



SRGC



# Bulb Log Diary



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### **Primula elatior**

When I changed from writing the Bub Log every week to once a month at the start of the year it was not my intention to expand its size however our garden over the past four weeks is possibly at its most floriferous and interesting period of the year so this edition is a bit larger than is my norm. Starting with *Primula elatior* which whose stems rise up displaying its flowers above the carpet of other low growing plants.



I have a deep fascination for plants, often delving deep into their botany and history but in the garden they become a part of the overall picture. I do not treat them as lone, stand out specimens but rather merging them together where they form part of a seasonally changing harmony of colours, shapes and textures that spreads out across the garden.



I have ceased to trying to pin specific names on many of the trilliums in our garden such as these sessile types often seen as *Trillium kurabayashii* or the superficially similar *Trillium chloropetalum*. All our plants have been seed raised from plants that have been in cultivation for generations which I think has resulted in a range of garden hybrids that do not key out as either of the species mentioned above. They make excellent fully fertile plants in the garden that if allowed will seed around.





**Sessile Trilliums**



**Trillium albidum**



Similarly *Trillium erectum* and its relatives while very different to and easily separated from the Sessile group also hybridise when grown in close proximity. Again we have a range of these mostly grown from seed around the garden ranging in colour from white through to the very dark maroon. Over the twenty years of Bulb Logs I have written in some detail about the Trilliums we grow and these are all available to read from the [Bulb Log home page](#) and to help locate what you are interested in there is the excellent [Bulb Log Index](#).





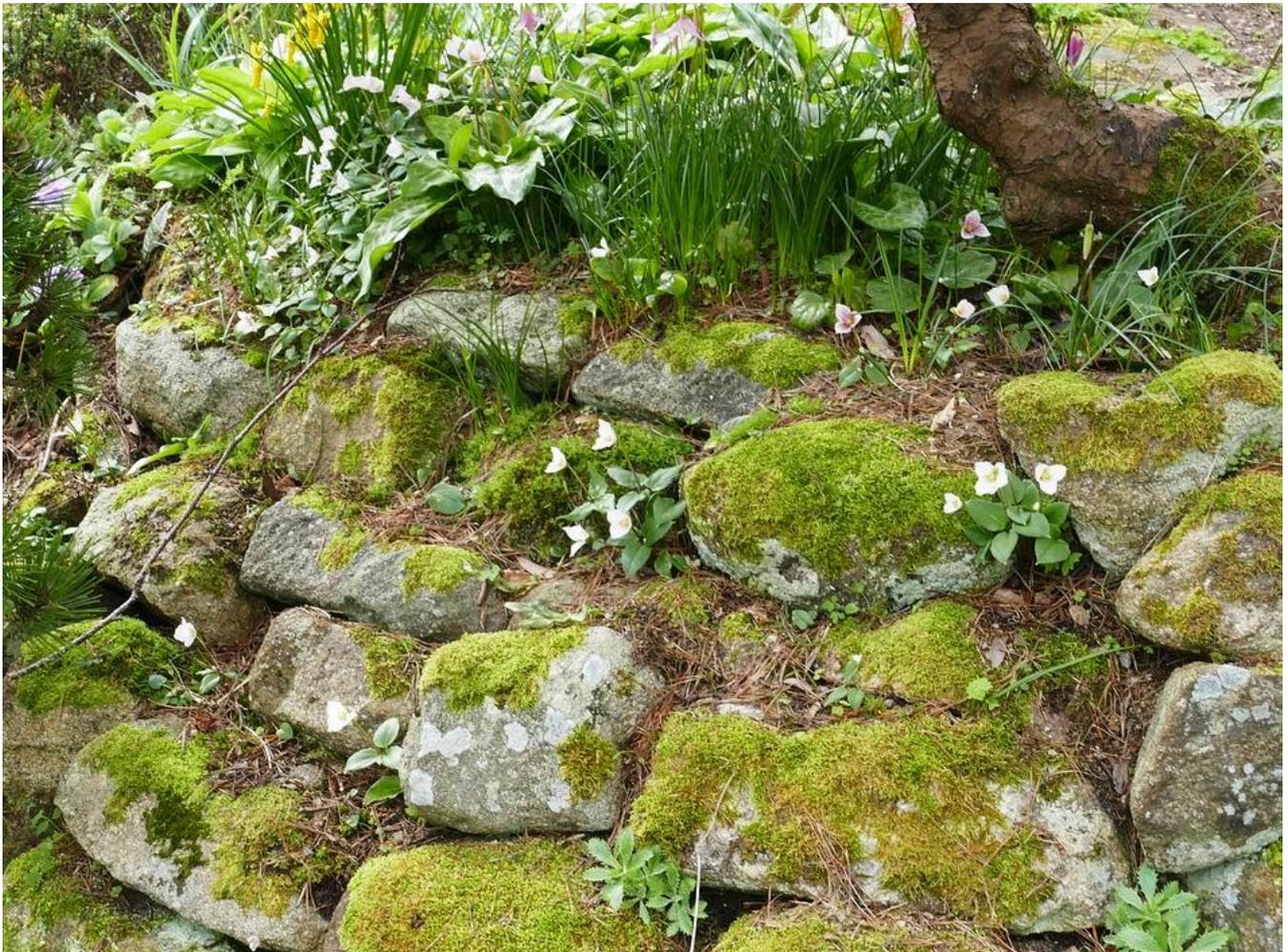
The variable weather conditions from year to year means that the transitions between the flowering sequences in the garden change slightly. This year there is a strong overlap between the earlier flowering **Narcissus cyclamineus** and **(Pseudo)Trillium rivale** and the Erythronium.



Looking over an **Erythronium revolutum hybrid** towards the raised wall where my project to establish a cascade of **(Pseudo)Trillium rivale** down the face of the wall is progressing well.



On the top at one end of the wall is a small colony of **Trillium hibbersonii** which is seeding round nicely.



At the other side of the pine tree the **(Pseudo)Trillium rivale** are also doing well. The original plants were established by sowing seed directly into the gaps between the rocks and these are now both clumping up and self-seeding down into other crevices.



**(Pseudo)Trillium rivale**





**(Pseudo)Trillium rivale with Narcissus cyclamineus.**



**Sanguinaria canadensis multiplex**

We enjoy going round the garden spotting the many different plants that may draw our attention. Rather than being treated as individual specimens surrounded only by ground the plants contribute to the overall planting.



***Arisaema nepenthoides*** is one of the many plants that rise up through a forest of *Dicentra* foliage.



***Fritillaria meleagris***

Jeffersonia dubia is among the many plants perfectly at home in this bed growing closely with Erythronium revolutum and many other plants.



Even though **Jeffersonia dubia** and *Erythronium revolutum* come from different continents they are among the wide range of plants growing well in the conditions of this garden habitat.



Our view of the garden changes with the light and here in the shaded cooler end of the garden the plants flower a week or two later than they do in the sunnier areas. This is also one of the more recently reworked plantings and I am pleased to see we have achieved our trade mark green carpet made up of a wide range of different plants through which the bulbs and other plants can grow.



Of course it is peak Erythronium flowering time so I have to mention them.

Put simply: for the general garden there are three colours. White is mostly, although not exclusively, derived from *Erythronium californicum* and *Erythronium oregonum*, pink comes from *Erythronium revolutum* and yellow mostly from *Erythronium tuolumnense*. These species and their hybrids account for

most of the Erythroniums that are available to gardeners



This is one of the many hybrids that seed around the garden and it will have both *Erythronium oregonum* and *californicum* in its genetic makeup.



**Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss'** that we were given a few years ago, is a hybrid of *Erythronium hendersonii*.



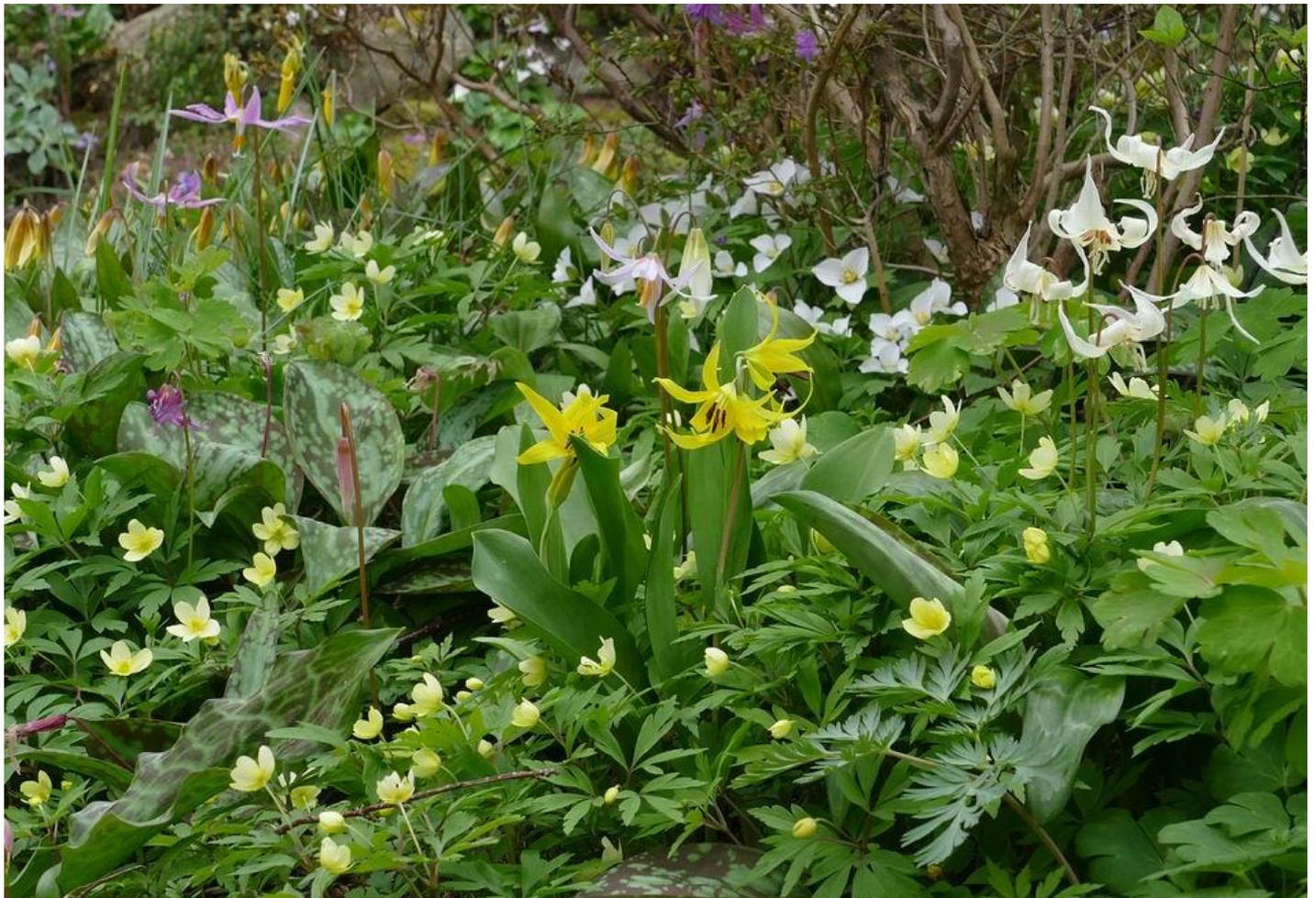
These whites include **Erythronium oregonum** and its hybrids including **Erythronium 'Minnehaha'** and self-seedlings. As across the garden it is never just about the individual plants but the entire community growing in harmony delivering a changing sequence of colour and interest through the seasons.





Even the frames where the Erythroniums are grown in mesh baskets plunged into sand must blend into the overall garden.





**Erythronium grandiflorum** is a beautiful yellow species but despite its extensive range and mass flowering in the wild it is not widely available or often seen in cultivation.

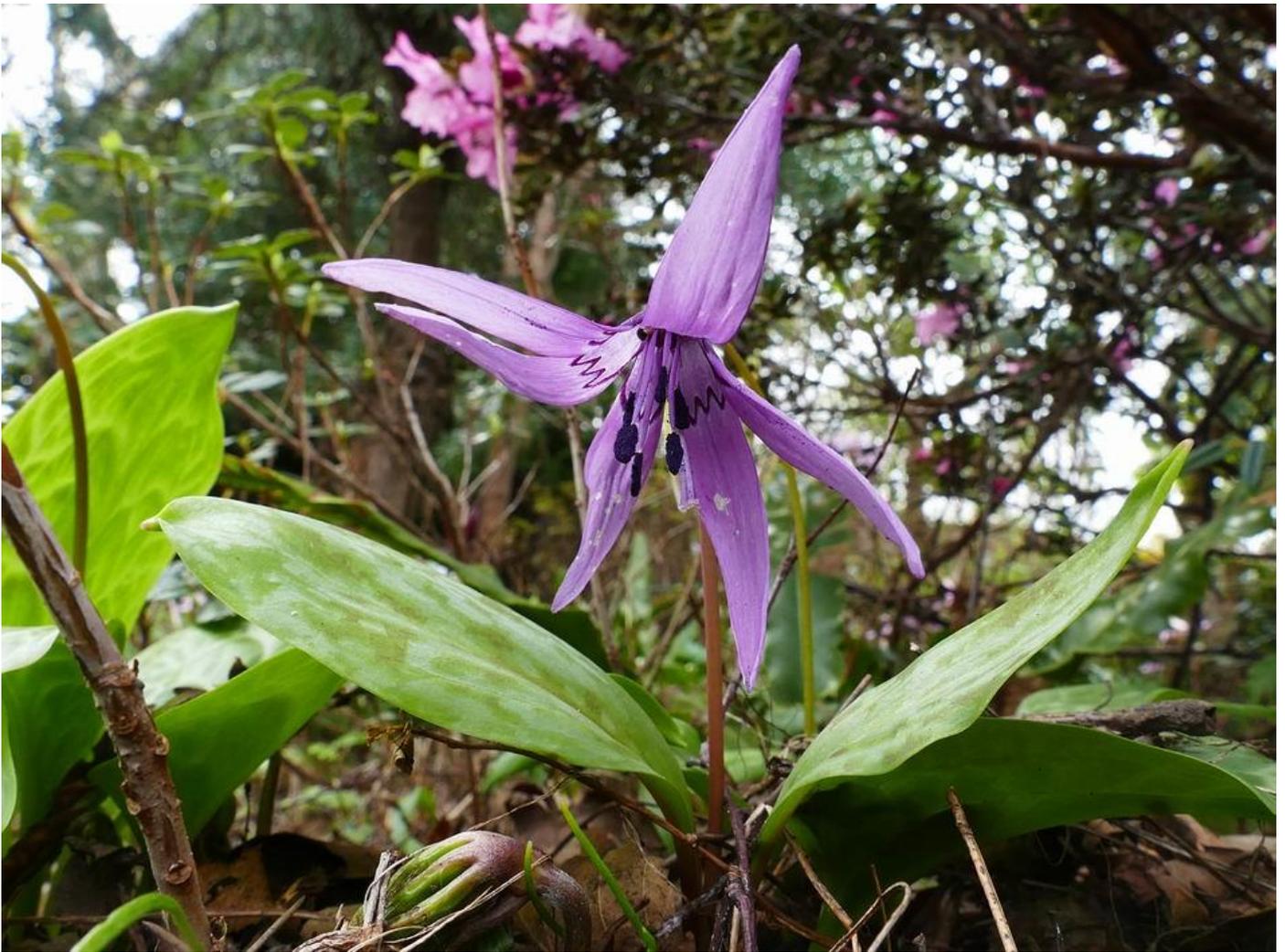


Some years ago I received some seed collected on Vancouver Island that was labelled **Erythronium aff. grandiflorum** but I think it is so different that in my [E-book Erythroniums in Cultivation](#) , where I describe in detail all the species we have grown as well as how we grow them, I suggested it could be a new undescribed species.



**Erythronium americanum** is another yellow species that I didn't mention earlier because while it grows well enough the commonest forms available can be slow to flower.

We have raised a number of forms from seed that flower well and even the form that proliferates has settled in producing many flowers each year.



We have a number of forms of **Erythronium japonicum** around the garden but sadly this great beauty is slow to increase and because of our inclement weather at its flowering time it does not always set seed.



We have more success with the **Erythronium sibiricum complex** which regularly sets seeds with some forms also increasing by the bulb.

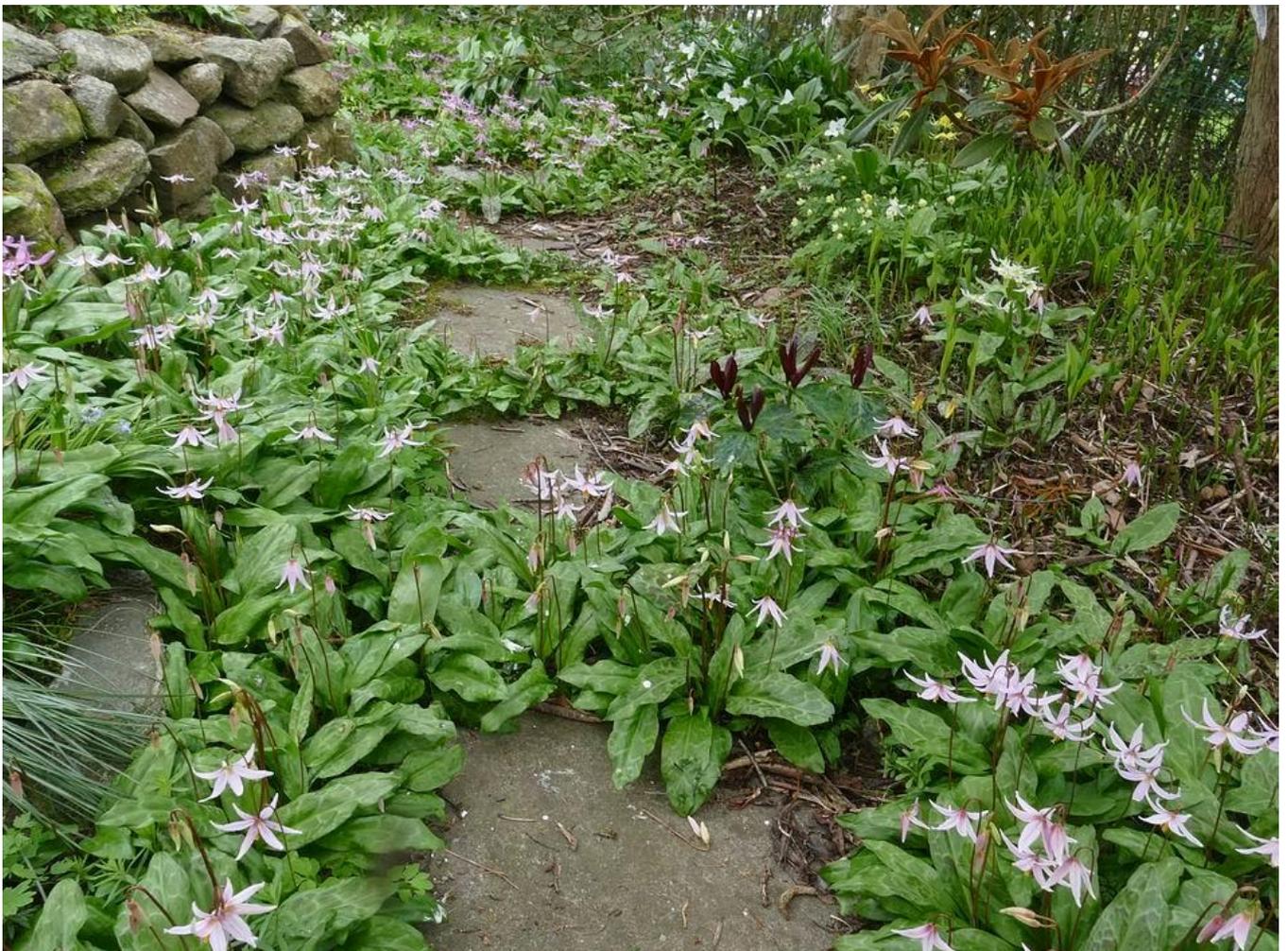


In our garden it is **Erythronium revolutum** that is the most prolific in seeding around which results in many mass plantings where in addition to variations within the species we also find many hybrids.





*Erythronium revolutum* hybrid 'Craigton Cover Girl'



*Erythronium revolutum* seeding into and taking over the path – we even get seedlings germinating in the moss growing over the edges of the slabs.



I am often asked what a rock garden is and my answer is, it can be anything you want. I would describe our garden as a rock/woodland garden where we have manipulated the ground to create a wide range of habitats that in turn support a wide range of plants.

The range of plants we grow tend to be wild plants, mostly raised from seed, many are species or forms and cultivars that are not over bred or manipulated. They are often plants from the mountainous regions of the world which means they are more likely to be hardy. These plants also tend towards being relatively small although we also grow trees and shrubs that are far from small.



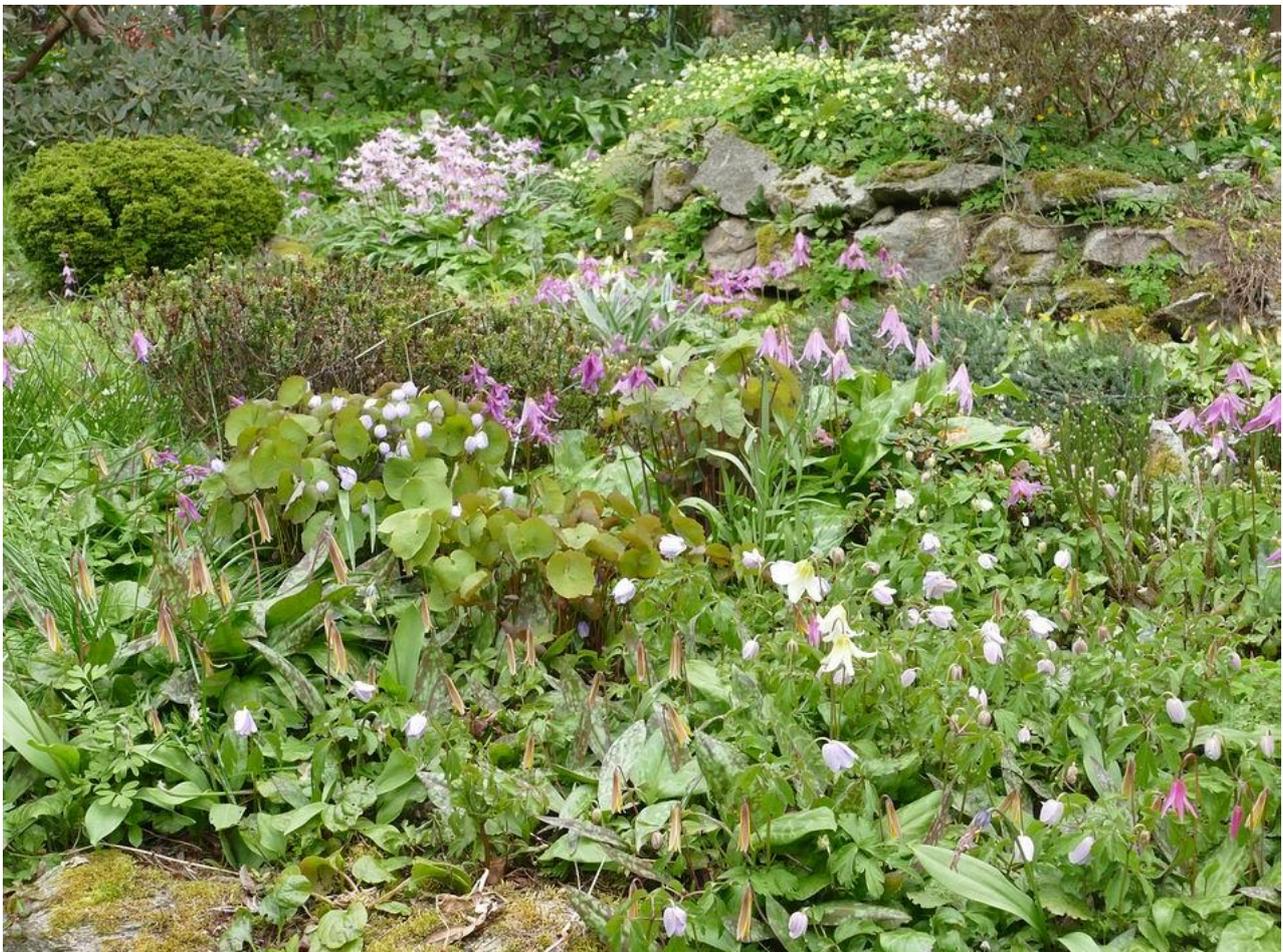


The late winter and spring is dominated by a wide range of bulbous plants and combining these into mass plantings is very rewarding both visually and horticulturally.



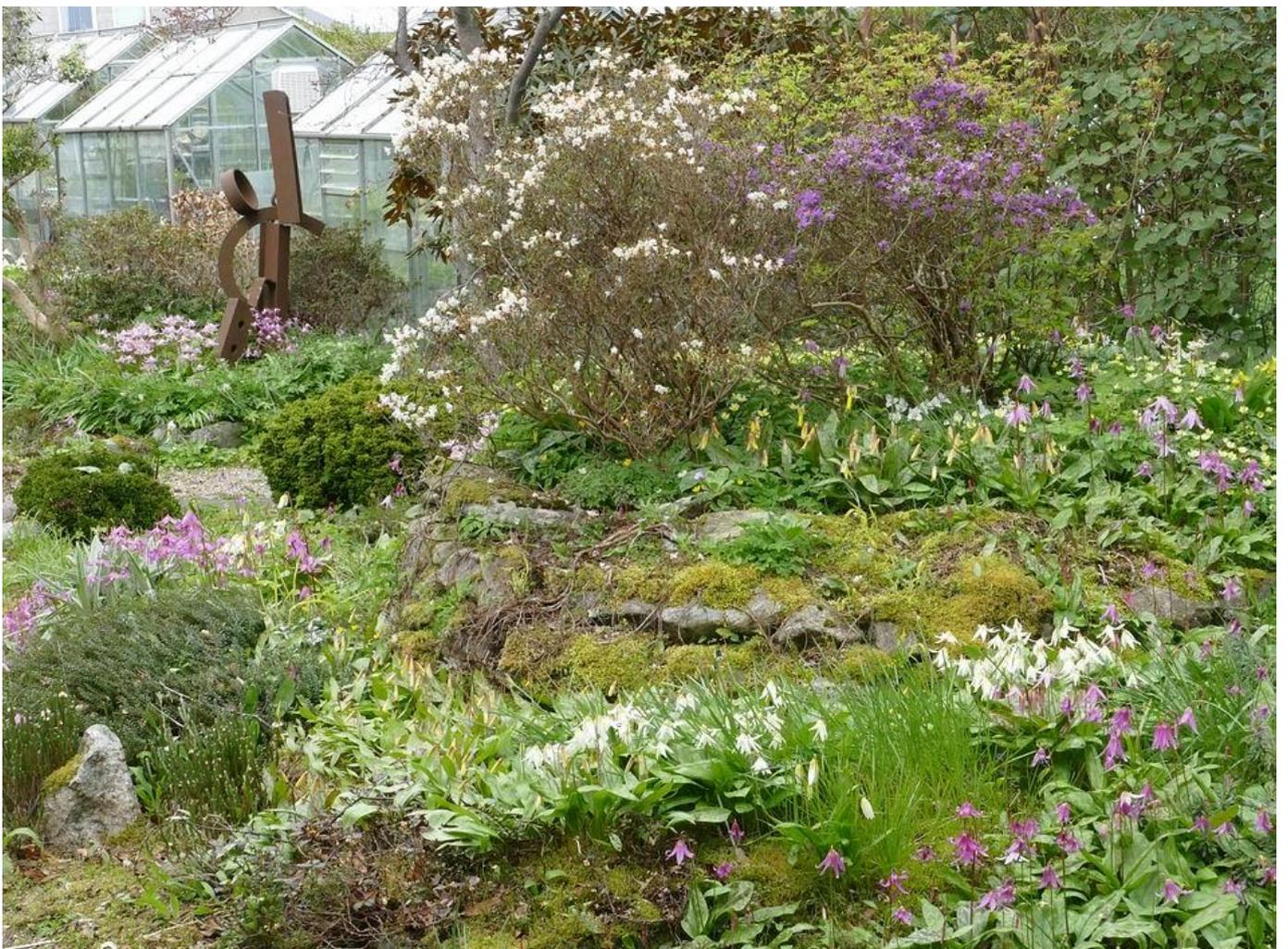


Of course rock gardens mostly have rocks which are used to modify the habitat such as raising the ground to create raised beds. The rocks can be of any type and size from gravel all the way up to natural ground rock breaking through the surface if you are so lucky. Building materials are also suitable such as the slabs we use for paving as well as in the raised slab beds. We also use broken concrete in place of natural rocks. Check out the great work at Utrecht Botanic Garden where recycled material is used so well.





Rock garden views



We can also plant up the gaps between the rocks of the walls with a range of suitable plants including bulbs.



Even the concrete paving slabs form an important part of the garden rock work. The slabs are spaced out to form stepping stones around the garden. The gravel covered gaps between the slabs have been invaded by a range of plants including the prolific seeding *Erythronium revolutum*.



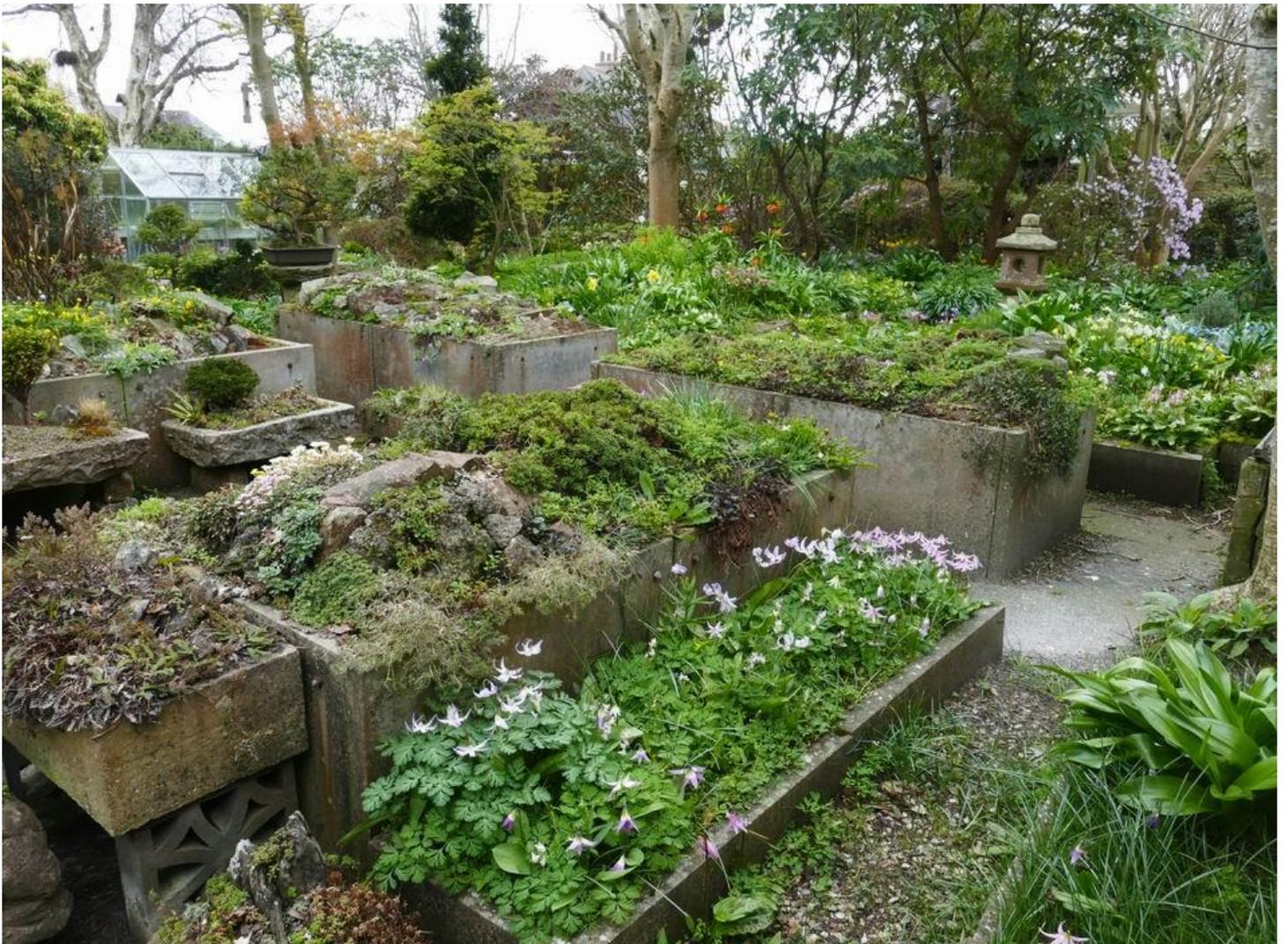
Erythroniums growing in the gravel spaces between the paving slabs.



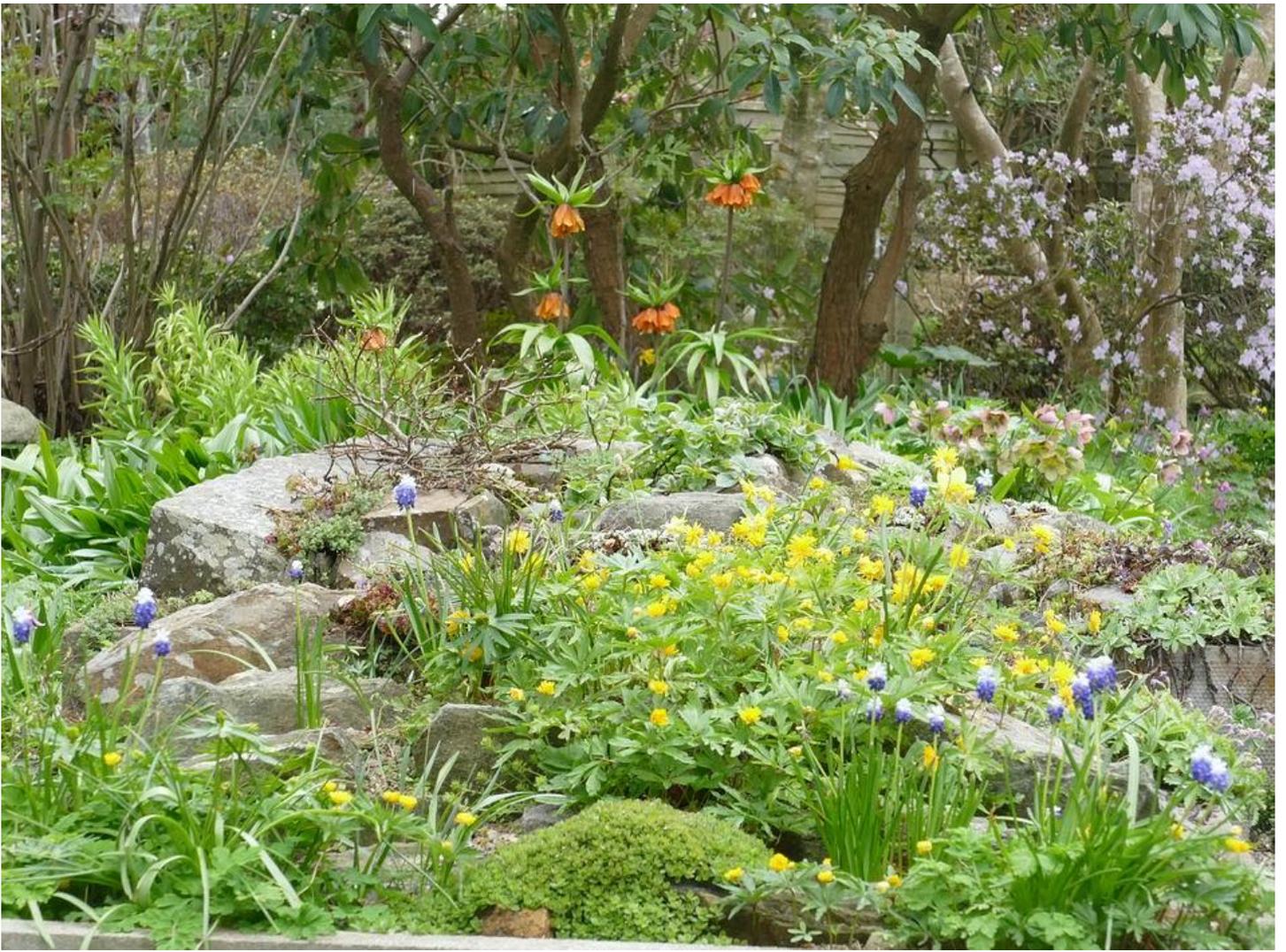
At this time of year the self-seeded Erythroniums make it difficult to walk on some parts of the path.



So a rock garden is a combination of rocks and plants which together can deliver seasonal interest and beauty.



The trough and slab bed area probably fits into the typical idea of what a rock garden is.



The last few views show how we use the rocks along with plants of all types and sizes including trees and shrubs.





For this Bulb Log I have had to select from the 500 plus pictures that I have taken this past four weeks. If you want to see more from the garden I have also published two more Bulb Log videos in that time check them out on my [YouTube channel](#) or through the links on the [SRGC Forum](#).