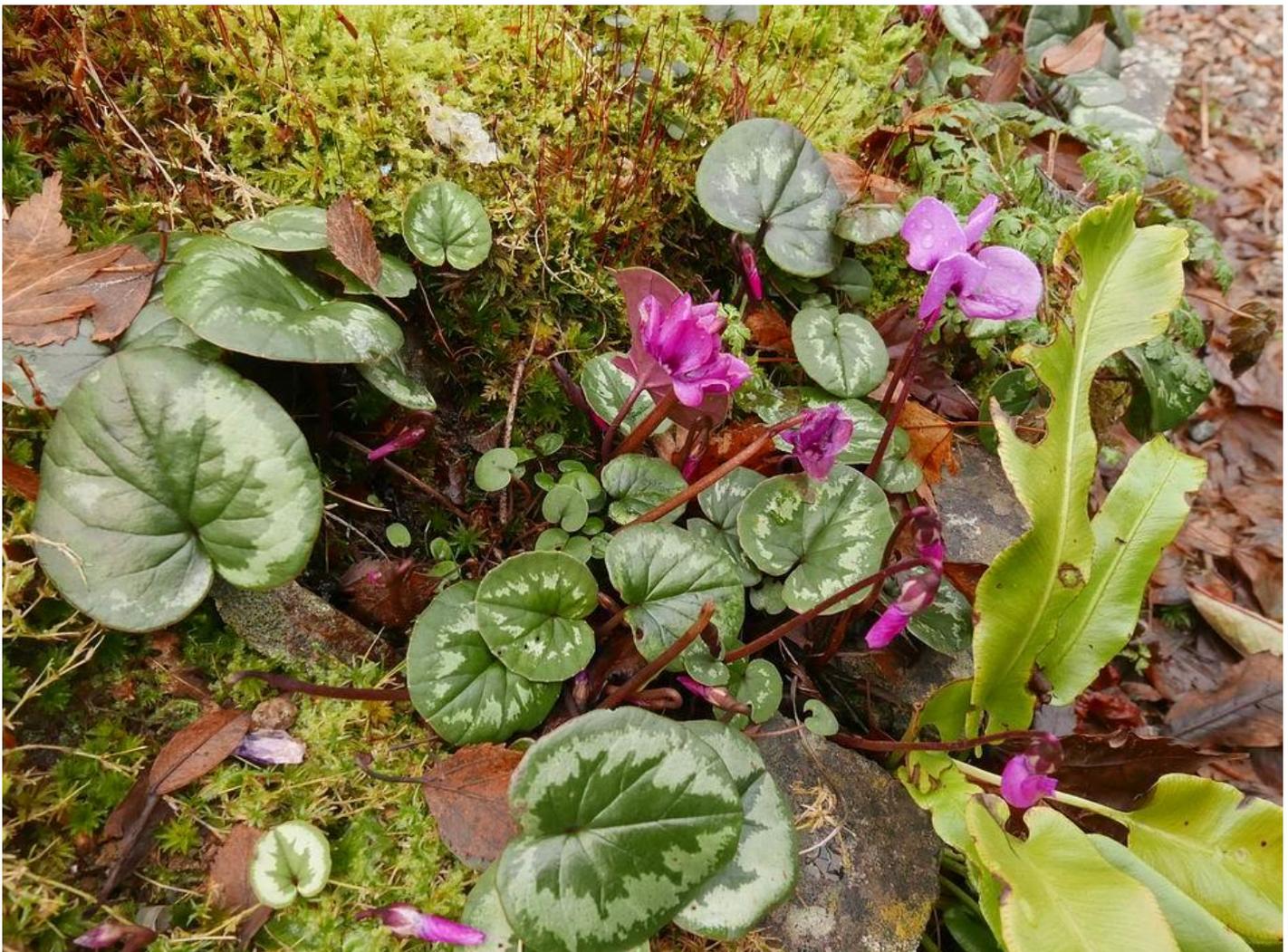


In other beds such as this sand bed I made the opposite decision leaving the mosses to grow forming an interesting habitat for bulbs.

Cyclamen coum

I have written previously about our struggle to establish *Cyclamen coum* in our garden eventually finding that it grew well in this sand bed doing especially well when the moss covered the sand.

I started this population off by sowing some seed and since then it has self-sown.



I recently saw some stunning images by Sajad Alipour and posted on [Bulbs in Habitat Facebook](#) of *Cyclamen elegans*, a close relative of *Cyclamen coum*, growing on moss covered branches in Northern Iran, here was confirmation that these plants enjoy growing in a moist moss covered environment.



Cyclamen coum growing in the moss covered bed with a cluster of seedlings germinating where they fell on top of the parent.



Moving to another of our habitats for bulbs I found some *Trillium rivale* seedlings. Exposed by the birds chucking the mulch about, were similarly germinating in a cluster where the seed fell.



Trillium rivale seedlings germinating with an *Erythronium* seedling in the bottom left of the picture.



***Eranthis pinnatifida* seed germinating.**

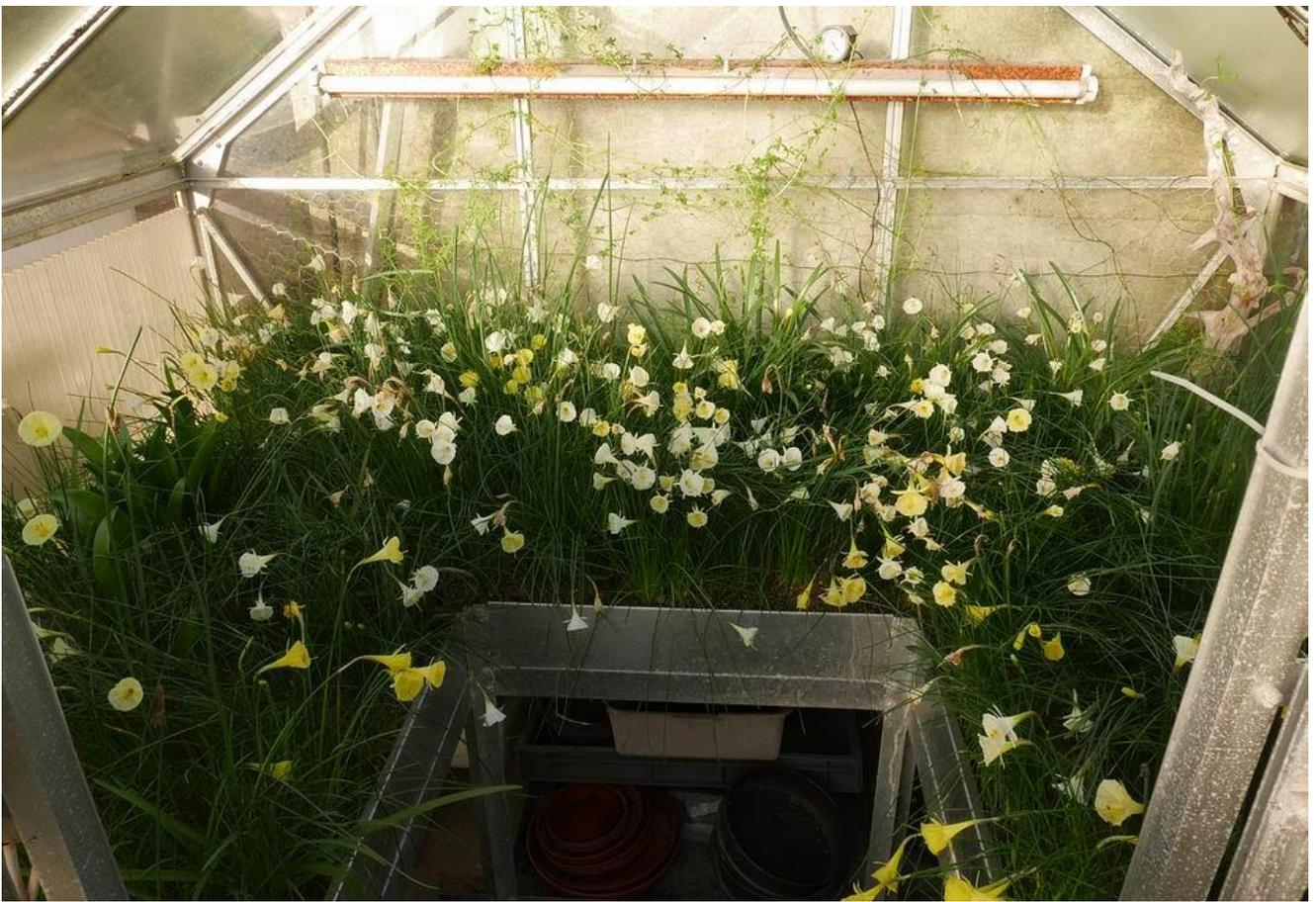
I never cease to be fascinated by the seeds that germinate in the deep winter. I sowed these *Eranthis pinnatifida* seeds as soon as the capsule opened last May and found them germinating last week when the pot, which is in an open frame, was frozen solid. As you will see below the parent plants are also in an advanced stage of growth and I have found no exception in the bulbs that we grow to the seeds germinating at the same time as the parent plants start to grow provided the seeds were sown by August/September.



Eranthis pinnatifida



Eranthis pinnatifida



The bulb houses still offer us up plenty of interest and some shelter when it is raining.



Searching through the mass flowering of Narcissus in this sand bed I spot many variations as well as plenty more buds to come.



One essential task in the very damp weather is to remove the old flowers as they go over to prevent moulds forming. During the wet days the brown remains of the old flowers are so heavy with water that they slip between my fingers as I try to pluck them off.



It is always better to prevent a problem or infection from occurring which I do by removing the old flowers.



The yellow of **Narcissus bulbocodium** starts to spread though the sand beds.



Narcissus romieuxii types flowering.



Narcissus romieuxii forms and hybrids.





Moving back outside there are still areas where the evidence of last year's flowers still remain - I like to leave these dried out, empty Erythronium stems and seed capsules for both decoration and as a benefit to the garden fauna.



Insects sometimes take up residence in the capsules and I often see the smaller birds foraging among the stems.

Winter is the time when you can see the structure of trees and carry out any pruning and this includes the smaller ones growing in pots.

I have intended to cut back some of the longest branches of this Acer for some years but could never bring myself to remove all the beautiful leaves however now there are no leaves to sway me I have grabbed the pruners and snipped.



This is one of a number of Acers I raised from seed many years ago and was originally planted in the garden – I regularly show the siblings which are fully mature and around 6-7 metres tall. Within a few years of planting this one I realised we had too many to grow them all to maturity so I cut down the trunk, lifted and trimmed the root ball to fit in this pot where it has grown for something like twenty five years now.



I will finish off this week with another Acer whose bark spotted with some lichens makes a very decorative display even in the winter.....