



BULB LOG 19..... 8th May 2013

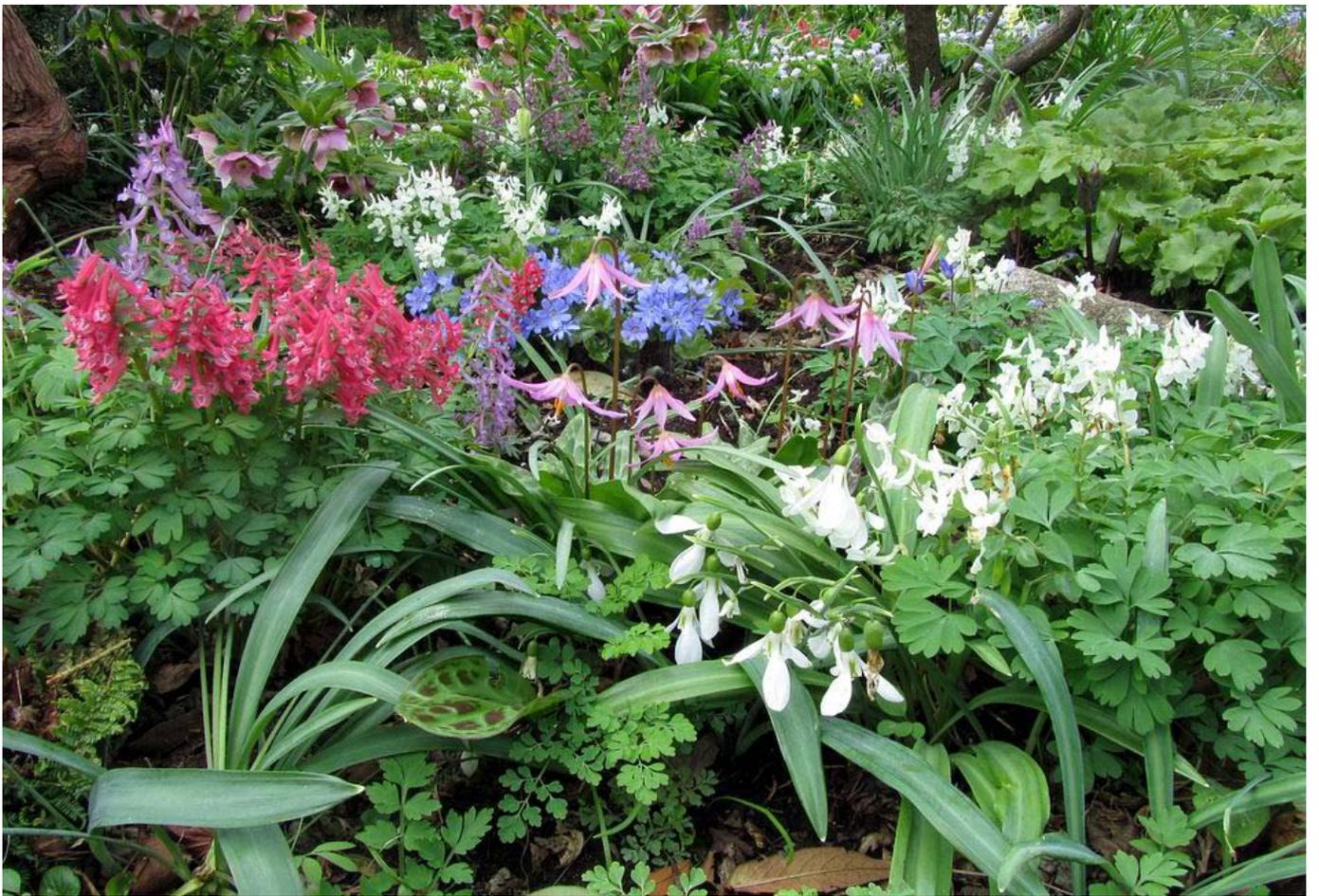


I prepared this bulb log before I left to go to the Czech International conference. My consolation for leaving all these beautiful flowers behind is that I will be seeing some outstanding gardens and many fine plants, including I hope, many Saxifraga. We have to thank growers in the Czech Republic for keeping this wonderful group of plants going when it fell out of fashion in the UK pushed aside by the likes

of Dionysia -which we have no chance of growing unprotected. Thankfully there has been a resurgence of interest in saxifrages in recent years – I certainly hope to be bringing a few home with me.



My style of gardening that has evolved over many years is growing as many bulbous plants together providing glorious mixes of colours that changes from season to season.



Every year we see different plant combinations as each is affected differently by our variable weather. In many years the galanthus would be past flowering before the Erythroniums came into flower but this year there is some overlap with their seasons.



Galanthus 'Craigton Twin'

A closer look at the galanthus in the foreground reveals that mature bulbs always have two flowers on the stem. Young offsets and small bulbs only have a single flower but will have two when they are growing strongly.



Erythronium hendersonii* and *Erythronium grandiflorum



Erythronium grandiflorum

Erythronium grandiflorum can have yellow, brown or pale cream pollen and in my experience you can get all three from a single seed collection. As this colour variation is not genetically fixed and passed on through seed they are given variety status, the lowest taxonomic classification.



This bed is now in its third incarnation of flowering for this year with the *Corydalis* and *Erythroniums* being the stars of the moment.



Evidence of one of the earlier flowering displays can be seen in the foreground where some *Galanthus* seedpods are swelling.

Careful scrutiny will reveal signs of the next phase of flowering in the form of *Fritillaria* buds along with *Trillium* and various lilies.

Corydalis solida

Corydalis solida is an outstanding plant and should be included in every garden.

It comes in many colours and flowers early in the year – by mid May it has completed its growth cycle and retreated back underground allowing other plants to share the same space.

It has a wide colour range from red through pinks and purples to almost blue. I like having mixed plantings of all the colour range which can sound gaudy with potentially clashing colours but if you include some whites they neutralise these imbalances and everything looks harmonious. We have raised a number of white seedlings and I always work to build them up as they are less common than the other colours.





Trilliums have long stems with the leaves near the top because they have evolved to grow through an underplanting so this is how I like to grow them – not as a specimen plant surrounded by bare ground.





Erythronium with Trillium in the background showing how densely we like to grow our plants.



Another feature of our gardening is allowing plants to naturalise by self seeding. I do not want my garden to be like a depleted modern forest which consists only of old trees with no young plants and seedlings to be found. I want to have plants of all ages from newly germinating seeds up to fully mature plants not just some specimen plants. The area above has been populated by allowing the Erythronium and Trillium to self seed and now it is a mass of plants some flowering, others just germinating.



Seed variation always appears and among the many similar looking leaves this one has emerged to stand out.



All the Erythroniums in the foreground have escaped from the bed by self seeding, taking over the gravel area between the paving slabs



It is not only Erythroniums that are self seeding all through the gravel areas that we originally intended to be for walking on. A colony of *Narcissus bulbocodium* is slowly spreading as it seeds around and as you see below some variation, like this twin flowered form, will occur. I doubt if this will be a fixed feature as I have often been disappointed before when I carefully selected out a twin flowered form like this only for it to revert to the more typical single flower.





Trillium rivale peeks out from under a dwarf *Rhododendron* with *Erythronium*s and *Narcissus cyclamineus* in the foreground.



The yellow flowered *Erythronium americanum* works well blending with *Narcissus cyclamineus*.



Any garden is a very artificial creation but I always try to mimic nature as much as I can. I saw *Trillium rivale* growing on a steep rocky wooded river bank in Southern Oregon and that was the inspiration for this planting. A group of seedlings flowers on the top of the wall below a dwarf pine and I want to get the plants to colonise the gaps between the stones. Last year I scattered the seeds between the rocks and you can see that they are now germinating. It would be very difficult to get actual plants into these gaps so I hope that some of the seeds will find a niche and survive



Further along the same bed I have planted out another pot of seedlings – when the flowers are going past I will lift this clump and space the individual seedling out a bit.



More plants are escaping from the beds by self seeding into the gravel area – noticeably a group of *Fritillaria pallidiflora* seedlings and a *Hepatica*.



A recent replanting in this narrow strip includes *Erythronium japonicum* and *sibericum* growing through white forms of *Corydalis solida* and *Dicentra cucularia* with *Trillium rivale* and *hibbersonii* peeking out at the edge. It is amazing how many bulbous plants you can pack in to even a small area like this.



Erythronium tuloumense growing under a large cinnamon barked specimen of *Rhododendron thomsonii*.



The final two view showing typical plantings and self seeding in our garden – normal(!) services should return to the Bulb Log next week.....

