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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 10.....9th March 2022



Crocus and Galanthus



This bulb log celebrates the arrival of spring in the garden.

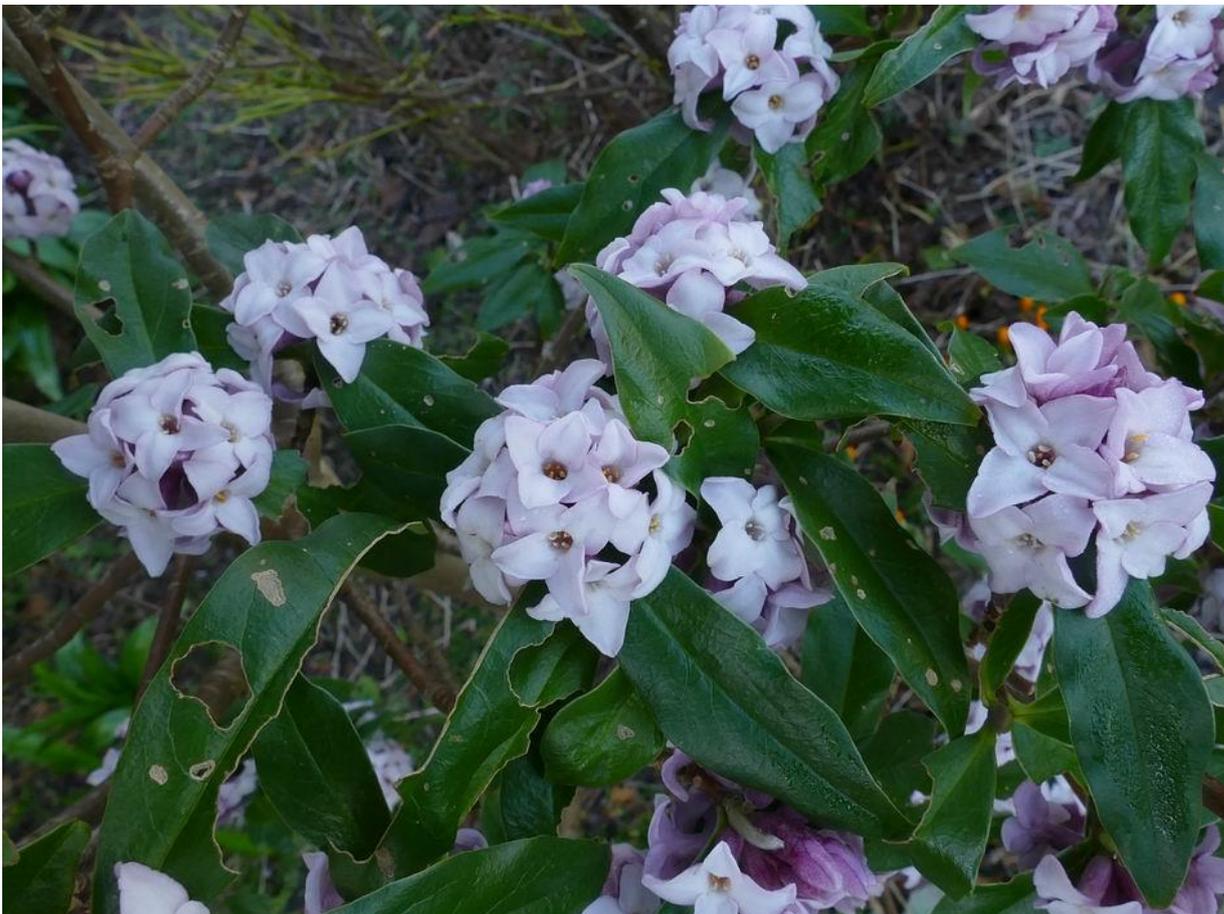
I will start in the north facing front garden which, because it is mostly in shade at this time of year, is still in winter - some days the frost never lifts so many plants can be weeks behind those in the sunny back garden.



As you approach the front door you pass the cloud pruned tree below which the first snow drops are just coming out some weeks after they did in the back garden. No matter what the size of our gardens they are not likely to be a single habitat but a combination of many micro habitats each of which, according to its aspect, will experience slightly different temperatures and moisture within in the parameters of your area. These habitats are then further manipulated by the gardeners using such devices as landscaping and plantings such as building raised beds, planting trees to cast shade etc.

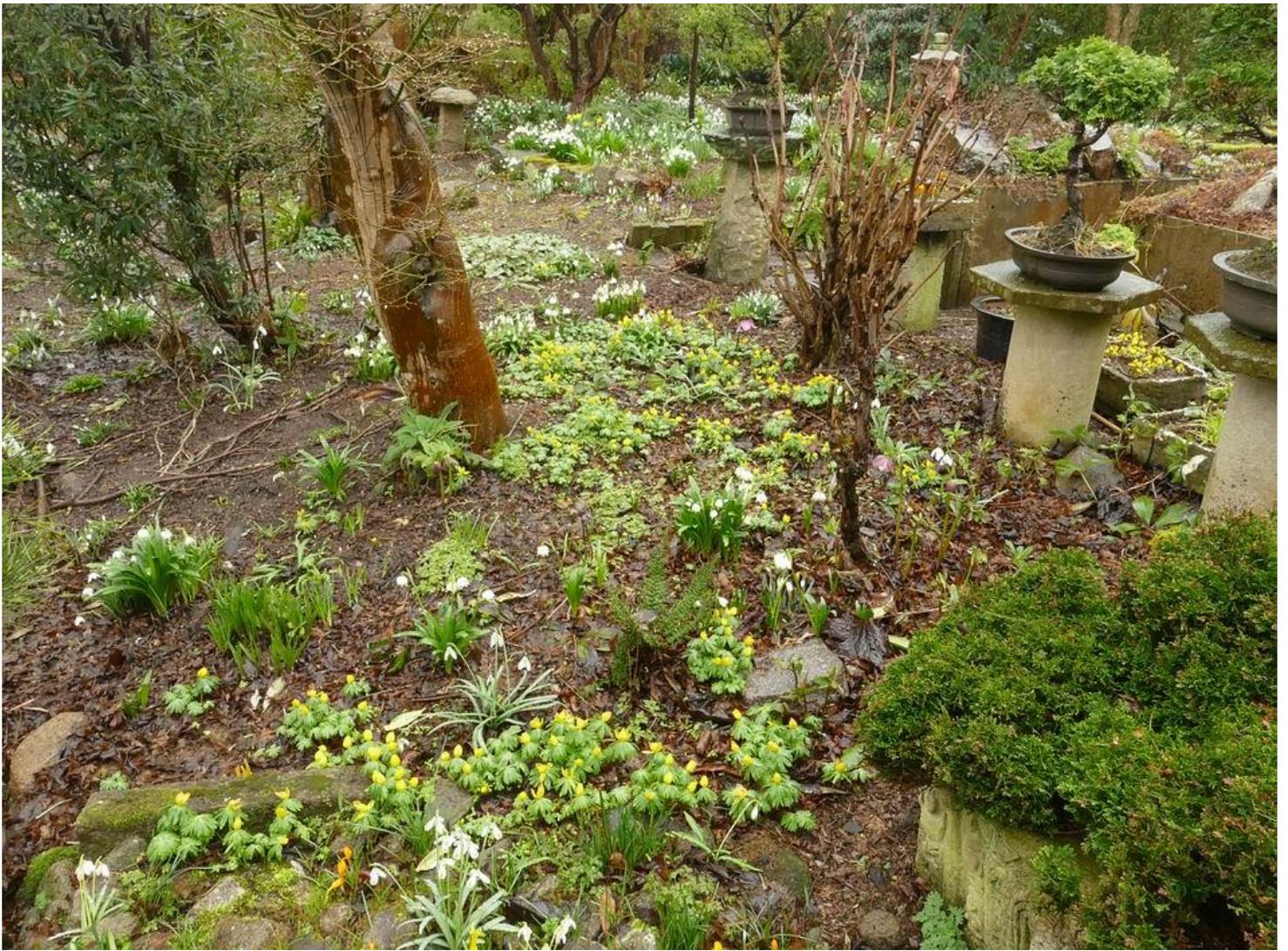


Before you get as far as the snowdrops you pass the pink blossoms of **Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill'** – this is a relatively young plant, we have had it for around five years, and this is its best year yet for flowers. I did not want it to get too big so from its very first years I have been pruning it to encourage a short bushy form and now we are seeing the benefits of this early shaping. To keep it compact and flowering freely I will continue to prune it annually by removing most of the new growth back to about a single node to encourage the growth and flowering spurs to stay tight as possible to the trunk.



**Daphne bholua
'Jacqueline
Postill'**

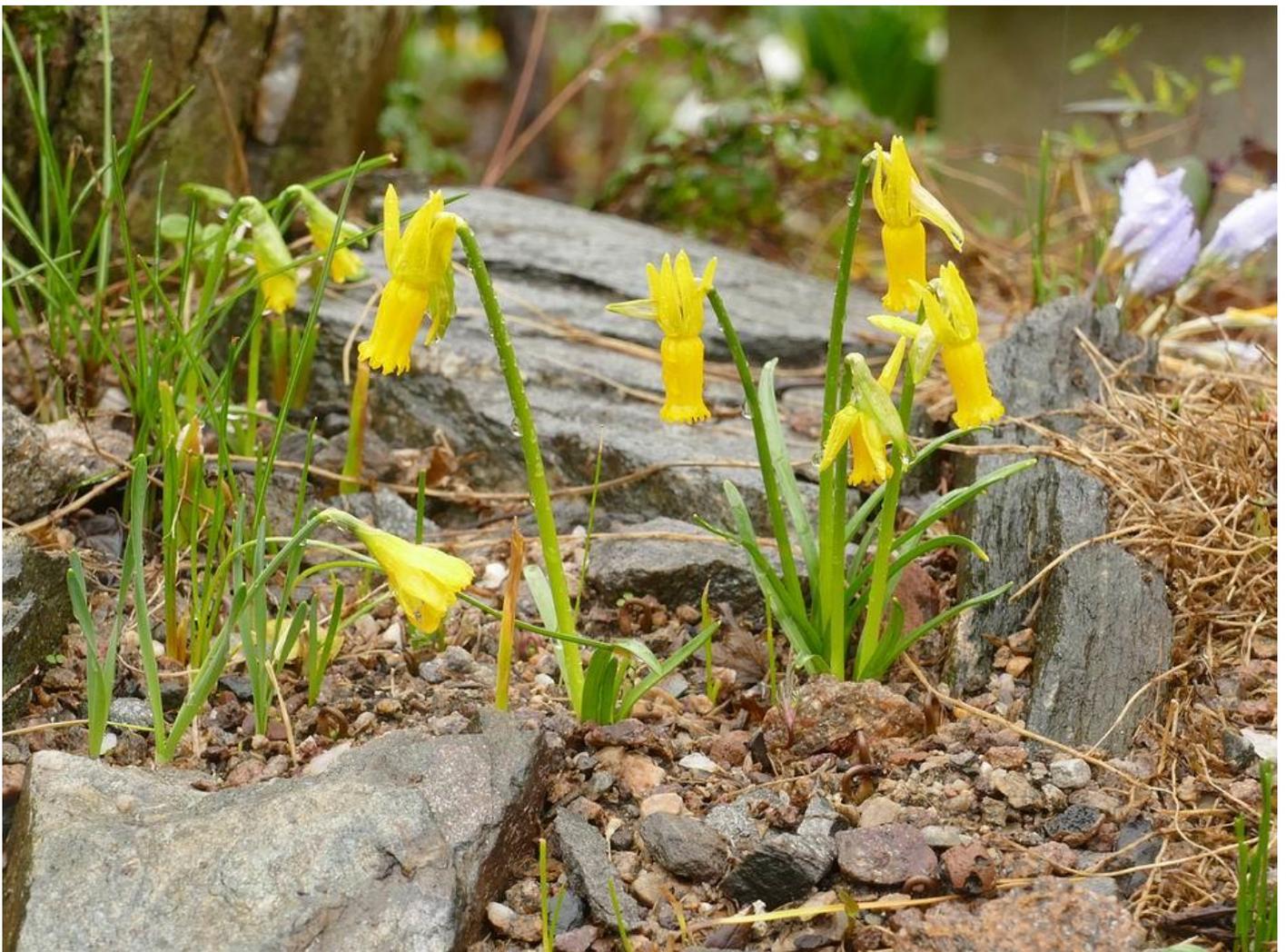
It is worth noting that one of this plants features and perhaps the primary reason we planted it here was for the wonderful scent, the first hints of which you detect some distance away from our garden, the sweet smell intensifies as you walk up the path.



Moving from the front through to the back garden, especially when it is sunny, is like moving through time walking from winter into spring where the brightness and temperature are noticeably different at this time of year.

Since the start of the meteorological spring last week we have enjoyed a number of beautiful sunny days. Frosts form during the cold clear nights causing many of the early growths to collapse onto the ground but as the morning sun warms the air and ground these growths soon stood erect again. It was also warm enough for many of the flowers to open wide when they have their moment in the sunshine.





As I head off round the garden in an anticlockwise direction I find **Narcissus bulbocodium** and **Narcissus cyclamineus** flowering in one of the raised slab beds along with **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** shown below.



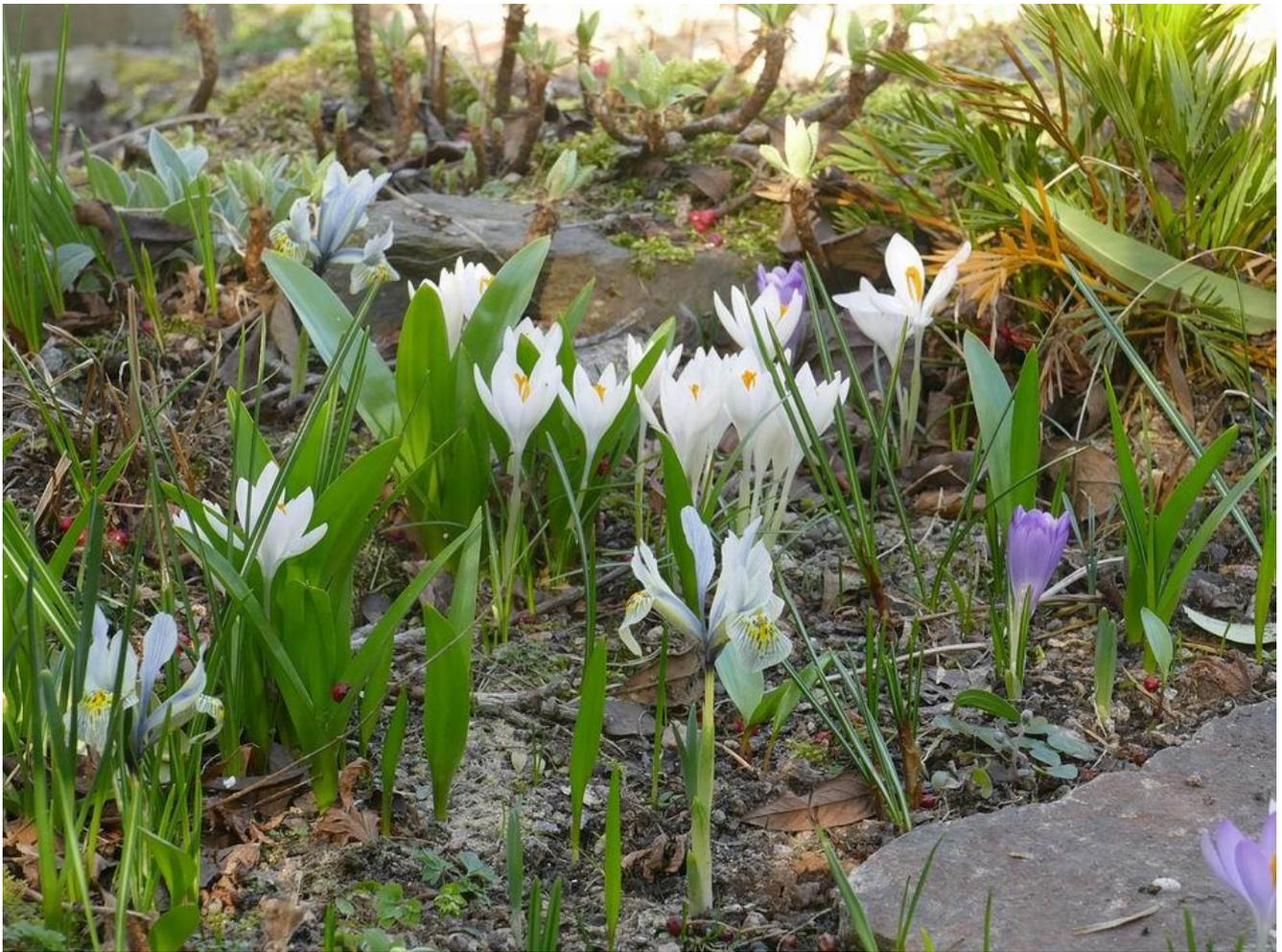
Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' and **Narcissus cyclamineus**



Moving onwards a host of crocus flowers including a white form of **Crocus tommasinianus** are among the many in the rock garden bed. Here you will also see between twenty and thirty individual flowers of **Iris 'Katharine Hodgkin'** that resulted from the two small clumps I split up last week.



Crocus tommasinianus



Rock garden bed





Rock garden bed



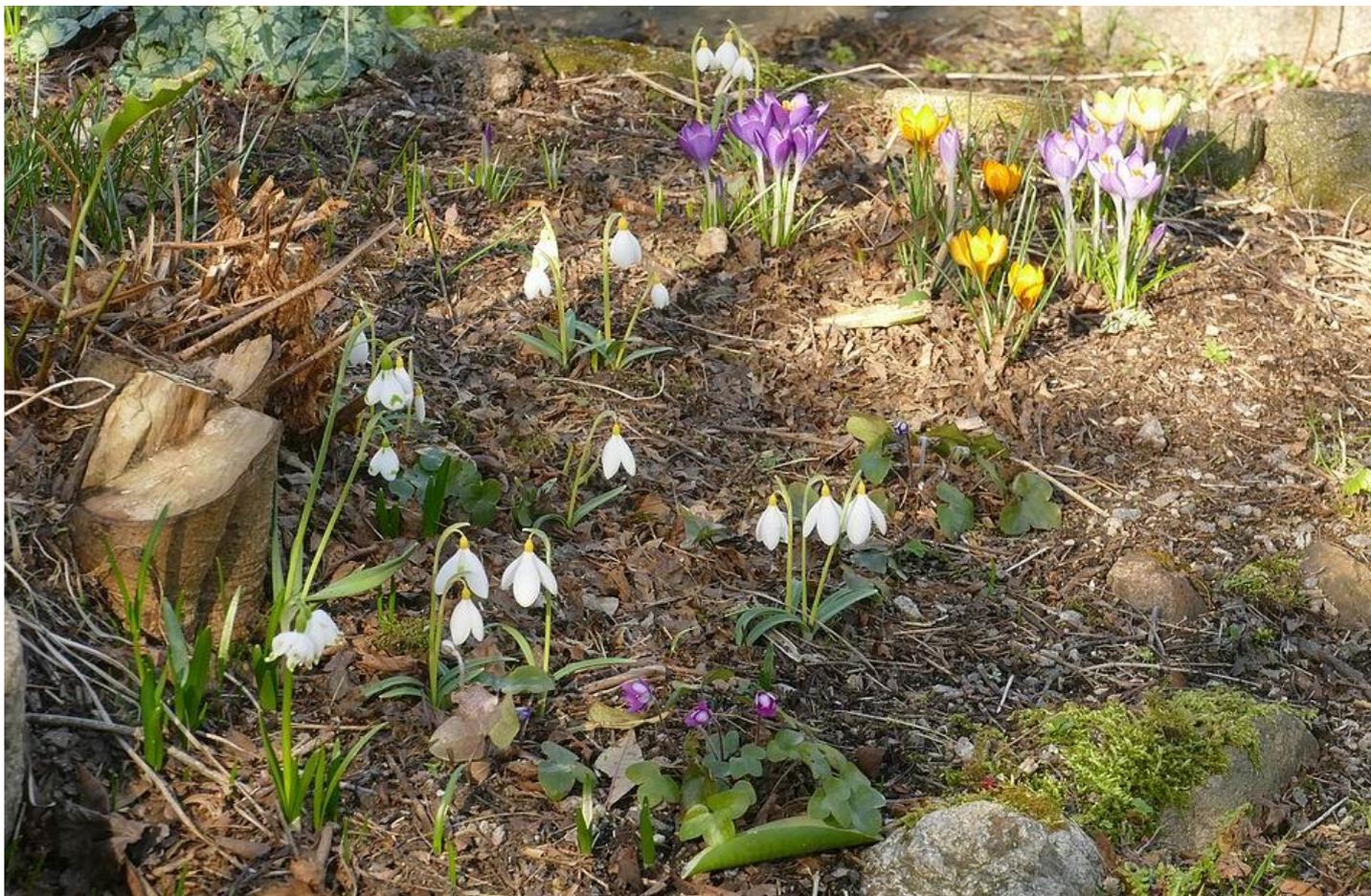
Crocus and Galanthus



As you become an older and hopefully more experienced gardener you start to appreciate more the plants that grow well in your garden – the ones which, after you plant them, look after themselves increasing and seeding around such as these common but beautiful crocus cultivars.



They can be mixed in with rarer more unusual plants like these Galanthus from the Dryad Gold series.



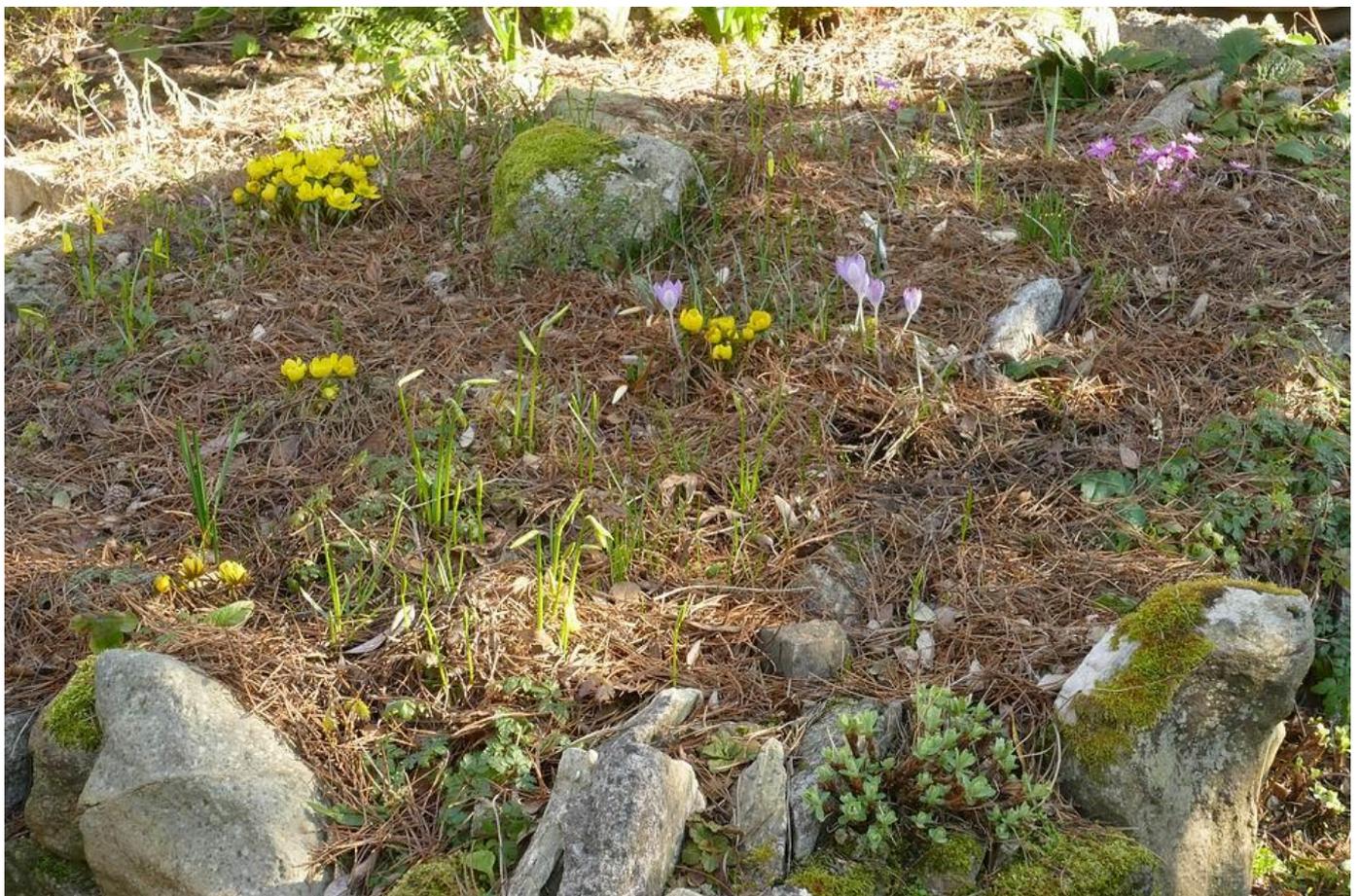
I have been adding early flowering plants to this area over the last few years since we lost a big shrub and so far it includes Crocus, Galanthus and Hepatica.



The warm yellow flowers of this **Crocus chrysanthus cultivar** open wide, mimicking and facing the sun.



The cooler yellow flowers of **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** do the same as they emerge through a mulch of pine needles.



Now the sun is high enough again to reach and spread its warmth to the new bed beside the pond so it is also waking from its winter state a bit behind the same plants in the sunnier part of the garden.



Hepatica nobilis



Crocus and Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' flowering with buds on Narcissus cyclamineus and Erythronium caucasicum.



It is not just the position in the garden that affects the flowering time of plants. Raising so many from seed means these plants are not clonal, and as a result these **Erythronium caucasicum** will have slightly different flowering times: these are the earliest other forms in similar situations flower up to four weeks later.



Erythronium caucasicum

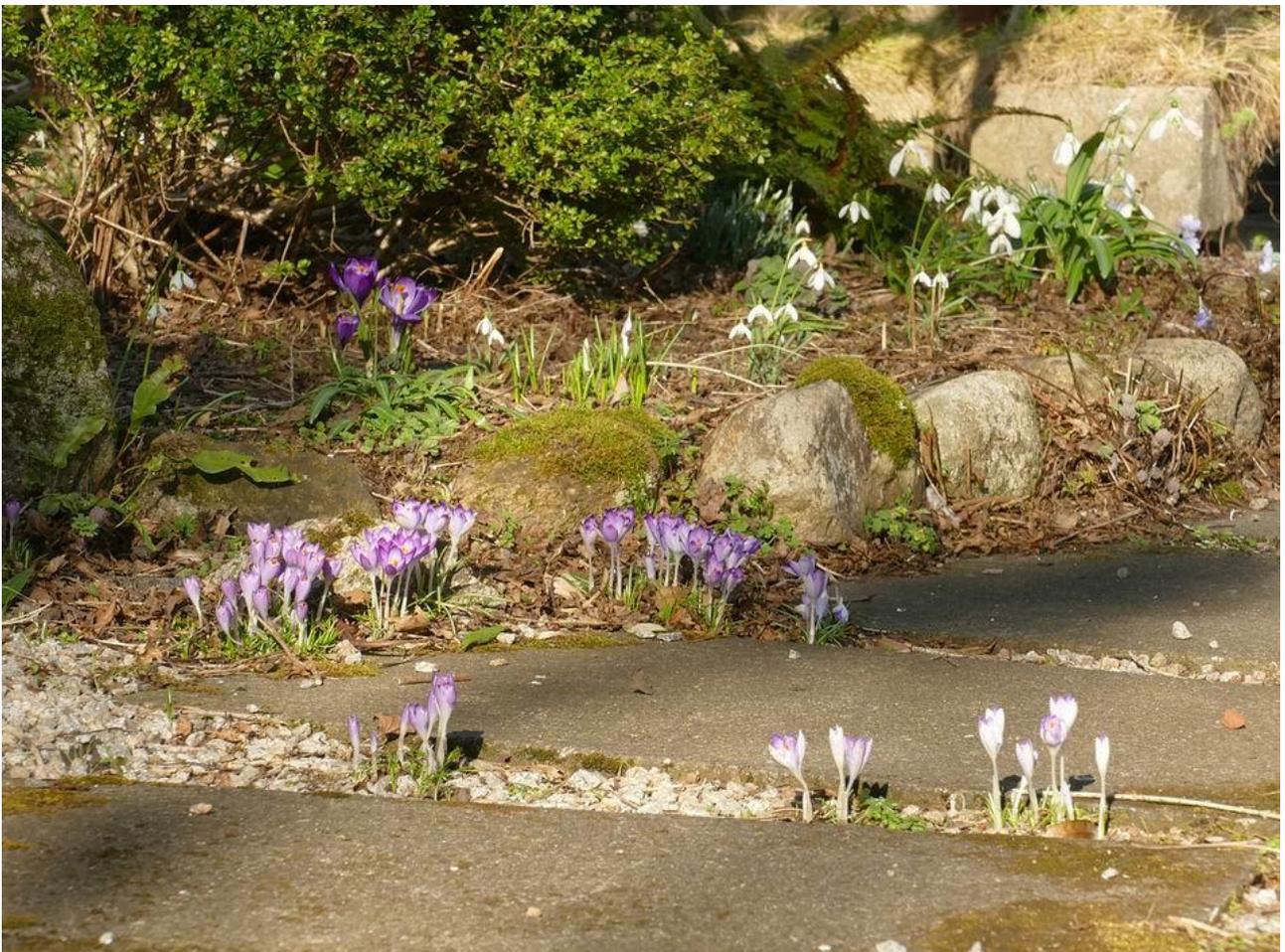


I know some people who deride **Crocus tommasinianus** just because it grows and increases so well but that is why I think it is a great garden plant where it can seed around displaying all its variations of colour.





Crocus tommasinianus



All around the garden the gravel between and around the paving slabs has become populated by many plants such as these **Crocus tommasinianus**.

Over many years this **Hepatica transsilvanica** has migrated from the centre of a bed moving over two metres until it now only grows hanging over the rocks that form the edge – I will need to propagate it by cuttings so I can have some to replant back into the original position.



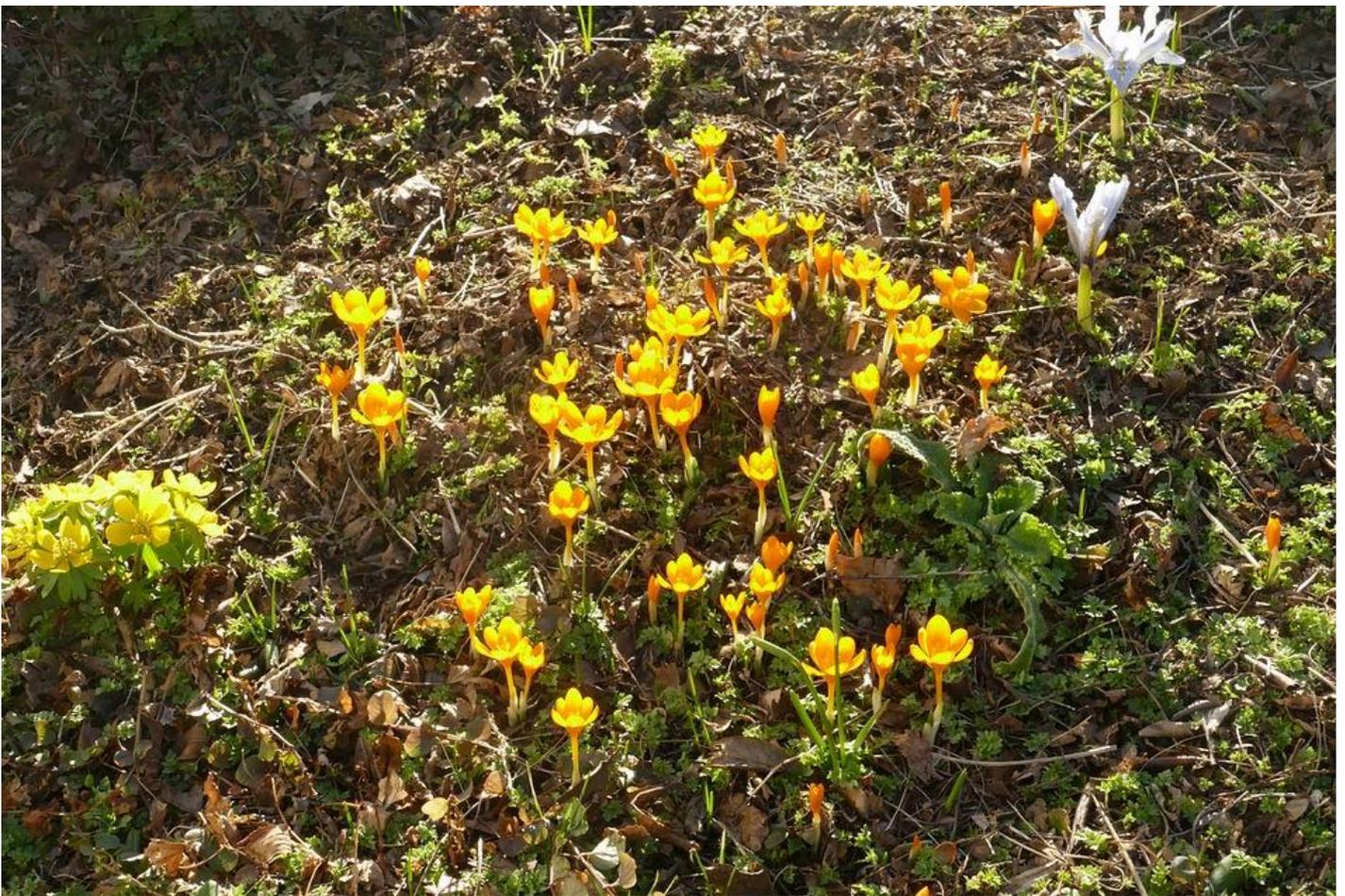
This white seedling of **Hepatica nobilis** is always the first of a number of seedlings I planted out in a small rocky habitat formed from broken concrete where they self- seed along with *Corydalis solida*.



Crocus thirkeanus gets everywhere in our garden here it is growing in a trough of dwarf willows some of its tiny corms must have been hiding in the compost I recycled to fill the trough.



I especially like **Crocus thirkeanus** for its colour, the way it spreads by stolons, forming patches rather than clumps but most of all because it likes to grow in our garden.



Crocus thirkeanus



Cyclamen coum growing in a moss covered sand bed habitat with a humus rich bed beyond and it is interesting to observe through the years how plants are spreading themselves both ways across these habitats.



While the open garden is waking up with more colour appearing every day the bulb houses are still full of flowers mostly from the Narcissus.



I will round off this week with an image that reflects the change we will see over the coming weeks as the winter flowering white flowers of Galanthus slowly hand over to the brighter colours of spring.....