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# Bulb Log Diary

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Once again, we are experiencing unseasonably warm weather which is good for the lovely *Erythronium americanum* which will only open its yellow flowers when it is sunny and warm. It is impossible to say which of the genus is my favourite, but this must come close. Unlike others it runs around, spreading out by stolons to create large clumps of decorative leaves among which there will be hotspots full of flowers surrounded by the single leaves of non-flowering bulbs.

The few days of hot dry weather has compressed our *Erythronium* flowering

season. The heat both brings on the flowering and causes it to go over more quickly.



I have grown and studied plants most of my life but my joy is the garden we have created by combining them into our wee landscape. Above I show one of the main paths that leads up the garden we have to walk between two shrubs, *Rhododendron tatsienensis* on the left and *Pieris* on the right. These act as symbolic guardians guiding you to the path as well as framing the view. Just as a painting looks better when it is framed, so does a garden view.



Of course, we do have feature plants, but these have to stand out among the mass plantings rather than standing alone isolated from their neighbours by bare ground. Here **Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'** holds her own below the Pieris growing in perfect harmony with ferns and various other plants.



As I previously mentioned I more and more see the garden as number of pathways winding through a single landscape. As I walk around, I can enjoy the varied habitats and plantings that we have created over the past fifty years.



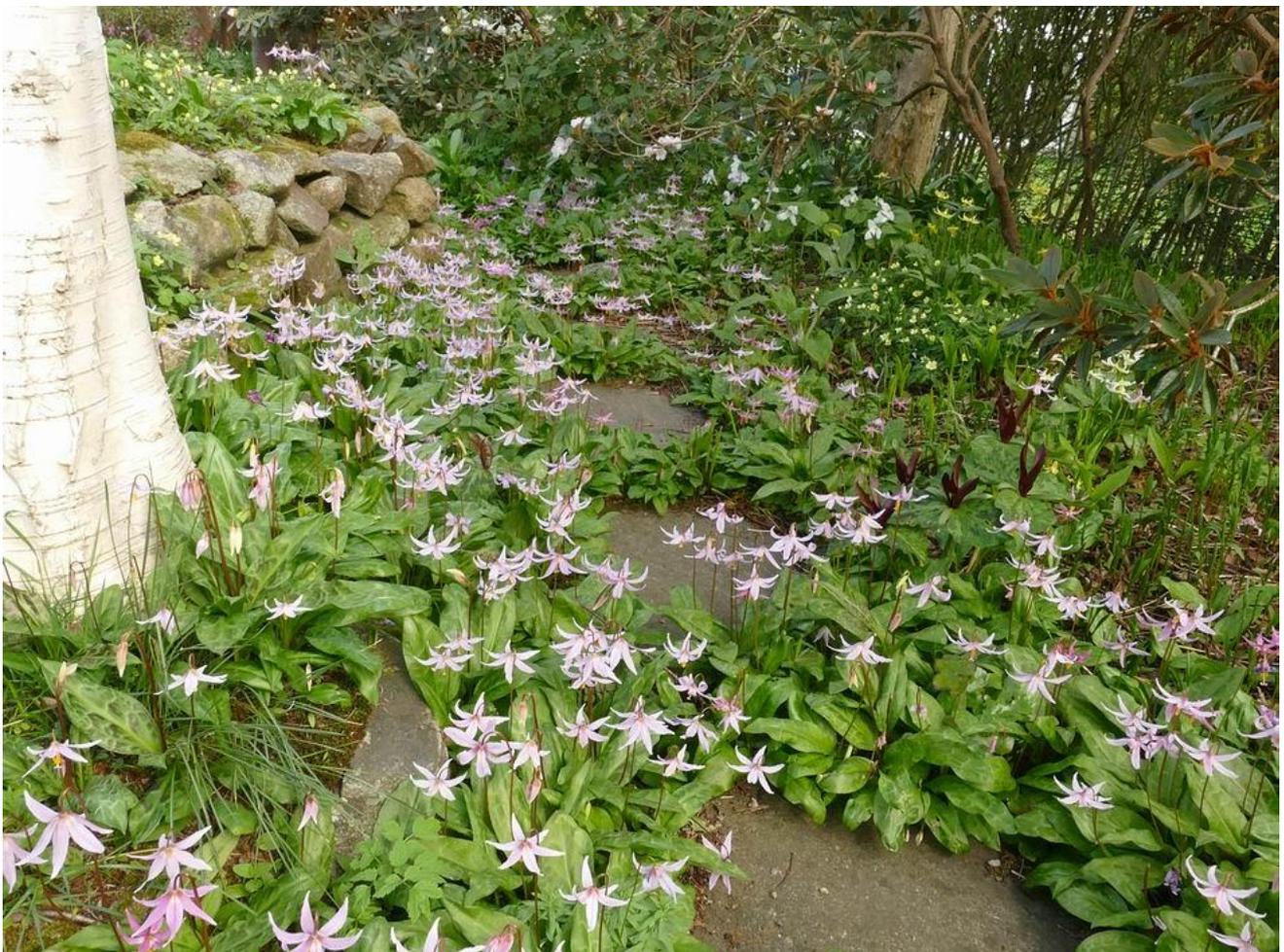
The plantings are very seasonal changing dramatically as the year progresses. Now it is the time for the Erythronium to be the most prolific plants with their flowers rising to put on a colourful display above the varied green carpets.



When I turn my focus to the green carpet, I find it is made up of a multitude of plants from many parts of the world such as **Primula vulgaris** growing in harmony among **Anemone ranunculoides**.



So long as we allow them to, gardens will change as they mature and one change in our garden is that paths are also seasonal. Originally, they were clear to be walked on all year round, while at this time of year it is not so easy as many plants, including Erythronium, have chosen to seed into the gravel paths.



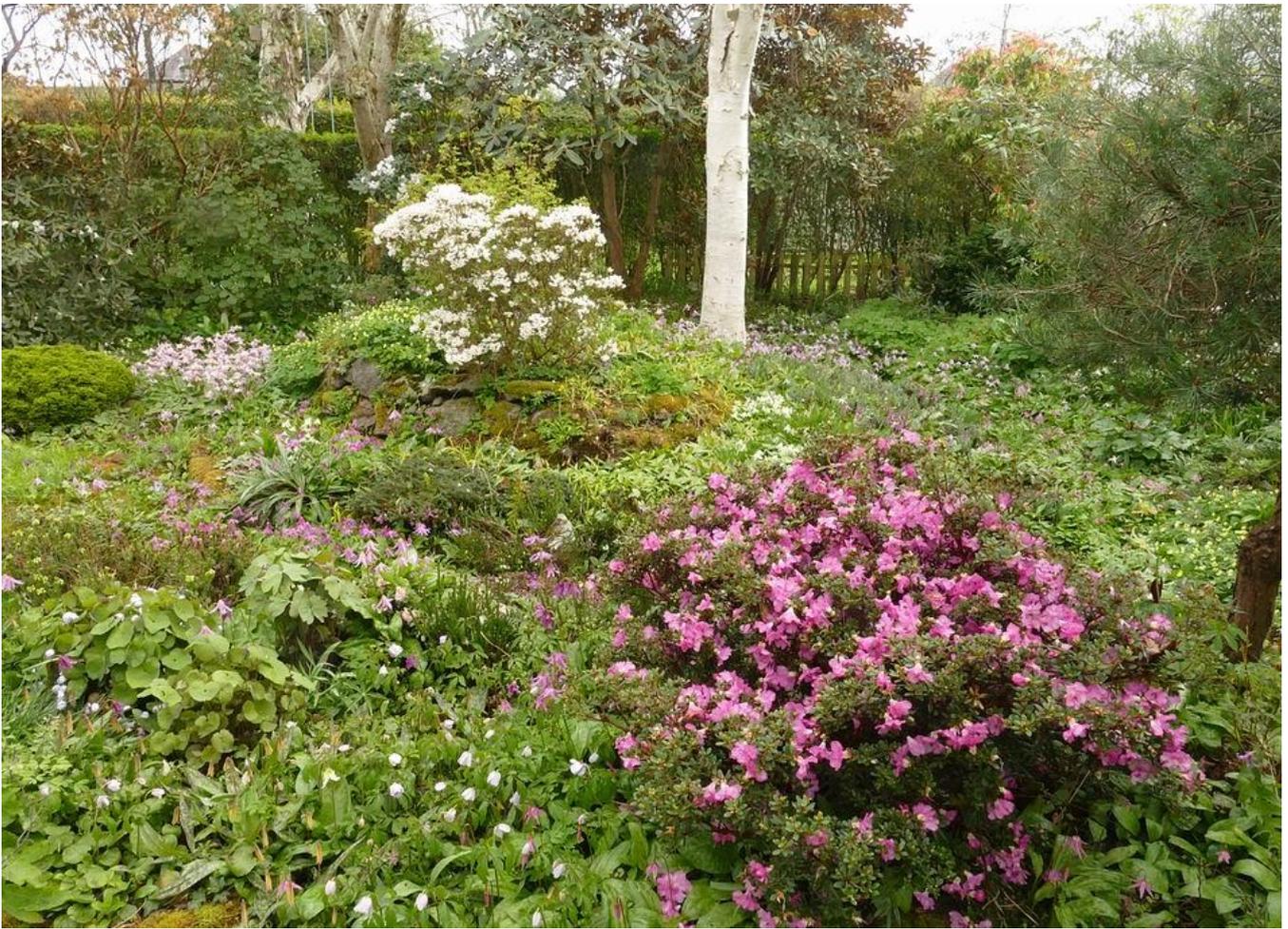
Passing with care, stepping from slab to slab, is still just possible.



Stopping at various points to appreciate the landscape - taking in the many colours and forms created by the mass planting.



Obviously, we created the structure by strategically planting the trees and shrubs to provide a structure while much of the lower plantings have evolved by allowing plants to self-seed.



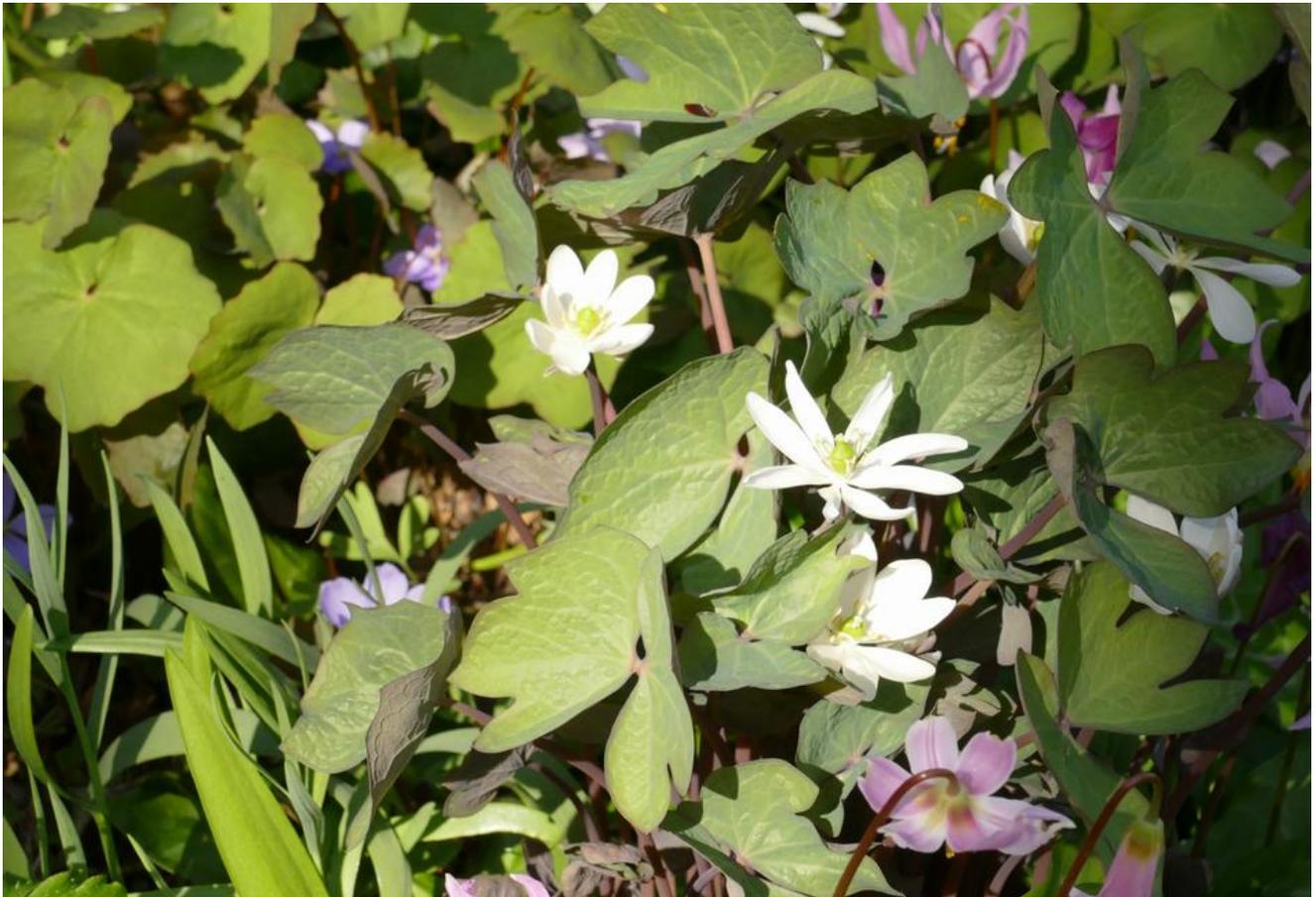
After taking in this overall view, I can turn my eye down to explore the many plants that grow there.



The beautiful **Jeffersonia dubia** is native to shady woodlands in China and Korea. We are fortunate that it finds our generally cool moist weather acceptable and grows among the Erythronium.



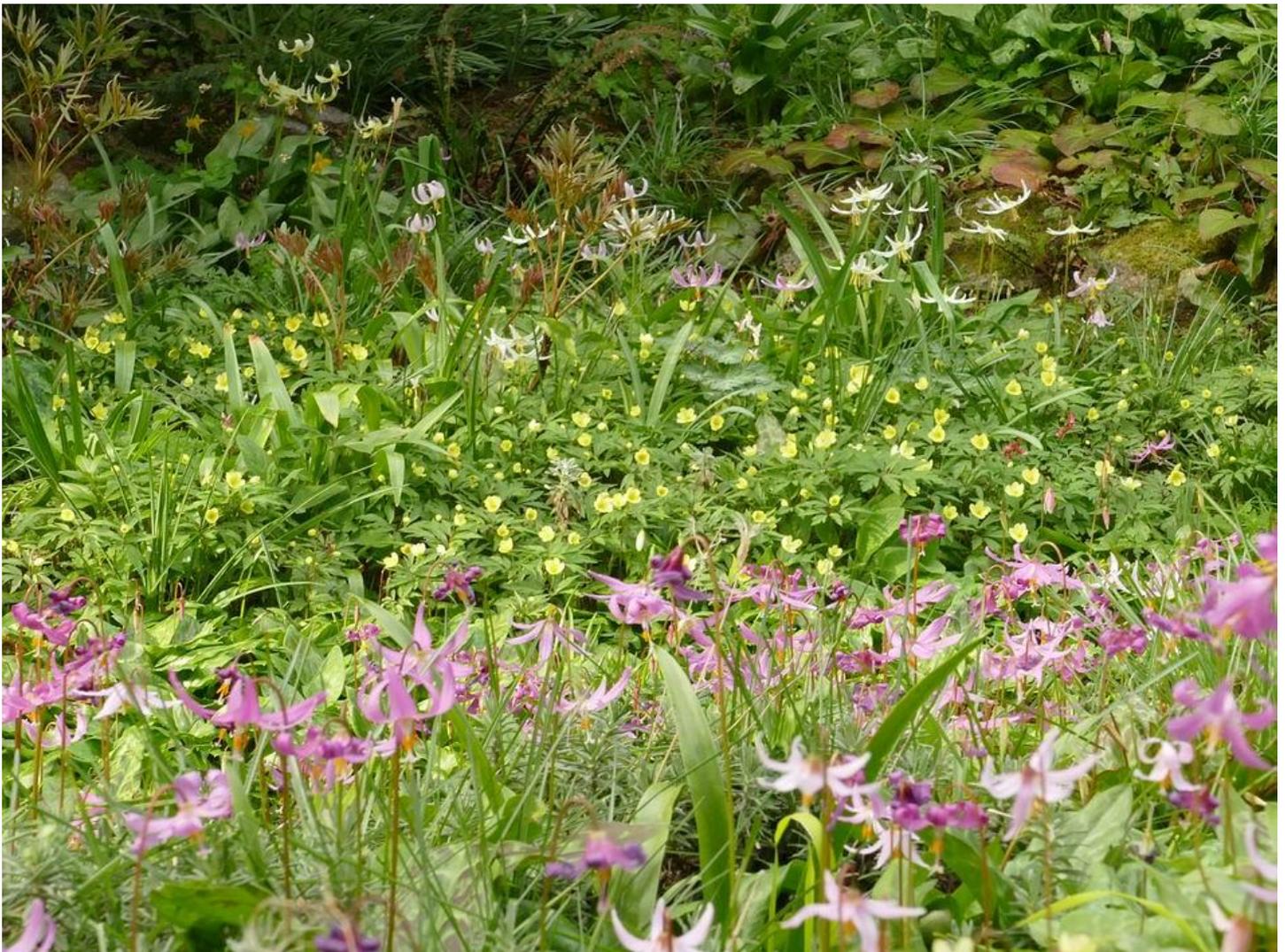
To be found among this mass planting there are two forms of **Jeffersonia dubia** and to the right of them is the twin leaved **Jeffersonia diphylla** - a North American native.



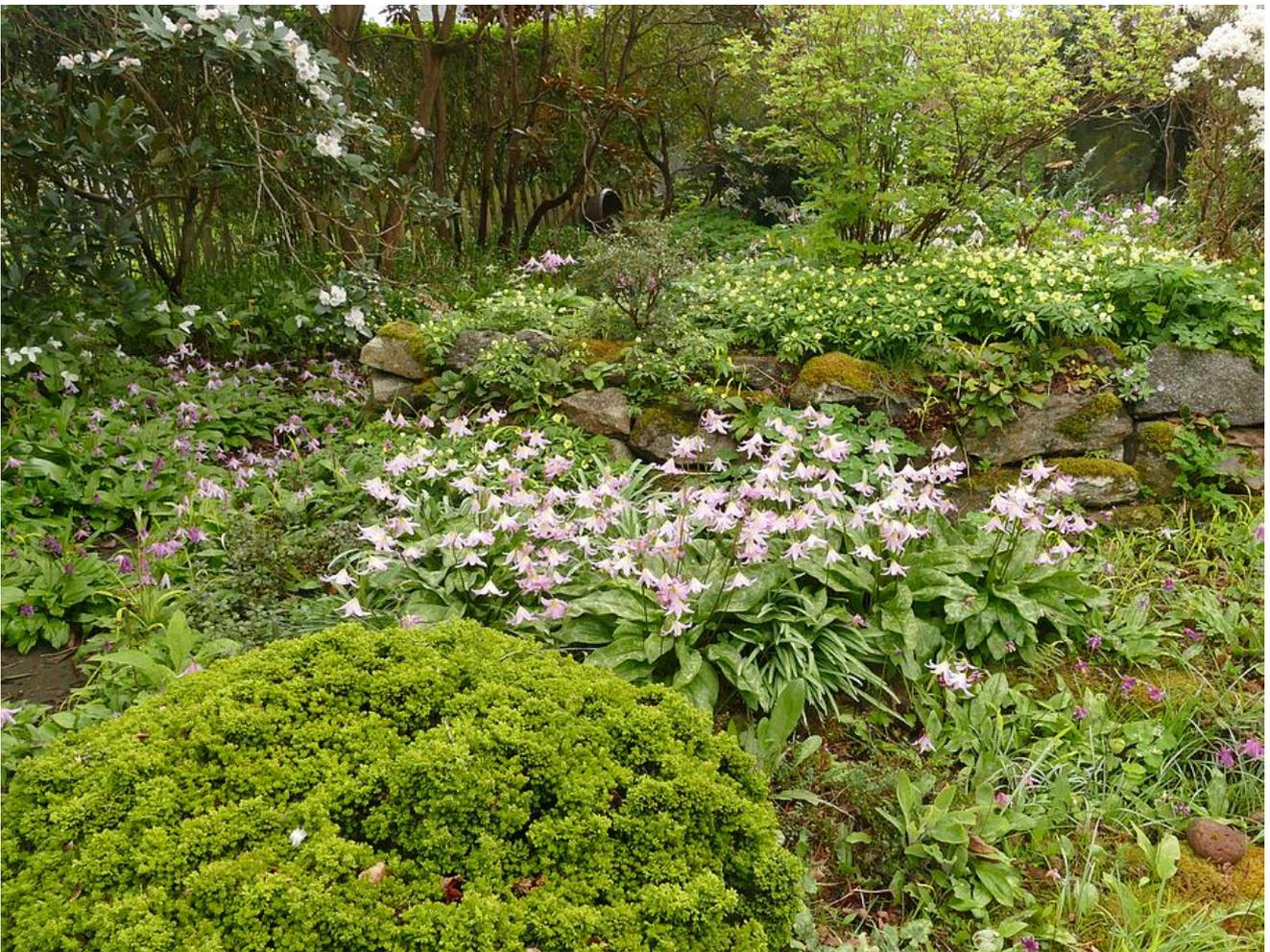
**Jeffersonia diphylla**



***Sanguinaria canadensis* multiplex form.**



The plantings work best when plants intermingle, blending together to the extent that you have to look carefully to pick out the individual plants.



We do have big blocks of a single plant such as this planting of **Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'** which is a lovely and vigorous garden hybrid.



A large planting of **Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'** stands out, but I prefer the visual effect of the mixed self-seeded plantings that are more prolific around the garden.



**Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'**



**Mixed Erythronium seedlings.**



**Trillium grandiflorum**, **Trillium chloropetalum**, and **Cardamine pentaphyllos** are among the plants that we can push into the dark shaded areas of the garden.



**Trillium kurabayashii**



**Erythronium revolutum** and **Trillium rivale** growing together, crevice style, in the wall.



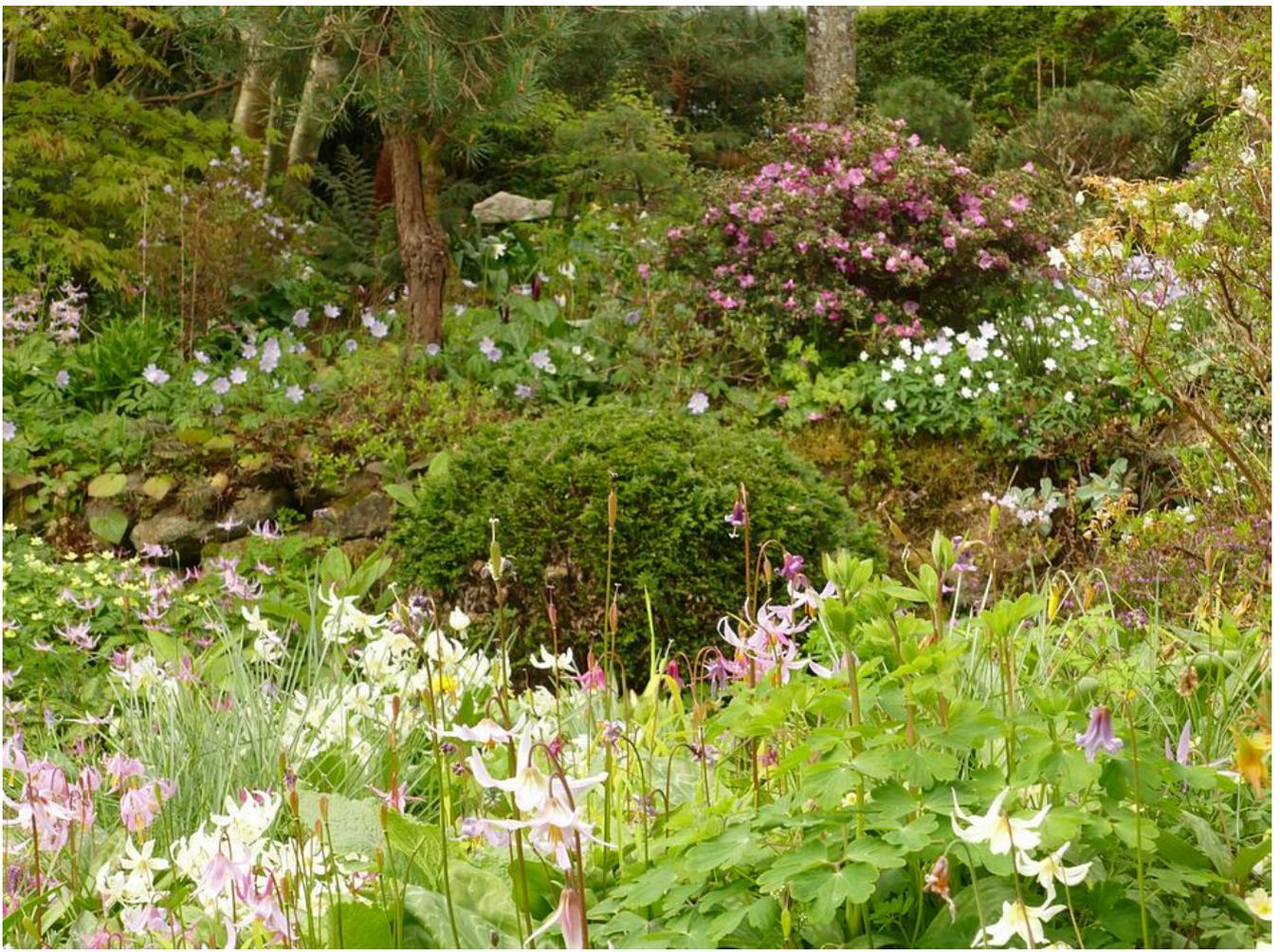
Another **Trillium** of small stature that needs to be grown along with plants of similar scale and vigour is **Trillium hibbersonii**.



**Trillium albidum**



Trillium also seed around the paths mixing with the Erythronium.



Through the spring months the garden delights us with a succession of different plants each flowering in sequence.

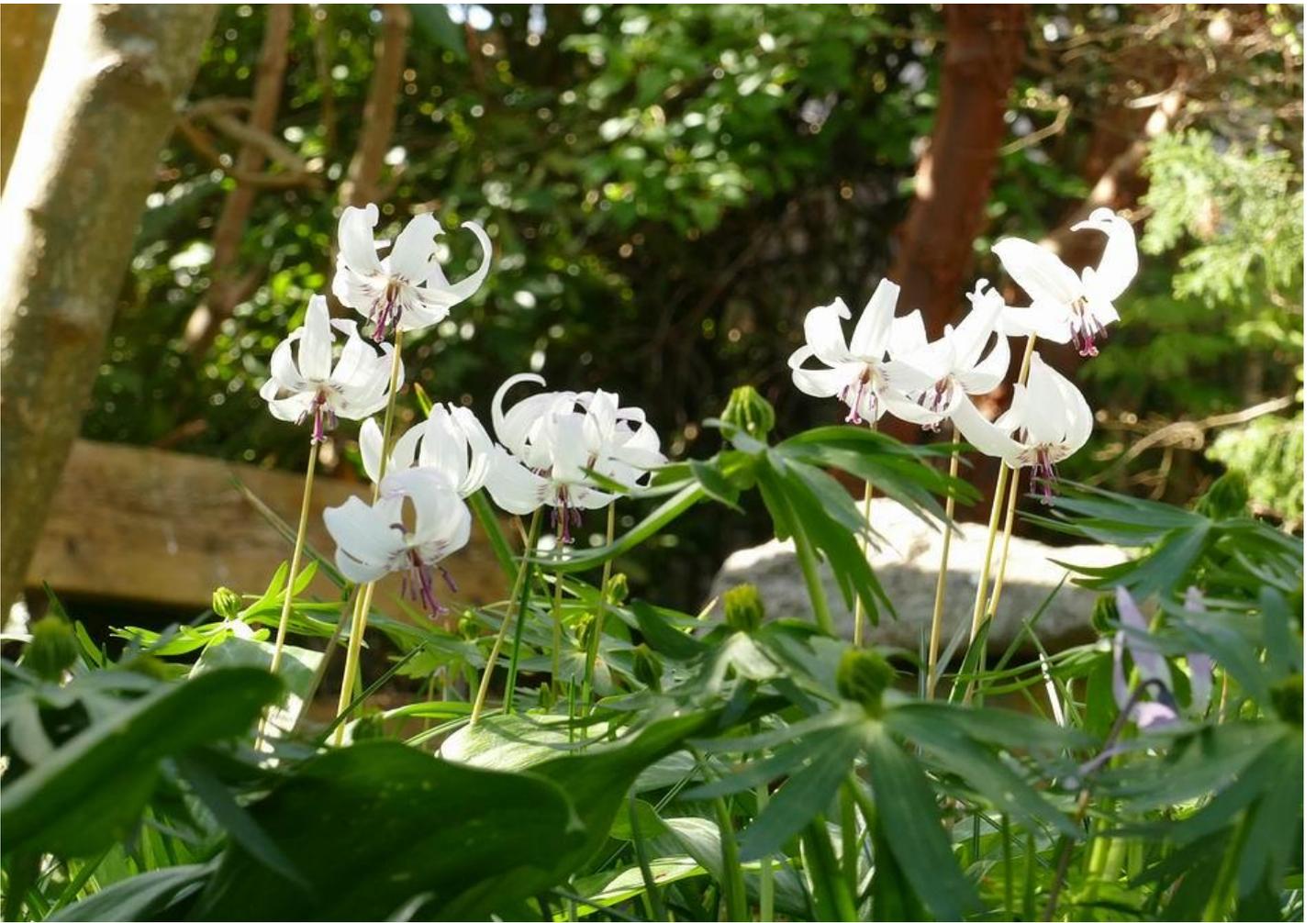


Anemone and Rhododendron combine with the bulbs to create attractive plantings.



Even as I write the unseasonal hot dry conditions are pushing the flowers and early plants over more quickly than in the more typical, cool moist spring, we usually experience. This is yet more evidence of how global warming is going to change our gardens.





**Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss'** is a lovely garden hybrid seeded from *Erythronium hendersonii*.



**Erythronium hendersonii**



**Erythronium elegans** seedlings flowering through the flowers falling from a large Camelia that towers above.



Although it is well integrated into the garden, we still like to keep some of the **Erythronium sibiricum complex** growing in the plunge frames.



Many plants from the **Erythronium sibiricum complex** are growing well seeding around the garden.



I love the surprises we get from self-seeding plants. We have sown pots of **Cyclamen repandum** seed in the distant past but do not remember having any success establishing them. For the last few years, I have noticed the leaves of a Cyclamen growing under the trees and shrubs and from the leaves I suspected it was *Cyclamen repandum*, which I can confirm now it is flowering. I used to discard pots of ungerminated seeds in this area and obviously nature did better than I did by establishing a beautiful flowering plant, hidden as it is deep in the undergrowth.



As well as being beneficial to growing range of plants the wide range of habitats we have created in our garden also attracts wildlife especially the birds. From the **Sparrowhawk**, at the top of the food chain, to the many small songbirds such as the **Bullfinches** that come to the feeders, shown below.





There is no question that the biggest attraction for the wild life is the number of trees and shrubs we have planted to create a small woodland oasis in an urban setting to the benefit of the birds, plants and gardeners alike.



From the shrubs that frame one path the troughs and slab beds guard and lead you to another path leading up the garden....