



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 14

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BULB LOG 14.....4th April 2018





Rhododendron uvariifolium

Rhododendrons are a critical part of the structure of our garden, especially the larger ones which are now like small trees providing valuable height. I keep the ground below open by removing the lower branches which allows me to plant bulbs and herbaceous plants right up to the trunk.



Rhododendron uvariifolium is one of many we have raised from wild collected seeds.

With their very attractive foliage **Rhododendron uvariifolium** and **Rhododendron elegantulum** form an attractive screen in the garden all year round and when they are in flower it is an added bonus. *R.elegantulum* is a reliable re-flowering plant throughout the year, adding to its value in the garden.



Viewed from the reverse angle *Rhododendron uvariifolium* seems less dominant.



Rhododendron 'Cilpinense'

Our Rhododendron 'Cilpinense' does not have an attractive form largely because it is tucked under the shade of larger rhododendrons however this canopy does afford it some degree of protection from frosts.

It flowers so early that its flowers are often frosted so when they do get to open we make sure to enjoy them.

Surprisingly the flowers survived the recent cold weather which damaged other plants and the reason for this is that it was not so much the freezing temperatures that caused the damage but the associated gale force winds blowing in from the east that turned exposed parts of the garden into a blast freezer.



Rhododendron thomsonii



Rhododendron thomsonii – McBeath’s Form – seed collected by Ron McBeath

Rhododendron thomsonii is another over 3m high, it is now the size of a small tree – it has beautiful cinnamon coloured bark, large blood-red flowers, and is under planted with a wide range of plants.

Views across parts of the garden show how the Rhododendrons along with other trees and shrubs from a structure and canopy that we under plant with a wide range of subjects to provide an ever changing range of colour, form and texture. The added bonus is when we allow the bulbs and plants to self-seed so we don't just have a single isolated specimen plant but the range of ages from germinating seedlings to mature plants as is seen in nature.



In many warmer gardens the snowdrop season is almost over but here in the colder north many of our Galanthus are still in glorious condition and depending on our temperatures will continue for some weeks.



Galanthus and Megan



Snowdrops in their prime



The growth in the Bulb Bed is becoming more lush with the *Fritillaria imperialis* stems pushing upwards and a number of these are going to flower.

Hellebores are also flowering this one flowers beautifully but others have significant damage caused by the recent icy cold winds.





There are many micro climates in any garden and there is one area near the cobble bed which was especially battered by the recent freezing winds it is here that many of the Hellebore flowers stems are damaged.



It was not the cold alone that did the damage to the Hellebores as we regularly get colder conditions at this time of year when the flower stems collapse then rise up again as the frosts lift it was the severe wind that accompanied the frosts that did this damage. It is however only this year's flowers stems that have been damaged the leaves which do not emerge for a while yet will grow as normal.

A nearby *Crinodendron hookerianum* had all its leaves, flower buds and youngest growths destroyed - however from previous experiences I know it will regrow from older wood so I took this chance to do some reshaping of this shrub.



In other parts of the garden Hellebores show no signs of damage.



Hepatica nobilis



My small bed along the edge of one of the Erythronium frames, landscaped with broken concrete and planted up with **Hepatica nobilis** and **Corydalis solidida** seedlings, continues to give me great pleasure at this time of year.



Hepatica nobilis and **Corydalis solidida**



The mini landscape of broken concrete block is now completely covered in moss but I have no intention of removing it this year – I will observe the evolution of this habitat and how the plants respond.



This small self-seeding colony of *Corydalis solida incisa* is in one of the raised slab beds.



Corydalis solida incisa



One of my original stock boxes of ***Corydalis solida*** 'Beth Evans' which is also planted around the garden.



Corydalis solida



Corydalis solida



The white wave effect of the *Galanthus* and *Leucojum* that rolled out across the garden will start to fade but is replaced by the creamy white froth of ***Corydalis malkensis*** flowers spreading across many of the beds. It flowers and sets seeds every year and I welcome this gradual spread. Like most similar *Corydalis* the growths disappears as quickly as it arrives and will be back underground by the middle of May.



The warmer bright colours of ***Corydalis solida*** are joining in with ***Corydalis malkensis*** adding to the colour spectacular across many beds - I cannot understand why these plants are not more widely grown.



I am never happier than when the ground disappears under the growth of foliage and flowers in the spring and does not come back into view until autumn. This cycle of flowering repeats itself every year but our intermittent weather affects the growth rates of plants differently so the sequence of plants flowering together varies from year to year.



Fritillaria imperialis and *Colchicum* leaves with *Helleborus* and *Corydalis soilda* flowering.



We have been enjoying Narcissus flowers all winter in the bulb houses and now they are appearing in the garden.



Narcissus cyclamineus



Because of their diminutive stature I tend to establish **Narcissus cyclamineus** on the raised beds and walls where we can better enjoy their unique beauty. These will soon be joined by a host of other plants including some of the smaller Erythronium and Trillium species.



Erythronium dens canis

I am always excited when the Erythronium start flowering and the earliest Erythronium caucasicum has been in flower for a while but now early flowering forms of Erythronium dens-canis and japonicum are making their appearance. I try very hard not to use the common term 'flowering is later than normal' because even after all these years I do not know what a normal season is however flowering this

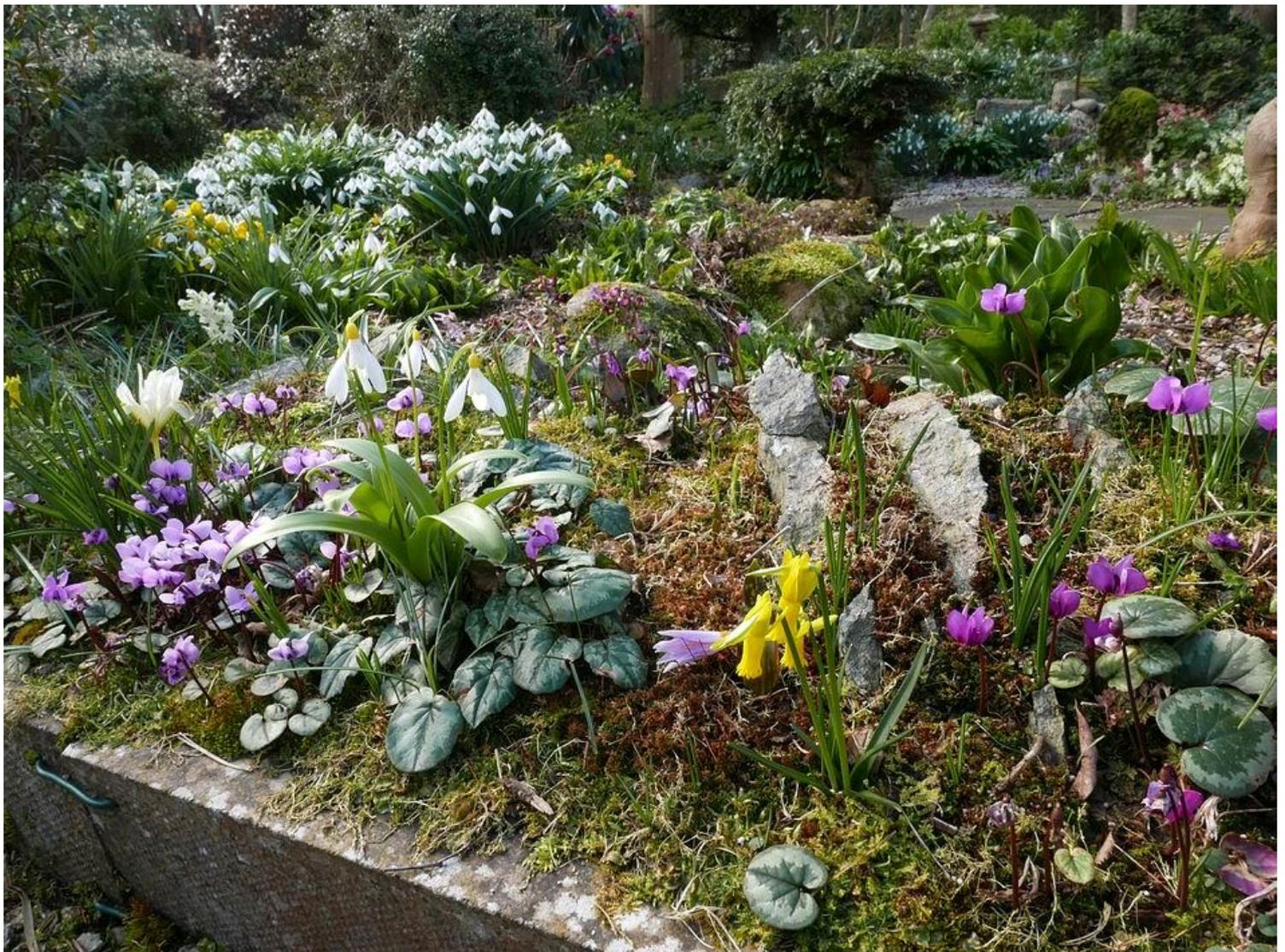
year is two to three weeks later than last year. Plants do not flower according to a date on a calendar they respond to the prevailing weather conditions with temperature and moisture levels having the largest influence on triggering growth.



Erythronium japonicum

Next week I will be at the wonderful Inverewe Garden taking part in their second [Erythronium Festival](#): click to check out the details.

Also I have an exhibition of photographs, 'Erythroniums in Cultivation' at [Explorers Garden Pitlochry](#) running from 1st April – 28th October – this is another of the great Scottish gardens open to the public.



Most of what is currently in flower is included in this picture can you spot a pink form of *Erythronium caucasicum* just opening, more of that in coming weeks. Click the link to join me in the newest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) looking at the garden on 1st April.....