



BULB LOG 23.....9<sup>th</sup> June 2010



The occasional periods of warm sunshine tempts the Oxalis flowers to reveal their faces and one of the best is **Oxalis 'Ione Hecker'** a long established hybrid between *Oxalis laciniata* and *O. enneaphylla*. It increases well and as you can see below covers itself with flowers that have inherited the best features from both the parents.





**Oxalis enneaphylla**

This is a nice dark eyed form of *Oxalis ennyaphylla* which, though lacking the hybrid vigour of 'Ione Hecker' still increases relatively well in our garden.



**Oxalis adenophylla**

*Oxalis adenophylla* looks superficially similar to *Oxalis enneaphylla* but seems to form more of a 'bulb' than the other species.



### **Oxalis enneaphylla 'Sheffield Swan'**

The very beautiful white form of *Oxalis enneaphylla* was named and introduced by Capt. Peter Erskine a champion of the South American *Oxalis* among others.



### **Troughs and raised beds**

Despite the dull wet weather the troughs and raised beds are looking very colourful just now. It is often better to photograph them in these conditions as the flat light with low contrast records much better both on both film and digital image sensors. You may notice that my pet Dandelion, on the right, has stopped flowering now and is displaying its magnificent foliage.☺



**Edrianthus serpyllifolius**

Did you spot the raised bed in the top right of the picture two above ? Here is a closer view of that raised bed and one of the many variable seedlings of *Edrianthus serpyllifolius* that are growing there. I raised these many years ago from Vojtec Holubec's seeds and have been delighted with the way they just get better every year. There is a subtle variation in the size, shape and colour of the flowers but the most noticeable variation is in the plants' habit. Some are quite open and their stems sprawl over quite a distance while the one I like best has short stems that make a solid mass of leaves capped with the wonderful upward facing campanula like flowers.



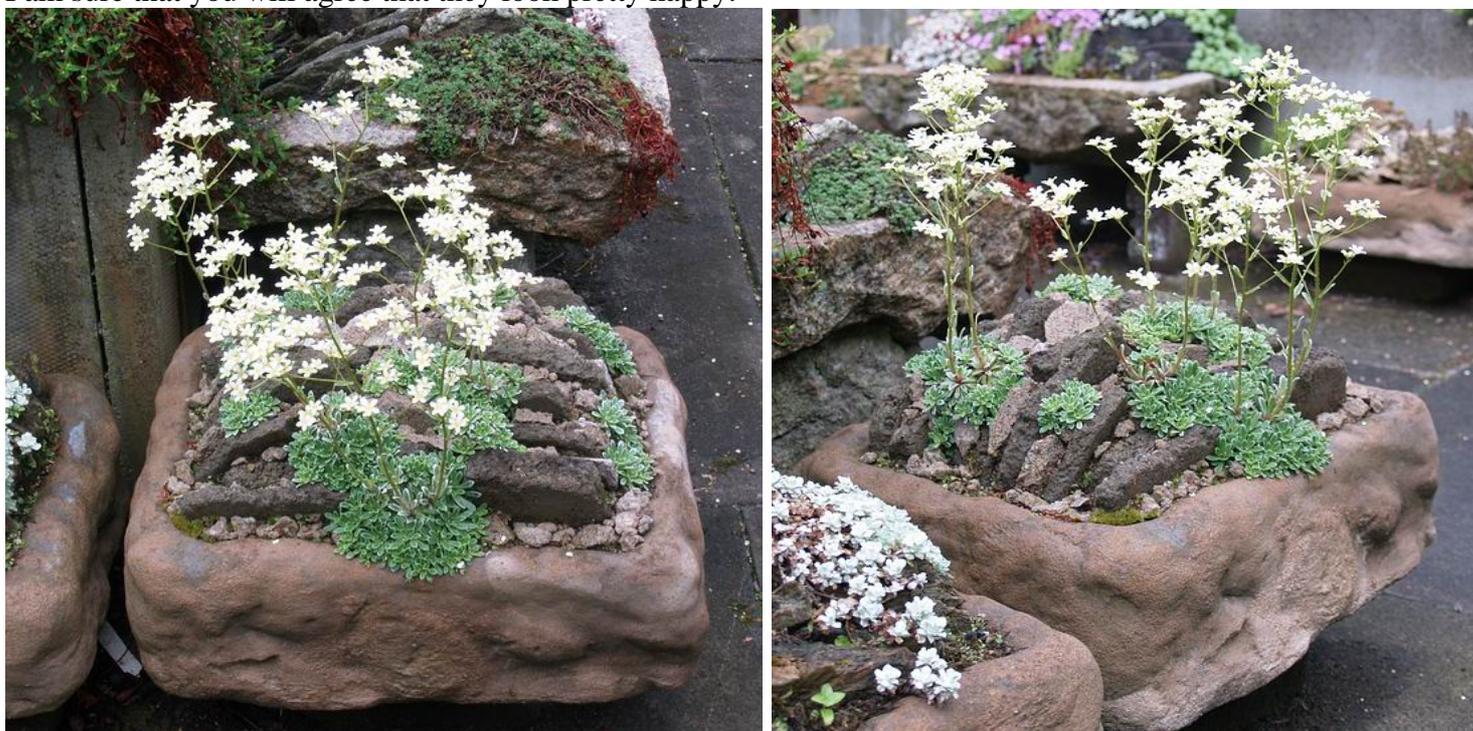
**Troughs**

Looking down on some of our troughs you can see three of my 'Fish box 2' type (polystyrene covered in mortar mix) while the larger one is of local granite.



### **Granite Trough**

I carved this trough out of an old granite paving slab that the Aberdeen Council in their wisdom (not!) decided to lift from our pavements to be replaced with the cement variety. It was a lot of hard work to carve out the centre to turn them into troughs but very well worth the effort and I have six of these in the garden. The unevenness of the lower part of the granite slab means I could not make a very deep growing area but I compensate for this by using old roofing slates to create height and give the plants a suitable root run. While they are not rare or difficult alpines I am sure that you will agree that they look pretty happy.



### **Concrete Trough**

I have lots of the 'Fish box 2' type and they have proven so successful having come through two of the coldest winters we have had without any cracking or flaking that I intend to make some more this year to replace the painted polystyrene, 'Fish box 1' type that I grow the *Rhodohypoxis* in. They will be a bit heavier but it will still be easy enough to lift them under cover to dry out for the winter. One of my favourites is this one which I planted using broken concrete blocks to demonstrate that you do not need to use natural stone to create a pleasing look and planted up with a silver Saxifrage.



I designed the garden to be able to combine views such as above where the view is across a trough, two raised beds to the garden beyond.



### **Garden view**

Again the garden view above combines three beds to the trees in the background giving a vista full of shape form, colour and texture.



**Corydalis capitata**

In the centre of the garden view picture you can see *Corydalis capitata*: it is not the most spectacular or most showy species but I think it is charming with its deep purple flowers clustered in a cap at the top of the stem.



**Corydalis pseudobarbisepala**

Do not adjust your screen settings – this is an impressionistic image of *Corydalis pseudobarbisepala*. I usually delete any bad pictures but I decided to keep this one which was taken when I accidentally triggered the shutter as I was setting the camera on a tripod. It reminds me of the great Impressionists so I kept it also I am putting together a Powerpoint talk on digital photography so I have been purposely taking pictures with some of the commonly seen errors so I can display them alongside the ‘correct’ version.



***Corydalis pseudobarbispala***

Here is the sharp version of this my favourite of the blue Corydalis. I am not sure but I might prefer the fuzzy image because it brings with it a sense of movement as the wind shakes the stems.



Here are wider pictures showing two of the Peonies whose flowers I illustrated last week: the deep blood-red *Paeonia delavayi* with the wonderful *Paeonia emodii* peaking through from behind.



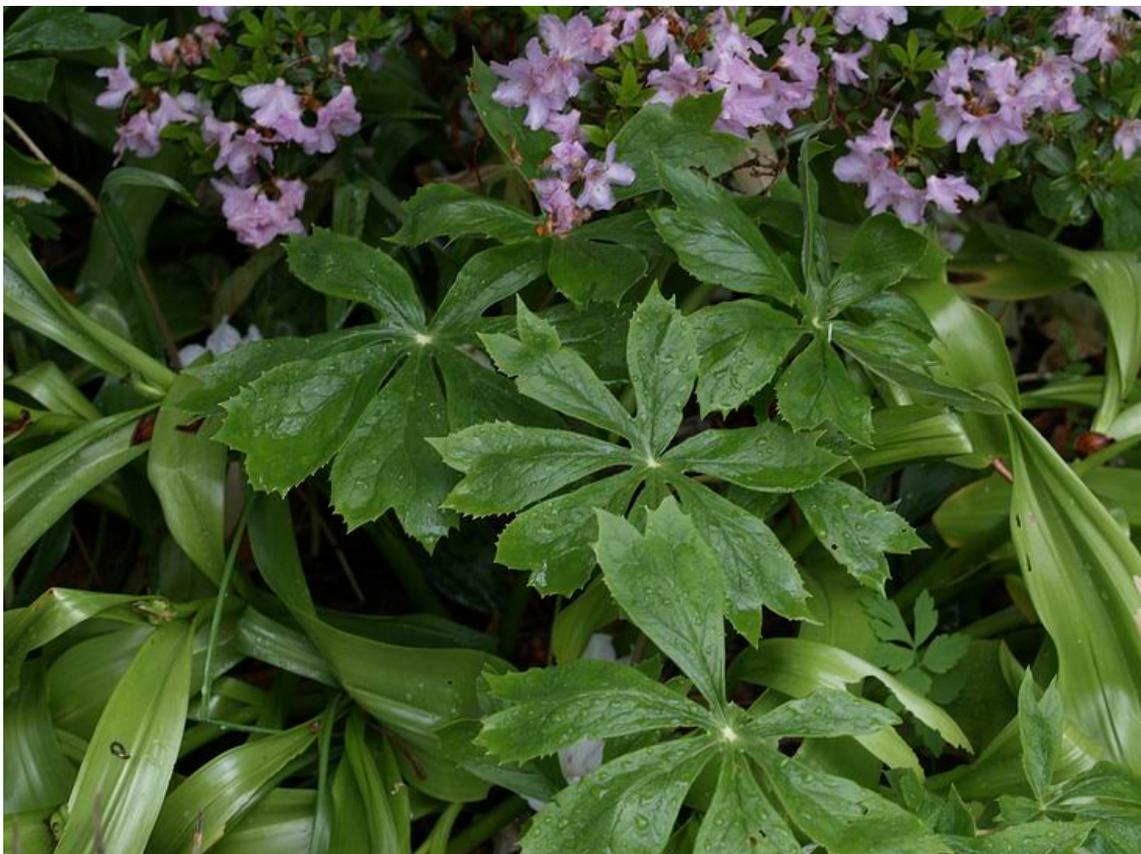
**Paeonia 'Feng dan bai'**

Another beautiful tree Peony we grow is a form of *Paeonia ostii* called 'Fend dan bai' which translates as 'white phoenix'



**Podophyllum peltatum flower**

Unlike the showy Peonies, *Podophyllum peltatum* hides its small perfect white flowers underneath its leaves where they face towards the ground. Presumably they must have evolved to attract either low flying insects or something coming up from the ground.



**Podophyllum peltatum leaves**

Where the conditions are to its liking Podophyllum peltatum can spread quite quickly by creeping underground stems so care should be taken where you plant it. I find it a perfect companion for many of the early flowering bulbs such as Erythronium because it only comes into growth as they are starting to die back. I also grow a lot of the summer flowering lilies and Nomocharis in this bed as their stems grow up through the Podophyllum.



**Flowers and Foliage**

The subtle flowers of Arisaema and Paris hide among a rich variety of foliage made glossy by the rain.



### **Foliage**

We should never underestimate the value of foliage in a garden if for no other reason than it will be around for much longer than the flowers. I love creating a rich tapestry of leaves that emerge from the ground under a large Rhododendron after the small spring flowering bulbs have gone dormant. Can you identify these from their leaves?



### **Lilium nanum white**

A lone stem bearing a large white flower represents the single white coloured form of *Lilium nanum* that I have left. Many years ago we had lots of them around the garden so I am hoping to get a fat pod full of seeds to build back my stocks.

From my previous experience this white form comes true from seed.

You can see a detail of the flower below. It is 5cms across the face and the petals are 4cms long.



**Lilium nanum white flower**

It is such a perfect wee lily but I have other more typically purple coloured forms of Lilium nanum whose flowers are about a third of the size of this one.



**Trees**

Along our Southern boundary we have a number of large Rhododendrons and trees which includes the beautiful Laburnum and Acer griseum. The area where I am letting Erythroniums and Trilliums naturalise is under these trees and shrubs.



### **Bulb house**

There is not much to do in the bulb house just now except to collect the occasional seeds and make sure the pots are drying out sufficiently so that the bulbs do not rot as they enter their resting period. If required I will remove the gravel top dressing to aid the drying out process.



### **Garden seat**

While the current mass fashion in the UK is to grow your own food our garden feeds my soul.  
Any one might think that we do not use this seat very often – but we do.