



BULB LOG 28.....11th July 2012



Cardiocrinum giganteum



Everything about this giant plant suggests to me that it has evolved to grow during a season of heavy precipitation – with long funnel shaped pendulous flowers to keep the pollen dry – the large shiny leaves that shed the water umbrella-like away from the bulb but into the area of root run and not least the giant size itself which requires copious quantities of water to fuel that amount of growth. As if it were not magnificent enough the stem of this plant has spilt about half way up to produce a second bunch of flowers just below the main one. I do not know how

common an occurrence this may be but it is the first time that I have seen it. You may not detect the scent of this lily during the moist days but in a warm evening it will fill the garden with its delicious fragrance suggesting that it is pollinated by evening or night flying insects.



Here is another important lily in our garden – Miss Lily one of our ‘Westies’ who shadows me wherever she can. Along with Poppy our other Westie she much prefers sunbathing to the continual rain. I know from the many messages of appreciation I get when I do include their picture that many of you enjoy seeing them.



Bulb Bed

The bulb bed which started out the year with Galanthus and Crocus followed by Corydalis, Erythronium, Iris, Narcissus etc is now a complete jungle of growth. A Delphinium species that I grew from wild collected seed as a 'dwarf' species is anything but. As I do not stake them the stems tend to flop over giving the appearance of a dwarf plant as the flowers appear to be low to the

ground. Visitors often ask what is that dwarf species until I point out that the plant rises from the ground some metre or more away. Along with other taller species that some may consider 'weeds' I value these plants for providing colour - taking on this role from the Meconopsis and Allium that recently flowered in this same bed.



Bulb Bed

Creating a bed that has flowering interest all year round is an ongoing process of watching what is in flower elsewhere that could fit in with the growth cycle of the bed and extend the flowering season. Dactylorhiza are a great subject and I continue to extend their use all around the garden as I will elaborate on in coming weeks.



I split this clump *Dactylorhiza* last year.



This group has increased from three self sown seedlings that I moved from one of the gravel paths about three years ago.



Garden view with Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'

The eagle eyed of you will already have noticed the blue of Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' in the background of the previous two pictures and here you can see how much of a feature it is in our garden. Over the years I have raised



and named a number of plants but this has to be the most successful of all. It is now offered for sale in many countries of the world and while I have never had any financial gain it brings me great satisfaction to know that so many can enjoy a plant that arose in our garden. The wonderful colour allied with its ability to tolerate a wide range of growing conditions plus a long flowering period make it a very good general plant - add to this the ease and speed of increase and you can understand

why it has become so widely offered. What you cannot get from the pictures is the wonderful sweet honey like scent that fills the garden air when it is flower. I first discovered Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' as a self sown seedling in the gravel path area of our garden and recognised that it was different from Corydalis flexuosa and C. omieana which grew nearby.



Hybrid Corydalis

This gravel path area has become a very productive bed for self sown seedlings of many types and last year I noticed the first flowering of another quite different coloured Corydalis and now a year on it is bigger and I can better assess it. It is not a compact plant but

has probably grown taller as it reaches out for light, having seeded under the edge of a dwarf pine, than it would in a more open aspect.



Hybrid Corydalis

I find it difficult to capture the true colour photographically it is more of a red/ purple than it appears here to the left 'C. Craigton Blue' which I include for comparison –it was the colour that first drew it to my attention last year.



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' x Corydalis capitata



The purple colour along with the compact cap-like huddle of the flowers when they first come out suggest to me that this is a hybrid between Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' and *C. capitata* although *C. flexuosa* (the pollen parent of 'Craigton Blue') which also grows nearby cannot be ruled out as a direct parent.

Further confirmation of the presence of *C. capitata* can be seen in the characteristic way that the inflorescence elongates as the flowers are fertilised and the seed capsules start to form – a typical feature of *C. capitata*.

Another indication is that I can see that the seed pods are not full of seeds but have only a few fat fertile looking seeds. Many hybrids are less productive in giving fertile seeds than the parent species and some turn out to be sterile.

Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' is a fertile hybrid and regularly sets small amounts of seed in our garden. The product of this is a spreading patch of attractive self sown seedlings the majority of which are almost indistinguishable from the parent plant.



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'

Corydalis hybrid

Corydalis capitata

The two pictures on this page give further evidence on this new plant being a hybrid between these two species intermediate in both flowers and foliage.



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'

Corydalis hybrid

Corydalis capitata



Corydalis hybrid base

I now have to wait and see if this plant will increase as well as *C. 'Craigton Blue'* or if it will adopt the habit of its other parent *C. capitata* which in my experience increases faster by seed than by division of the root which sometimes dies after flowering. I know that Peter Korn has a similar hybrid that I have in our garden but it flowered much earlier in the year. While I do not find its colour as attractive as 'Craigton Blue' for anyone looking for a purple form it could be a useful addition to the garden. I will continue to assess it over the coming months and years.



Spring beds

These two pictures show how one of our main spring bulb beds looks now that the *Corydalis*, *Erythronium* and *Anemones* that feature so early in the year are dormant.

A complete change as *Arisaema*, *Dactylorhiza* and *Lilies* represent the 'bulbous' subjects while *Meconopsis* continue to enjoy the wet cool conditions of what passes for a summer in these parts.



But delve deeply into the lower growth and you will see that at last the *Roscoea* are now also making an appearance.



Last but not least for this week are the giant leaves of *Arisaema wilsonii* which when the flowers first start to emerge in May are still wrapped in the shoot but soon overtake and cover the magnificent flowers which you can see by looking below.

