



BULB LOG 47.....19th November 2014



Even in the dark days of our winter the troughs and raised beds continue to provide great visual value in our garden but your eye cannot help being drawn to the white flowers at the bottom of the picture.



Tanacetum parthenium formerly *Chrysanthemum parthenium*



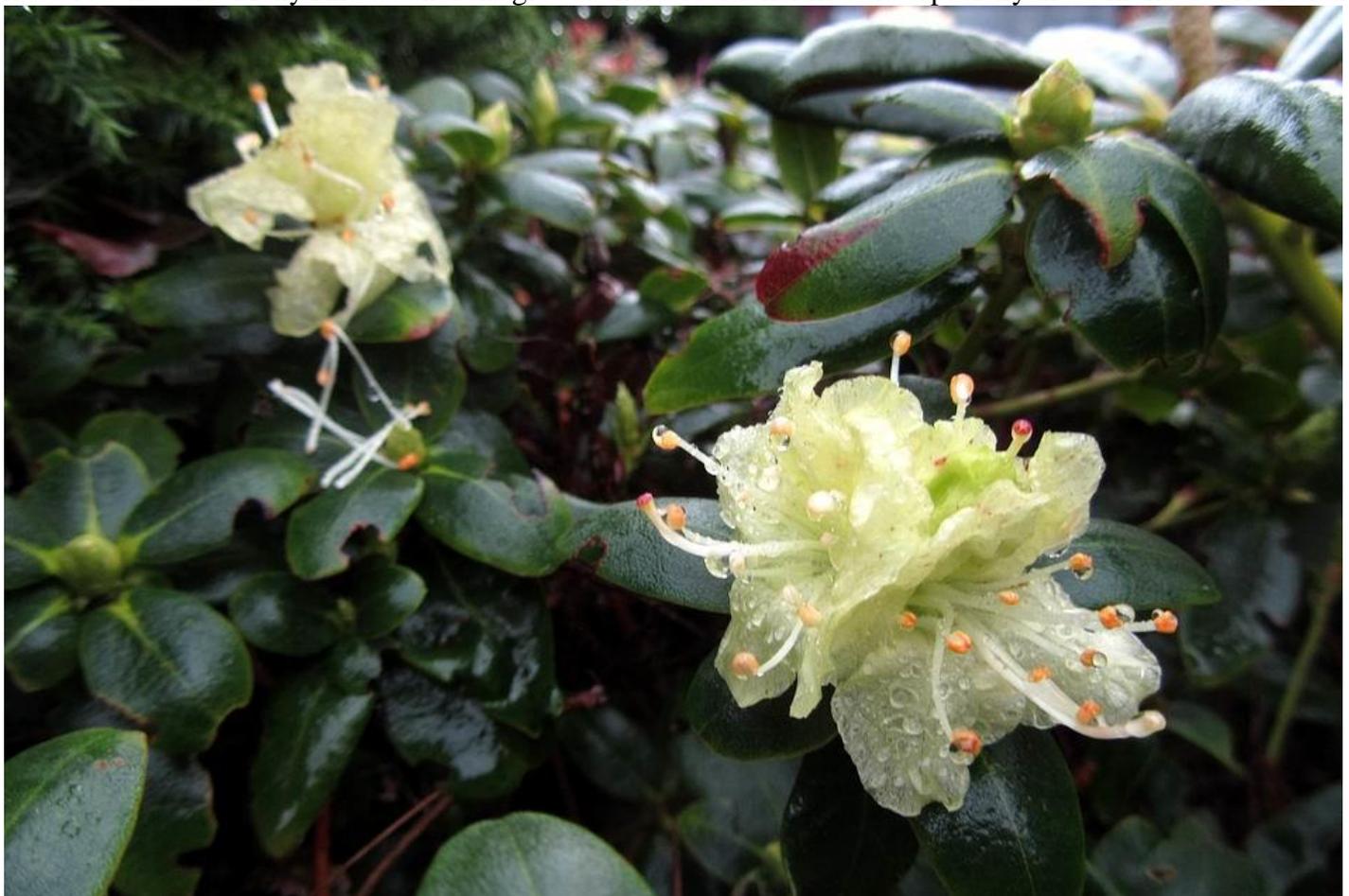
Tanacetum parthenium

Tanacetum parthenium is one of those plants that you do not need to introduce to your garden, they come in free - your choice is whether to allow them to stay or pull them out. When is a weed a weed and what exactly a weed is depends on your attitude. In your garden it is your choice. We are happy to let a number of plants self seed around but will remove those that appear in an inappropriate place – such as when they seed into a trough or raised bed. You can also see another self seeder, *Fragaria*, the wild strawberry, in the above picture this gives us flowers over a very long season - some had flowers all through last winter, which was exceptionally mild for us, and in the summer months we get very tasty small berries to eat.



Rhododendron saluense

Walking round the garden I find some plants with out of season flowers like this form of Rhododendron saluense which every year flowers in the spring then again produces a good flowering in late summer and even now it still has a few flowers. Many Rhododendrons give us these additional flowers especially those in the dwarf section.



Rhododendron 'Chikor'



Leucopogon fraseri

Another dwarf shrub in full flower just now is *Leucopogon fraseri* – a native of New Zealand with attractive grey green leaves - it grows well for us and is easily increased by cuttings.



In its homeland it produces masses of lovely orange fruits but in our garden, perhaps because we only have a single clone, we only get occasional fruits forming. Here it is pictured beside *Phyllodoce caerulea* to give you the scale.



Other plants that come for free are the fascinating fungi – which I am pleased to have as an indicator of a healthy living soil. One day I must read up on them and learn their names – I would be pleased if any of you can help.



Jasminum nudiflorum

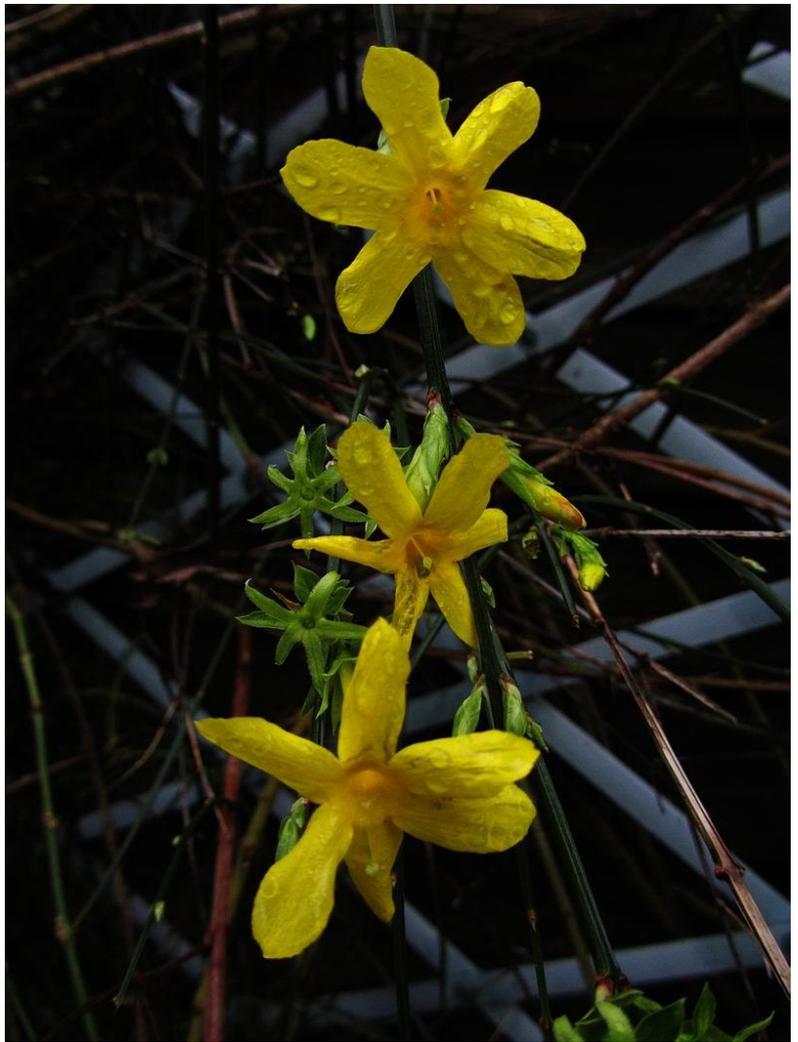
There are some plants that are worthy of a place in any garden and one of those is *Jasminum nudiflorum* – the winter flowering jasmine.

Our plant has never been treated very well: tucked in behind a plunge bed it spends much time in deep shade. Earlier this year I helped some of the trailing stems by tying them up towards the top of the fence so they are now seeing more light and so are flowering nicely. I hope that with a bit better treatment and some more help from me I will get this plant to cover this bit of fence.

Below is another welcome plant that once it arrives in your garden, usually without invitation, you will never be without it.

Meconopsis cambrica, was originally named by Carl Linnaeus in his 1753 *Species Plantarum* as *Papaver cambricum*. Louis Viguiier separated it from *Papaver* in 1814 making it the type species of the new genus *Meconopsis*. Recent taxonomic changes mean it will change its name again but I will stick with the name I am familiar with for now.

It is easy to remove seedlings from inappropriate places allowing others to grow and provide us with their cheery flowers that peak in summer but if the conditions are favourable can appear at any time of the year.



Meconopsis cambrica



Pseudofumaria lutea

Many of these plants will seed themselves into the most unlikely places and you can often see *Pseudofumaria lutea* growing in cracks in the masonry on walls, buildings and even high up on steeples. Again it is relatively easy to remove any unwanted seedlings that occur in inappropriate places.



If we did not allow plants to self seed in our garden we would never have found *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'. We still get many new *Corydalis* seedlings every year- many are very similar to Craigton Blue while others seem to have crossed with some of the other species we grow such as *Corydalis capitata*.



A self sown Corydalis seedling with a hint of purple is flowering just now through the brown stems of a Dactylorhiza.



Taraxacum officinale

Even my pet dandelion is managing a few flowers in these mild conditions we are experiencing. Notwithstanding the mild temperature it is not very enjoyable being under these deep dark rain clouds which not only bring heavy rain but also mean it has not been daylight for about a week - it makes taking photographs very difficult.



Cardamine hirsuta

One of the plants that self seeds in abundance and is definitely not welcome is *Cardamine hirsuta*, the hairy bitter cress. It is one of those weeds that will germinate and grow at any time of year if the weather conditions are at all suitable including mild spells in the winter. Most gardeners are aware of it in the spring and summer months, keeping on top of it then but as most plants go into a winter rest so do some gardeners, often not realising that these ephemeral plants can germinate and set seed

very quickly all year round. You can see fat seedpods in this plant just about to pop open scattering the seeds all around – how annoying it is when they pop just as you take hold of them to pull them out – I got this one in time.



A welcome self-seeded plant in our garden is this lovely *Acer*, I have been watching it for a few years and must decide soon if we will leave it where it is, under a large *Rhododendron thomsonii* or move it to a better site. I suspect it must be a seedling from a nearby *Acer* 'Osakazuki'.



Acer palmatum

We have a number of trees that I raised from *Acer palmatum* seed that hold their leaves very late every year – they are just turning colour now.



Aegopodium podagraria is a beautiful plant I love seeing it in glorious flower in the lanes and countryside but not in our garden. It is very invasive spreading by pernicious invasive roots that in our case come from the neighbouring garden – we have been fending it off for forty years and will continue to do so.



In the sand beds I have to be vigilant as weeds also love to grow there. The eye is initially distracted by the pretty leaves of *Cyclamen coum* but I still see those tiny weeds and liverwort that need dealt with – carefully removing by hand so they do not become too established in the winter.



A pot of *Colchicum* sits temporarily by our front door I will plant them into the garden next year.



Despite the dark days there is still activity in the bulb houses. Since I replaced all the staging I still find I have pots out of position. This pot of *Crocus caspius* is being crowded out by the leaves of the *Sternbergia* but as they are both liable to have roots out of the pot into the sand plunge I will not risk damaging them now however I have made a mental note to rearrange them next summer so they are beside more appropriate neighbours.



Crocus caspius



Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus grows ever taller as it hopes to find better light.



Ornithogalum leaves



It should be no surprise to see **Ornithogalum** seedlings germinating as the seed of many bulbous plants will germinate around the time the parents come into growth.



An ongoing task is removing the fallen flowers off the Cyclamen leaves to minimise the risk of fungal attack.



In these very damp days this task is even more important and I am out every day removing the flowers of Crocus, Cyclamen etc as soon as they go over.

As I collect them I appreciate how much moisture is in the air as I could literally wring moisture out of these spent flowers.



Final picture this week is of Narcissus 'Craigton Chorister' the first of which are just opening.....