



BULB LOG 19.....11<sup>th</sup> May 2011



**Front Garden**

This is the 'bulb log' but I know from feedback that many of you enjoy seeing the other plants and wider aspects of our garden. The front garden has become a bit of a jungle of shrubs and small trees which, along with our planted up drive ways, brings a steady stream of workmen knocking at our door offering to give us a quote to cut back our over-grown garden and pave our well planted drive over. The nerve of them – you can imagine the response they get from us!!

Sorbus are among my favourite trees and many such as **Sorbus cashmeriana** above are self limiting in height making them especially suited to the smaller garden. We have given away a number of seedlings and two offspring from this tree are growing happily in neighbours' gardens down the road.



## **Sorbus cashmeriana pink**

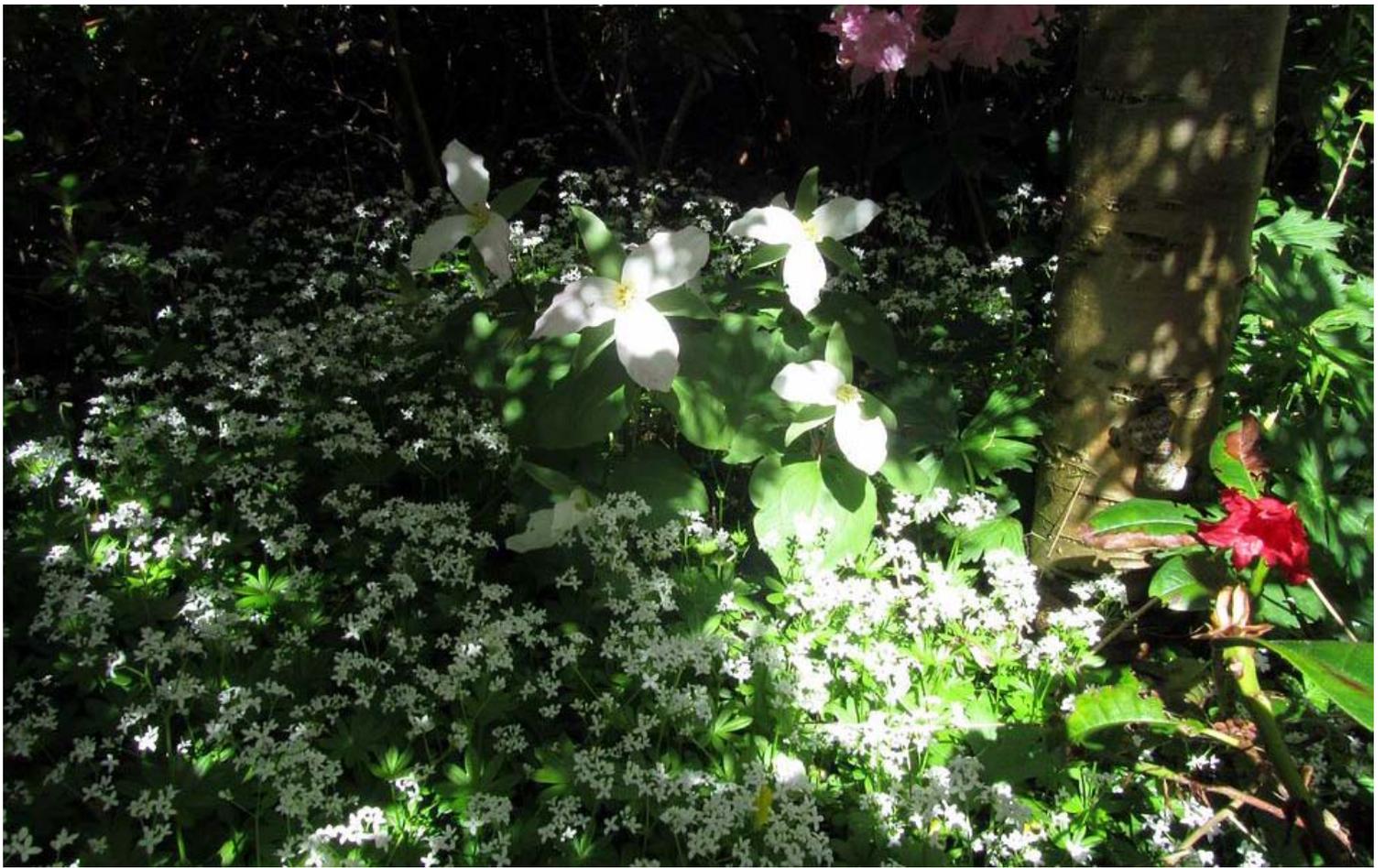
As you know I like to grow as many of my plants from seed and trees are no exception. Many would think that is a very slow way to go about it and would rather buy a tree from a nursery but I can assure you that a well grown seedling can catch up with and even overtake a containerized nursery bought tree after about five years especially if the nursery tree has spent a bit too long in its pot.

Both the normal form of *Sorbus cashmeriana* and this so called pink form were seed raised plants: the normal form from our own seed and the seed of the pink form came from Ness Botanic Garden.



## **Dicentra 'Boothmans form'**

Dicentra are ideal subjects for growing under trees and larger shrubs where they can run about without causing problems: this is Boothman's form a hybrid between two North American species which is a bit better behaved and spreads quite slowly.



**Trillium grandiflorum, Galium odoratum**

Trillium grandiflorum is also happy under the deep shade with just the occasional glimpse of the sunshine as it dapples through the leafy canopy. Another plant that many would describe as a weed is Galium oderatum but I find it a wonderful wild flower if used in the right place. Here it spreads happily under all the shrubs in our front garden and does not out compete any of the other smaller plants that it shares a bed with. At this time of year it forms a wonderful sea of green covered with a foam of white flowers.



**Rhododendron yakushimanum**

Rhododendron yakushimium has wrapped around the base of the Sorbus and is now climbing out over the wall to welcome passersby with its glorious deep pink buds that open into pink washed flowers.



**Rhododendron yakushmanium**



**Rhododendron makinoi**



## **Rhododendron makinoi**

Like *R. yakushimanum*, *R. makinoi* comes from the Islands of Japan and it has many similar qualities such as outstanding foliage with a thick layer of wooly indumentum. While they both tend to flower on a biennial cycle, with every second year providing a great display of flowers, the plants I show are now quite an age and seem to have got into a routine where around half of the branches flower one year and the other half the next. Both these

shrubs come from an area of high rainfall and so are used to a constant source of water during the growing season. This also means that they have a constant supply of nutrients and this I think is the reason they can often look chlorotic in our garden because they do not always get that constant moisture. To counter act this I apply a liquid feed rich in chelated iron a couple of times a year.



## **Rhododendron decorum**

While this looks like one large *Rhododendron decorum* it is in fact two seedlings raised from the ACE seed collection that I planted out together. To the right with the yellow flowers is tall shrubby *Paeonia lutea ludlowii*.



**Rhododendron decorum**

The massive buds expand until they explode into the most magnificent scented flowers and I show a detail of both flower forms in the two pictures below.





**Rhododendron decorum clone 2**



A similar plant but with even more scented flowers that I also raised from seed is **Rhododendron fortunei**



## **Podophyllum pleianthum**

As I have often mentioned , I remove most of the lower branches of these large Rhodendrons to open up the planting area underneath them for bulbs and other suitable plants.

The massive leaves of Podophyllum pleianthum not only look well but their large proportions are also efficient in capturing the light levels reduced by the shade of the shrubs.

The shrubs also provide good shelter filtering the worst effects of the winds that could shred such large sail-like leaves if they were out in the open.



## **Podophyllum pleianthum flowers**

The pendant flowers do tend to hide themselves from view so it is well worth getting down to view their subtle beauty. See how large the anthers are!

## **Podophyllum hexandrum**



Also just emerging and looking very spectacular are these shoots of *Podophyllum hexandrum*. The great hairy buds sit like the head of an alien on top of a shiny dark crinkled body.

Like a butterfly's crinkled wings as it emerges from its chrysalis, these unfurl to form objects of great beauty. The *Podophyllum* leaves expand to reveal a remarkably variable range of patterns. Some can be almost plain but the pattern and contrast of others can be quite spectacular when they first appear.

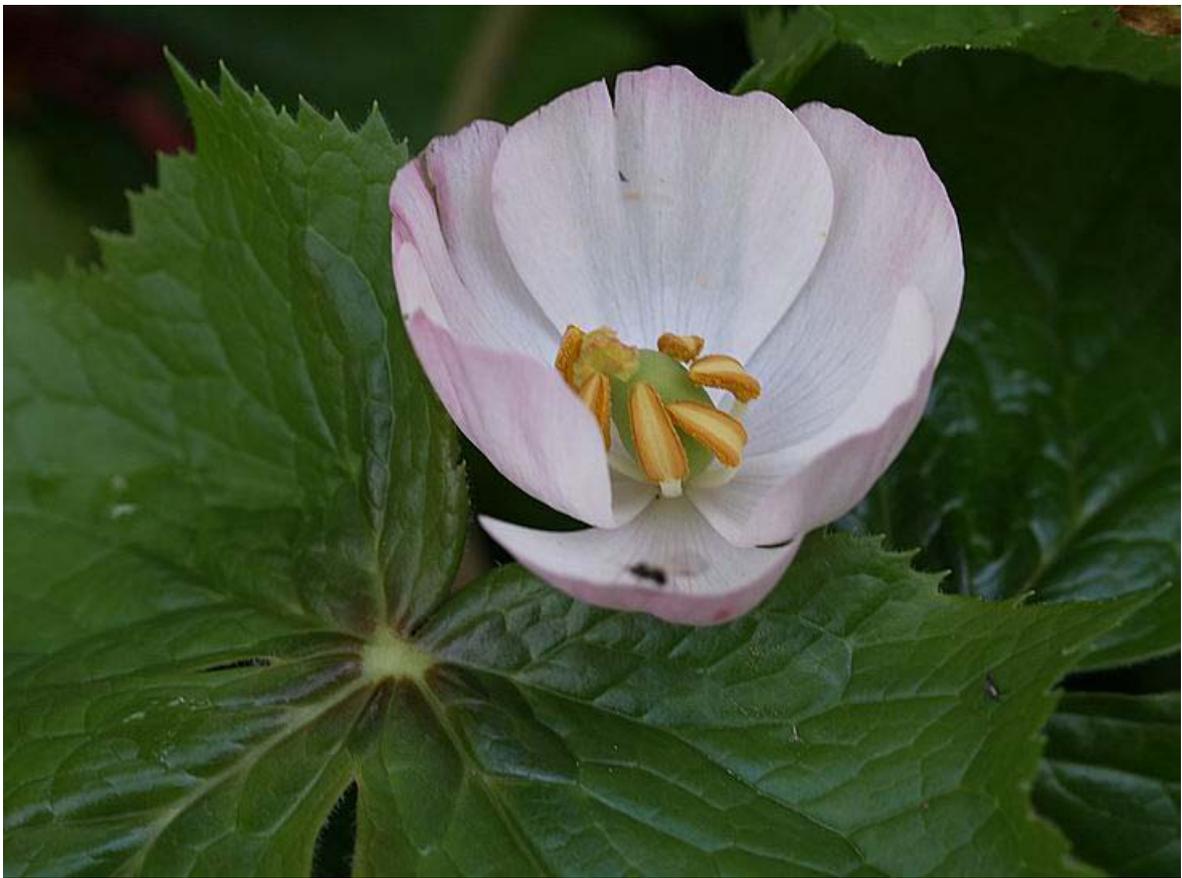
With time many start to lose these markings as they seem to fade with the light but some selections retain them.

Other species of *Podophyllum*, or plants that used to be called that before they were renamed by some taxonomist, are grown for their highly decorative foliage.

At the Conference in Nottingham there was much mention of all the name changes in the plant world and we were told of the 'Lumpers' that tend to group similar plants into a single species, the 'Splitters' that describe a new species for the smallest of variation and a new name to me was 'Splinters' which I take to be somewhere in between the two. I decided in my talk to make a stand and introduced the delegates to another name declaring myself as a 'Sticker' – someone who will stick with the name they know.



**Podophyllum hexandrum**



**Podophyllum hexandrum flower over plainer leaves**



**Paeonia obovata alba**

Another genus that we love and use a lot are the Paeonia especially the ones that love the cooler growing conditions – this is the beautiful white form of Paeonia obovata which in my experience always comes true from seed.



**Paeonia  
obovata  
alba**

Paeonia obovata alba  
enjoying the  
company of a Ledum  
– now sunk into  
Rhododendron!



**Paeonia delavayi  
and  
Paeonia emodii**

We also grow a number of tree Peonies such as the dark flowered Paeonia delavayi seen in the background. In the foreground is one of the most beautiful whites with massive and beautifully scented flowers – a close up appears below.

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***Paeonia emodii***



***Paeonia delavayi***



***Paeonia delavayi***



***Paeonia lutea ludlowii***