



BULB LOG 21.....25th May 2010



Corydalis flexuosa

I got the blues this morning, but not the same Crossroads Blues as Robert Johnson : I am enjoying the many superb species of Corydalis that are just coming into flower now. Note in the above picture that Corydalis flexuosa has a relatively narrow lower lip when it is compared to Corydalis cashmeriana below.



Corydalis cashmeriana

There are many other differences and you are not likely to mix up these two species once you know them.

For the most part *Corydalis flexuosa* is easy to please in most gardens or should I say that most gardeners will find a form that will grow in their conditions. I tried and lost a number of the clones that were available before I succeeded with the clone I now have. I normally apply the 'three strikes and you're out' method when introducing plants to the garden so having only tried the other variations of *C. flexuosa* once I must try them again. *Corydalis cashmeriana* on the other hand is not so easy to please in many gardens mostly because it dislikes hot dry summers which can kill it very quickly. Even in our cooler garden it will die down in the summer after it has flowered only to send up another growth of leaves and the occasional flower in the autumn before it goes dormant again for the winter.



***Corydalis* 'Kingfisher'**

There is good news for those of you who would love *C. cashmeriana* but cannot get it to survive and that good news comes in the form of *Corydalis* 'Kingfisher' a superb hybrid between *C. flexuosa* and *C. cashmeriana* introduced by Keith Lever of Aberconwy. It has the same great colour - to look at it is more or less intermediate between the two species and it has inherited the adaptability in cultivation of *C. flexuosa*.



***Corydalis*
*pseudobarbisepala***

I believe that the *Corydalis* genus adds tremendous beauty and colour to our gardens with the hot colours of the early flowering *solida* types to the cooler blues of the later flowering species I am showing here. There is a long way to go before we achieve the full garden potential of these lovely plants. *Corydalis pseudobarbisepala* is one of the many recent introductions to our gardens – it is still quite scarce and difficult to obtain but I am sure that like *C. flexuosa* this will change and it will become widely available.



Corydalis pseudobarbispala leaves

It is a very striking and distinct species with very beautiful leaves which alone make it unlikely to be confused with any of the other species I know.



Corydalis pseudobarbispala

At first the flowers are grouped close together at the top of the stem which gradually extends as the flowers mature spacing them out nicely so you can enjoy the stunning blue colour that just jumps out at you.



Corydalis pseudobarbisepala

The flowers are substantial and are the biggest of all the species that we grow. This is the first year we have flowered it so it is a bit difficult for me to tell how well it will increase in our garden but I can report that it has survived planted out and unprotected through the coldest winter we have had for a long time so it is certainly cold hardy down to -14C. I also know that it has been growing very well in Peter Korn's garden in Sweden.



Corydalis turtschaninovii

Corydalis turtschaninovii is the last of the tuberous species to flower for us and it too has settled down and is growing and increasing well in several of our humus-rich beds.



Bluebells

I could not mention the blues without showing perhaps the most wide spread ‘Bluebells’ - *Hyacinthoides*. Any one who has seen a woodland carpeted with blue will realise two things firstly what a magnificent sight this is and secondly here is a vigorous coloniser of a plant that spreads quickly both by division and by seed. *Hyacinthoides hispanica* is by far the most vigorous and commonly seen of the two species with the less invasive *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* becoming increasingly less common. The three pictures above are of hybrids between the two species. This hybrid is fertile and the three forms above blue, pink and white, have all come from a blue hybrid self seeding in the small area under an *Acer* where I have allowed them to grow unchecked until now. I will now have to thin this colony down a bit because while I am happy to have a small group I must prevent it taking over other beds.



Fritillaria camschatensis

Fritillaria camschatensis is about the last of the genus to flower for us each year – this is the Alaskan form which can be identified by having slightly more flared flowers which also have some degree of green in the petals: a colour that I have never noted in any of the Asian forms of this species that I have raised.



Fritillaria camschatensis

These next few pictures show just some of the variations in the colour mix between green and dark purple.



Fritillaria camschatensis

Most mature bulbs will have multiple flowers per stem: I have recorded up to five.



**Fritillaria
camschatensis**



Fritillaria camschatensis aurea

I am also pleased to have strong growing yellow form of Fritillaria camschatensis.



Dactylorhiza purpurella

The 'northern marsh' orchid, *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, is now opening in one of our raised beds. This is a wee beauty whose size makes it the perfect subject for our raised beds and troughs while the many taller growing hybrids are better suited to the garden beds.



Dactylorhiza purpurella



Eranthis hyemalis seeds

This week I have been collecting our *Eranthis hyemalis* seeds which have provided an excellent harvest. For many years I have just allowed the seed to distribute by its own means allowing the plants to naturalise but now these areas have reached a fairly intense density so I have scattered the seeds into other areas where I would like to enjoy this early flowering beauty.



Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' seed heads

While the hybrid *Eranthis* 'Guinea Gold' always goes through the motions of forming seed heads I have never had a single seed from them suggesting that this is a sterile hybrid.



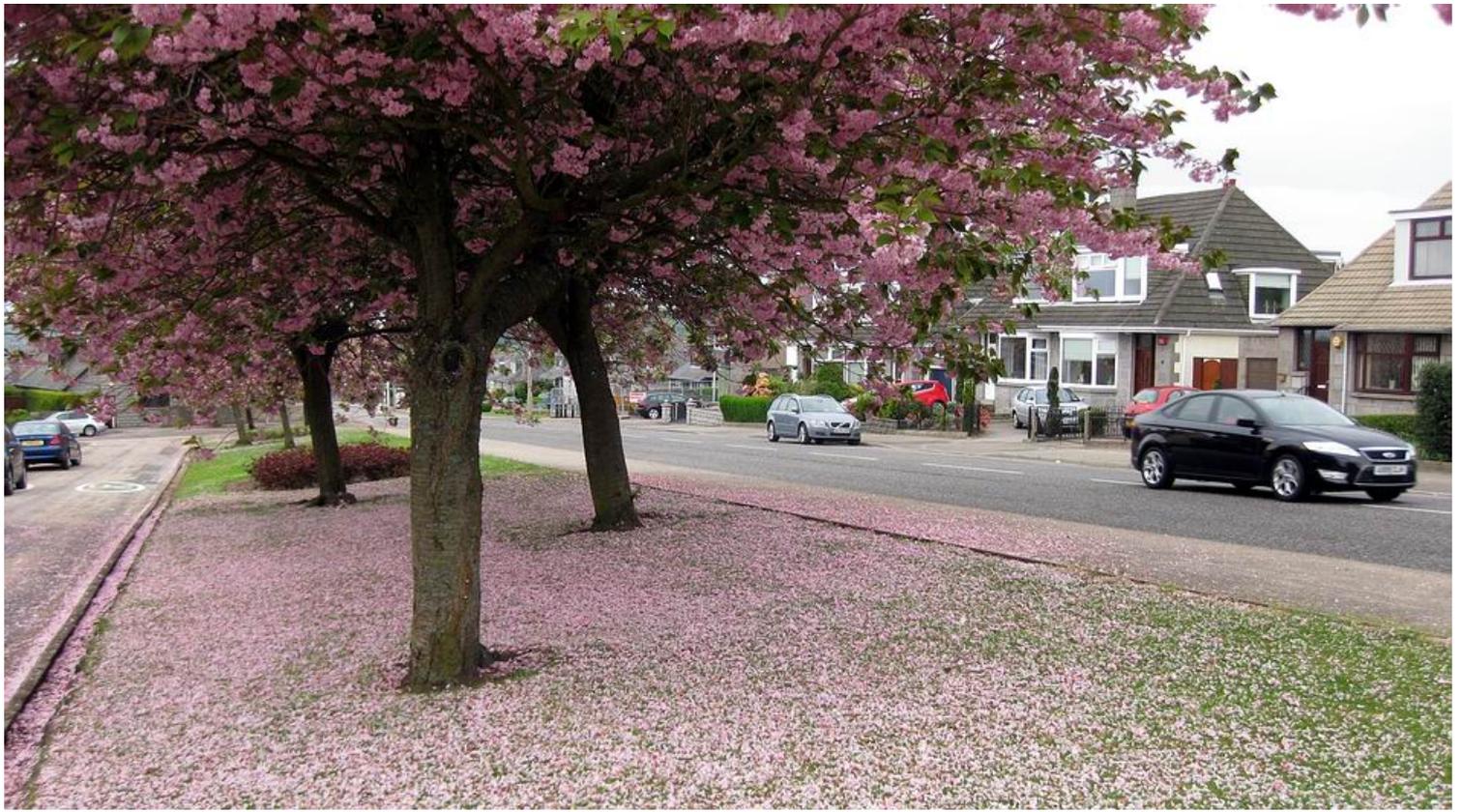
Trillium erectum and sulcatum

I read in the forum recently that I was not alone in having had trouble in seeing the difference between *Trillium erectum* and *Trillium sulcatum*. For years this troubled me until a number of years ago a pot of seedlings matured and flowered to reveal to me that I had never grown the true *T. sulcatum* before – all the material I had previously acquired had been wrongly named *sulcatum* and was in fact *T. erectum*. Once you have seen the two species you can quickly tell them apart.



Trillium erectum and sulcatum

The easiest way for gardeners to distinguish them is to look at the flowers from the side – *T. erectum* has an open flower and you can see all the base of the ovary from the side view while the petals of *T. sulcatum* form a shallow cup that hides the lower part of the interior with just the stigma and the tips of the stamens visible from a side view.



Cherry Blossom

To get back to my blues reference and the great Robert Johnson – ‘I went down to the crossroads’ and this is what I saw. Just round the corner from our house where I walk the dogs every day is this staggered line of Cherry trees – they look fairly miserable for most of the year but boy do they perform in May producing this fabulous sight.



I especially love it when the ground becomes carpeted with a sea of pink as the petals start to fall.



♪ ♪♪♪♪ I woke up this morning..... ♪♪♪♪♪