



BULB LOG 51.....18<sup>th</sup> December 2019



*Galanthus reginae-olgae*



With the winter solstice fast approaching it is cheering to have *Galanthus reginae-olgae* flowering in the bulb house. There are some shoots in quite an advanced state poking through the open ground amid the fallen leaves.

All these shoots are reminders that another season of garden delights is ahead of us and, like nature, I must make preparations for the early flowering bulbs by clearing the beds of the fallen leaves and debris of the old growths.

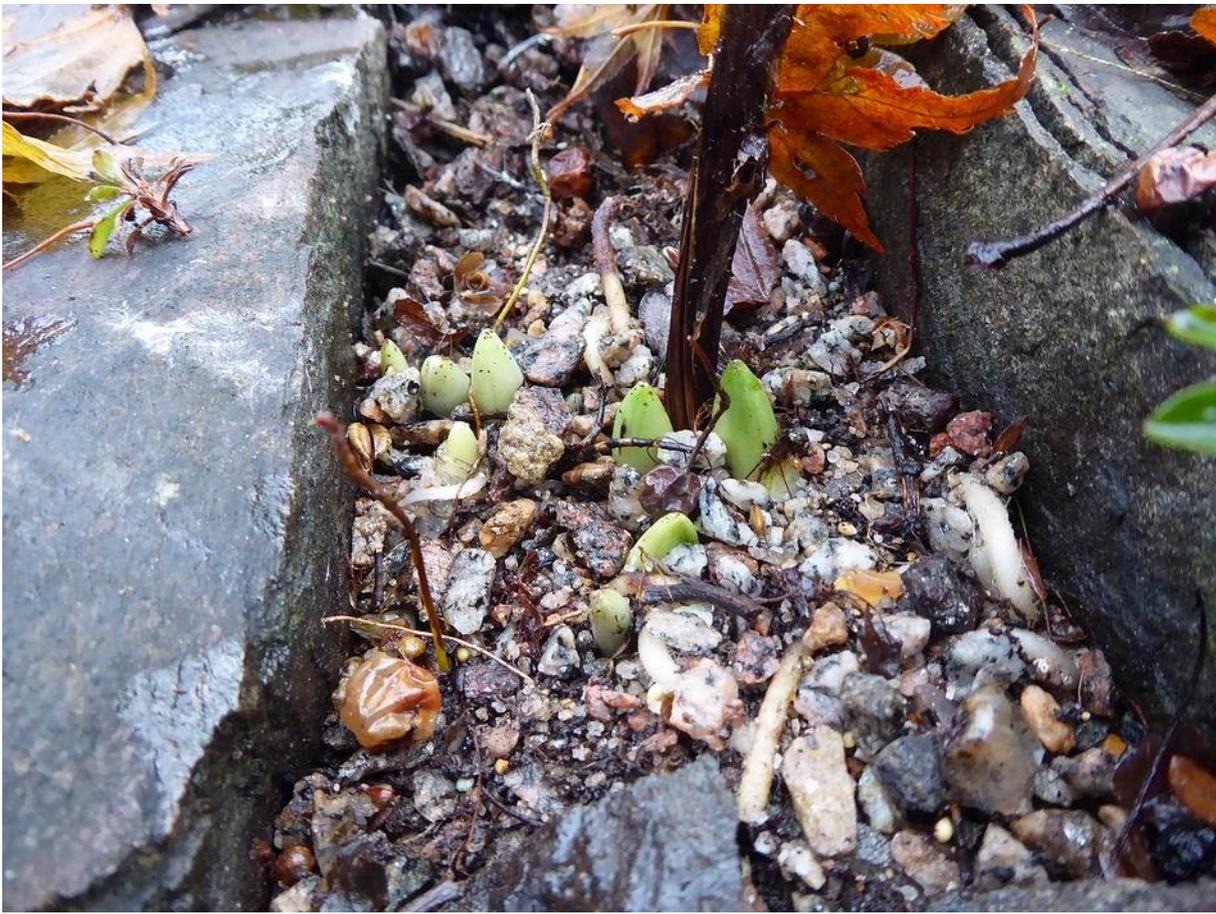


**Narcissus, Galanthus and Leucojum shoots.**

Here I am concentrating my efforts on clearing the 'Rock Garden bed' and adjacent Erythronium plunge beds which combine to form a single flowering unit later in the season.



I start to remove the leaves and old growths using a combination of a rake and a leaf blower then when I can see the ground I can also remove any unwanted weeds.



Like any job the most difficult part is getting started but rather than being a tedious task once you get going it is enjoyable exploring the bed in detail discovering all sorts of probing growths such as these *Dactylorhiza* shoots - promises of a colourful display in around six months.



On the other hand these *Iris 'Katherine Hodgkin'* buds will make their colourful floral display much sooner as they are among the earliest bulbs to flower in February.

Moss covered rocks can be attractive and in the right circumstances can form a very interesting habitat but here on the rock garden bed I want to see the rocks so I remove the moss each year peeling it off to prevent the rocks disappearing from view.



Peeling the moss off.



There are exceptions where I may leave the moss such as here where I found the training stems of a *Primula marginata* have rooted into the moss layer clinging to the rock surface. I suspected this may be the case so I slowly peeled the moss back stopping as soon as I saw the roots then carefully laid it back down.



The rock garden bed is to the left with the *Erythronium* plunge behind, with a narrow steeply sloping bed along the facing edge bringing the level down to the path. At the moment it looks like a fernery which leaves me with another decision do I leave or remove the ferns? For now I will leave them but may decide to remove some later.



To remind you of how this narrow bed looks when the *Corydalis solidia* and *Hepatica* are flowering in mid-March.





Progress is good and the bed is now clear of all the leaves with the *Erythronium* plunge bed also top dressed using the prunings I shredded a few weeks ago.



When we first built this bed around 1986 it was a rock garden bed getting good light but through the years trees and shrubs grew up casting it in some shade making it less suitable for the alpine plants so gradually it became dominated by bulbous plants but now the seasonal growth is underground there are a few survivors from the original planting such as *Haberlea rhodopensis* and some of the dwarf *Aciphylla* that stand out.



*Aciphylla similis*



Above my head I am reminded that there is some shaggy growth on the top of the hedge which I will cut back now rather than having to cut it in the early spring when I might disturb nesting birds.



The hedge trimmed, the rock garden bed, the erythronium plunge and the path-side hepatica bed are also tidied, ready for the new season with another reminder below of how they will look in the months ahead.





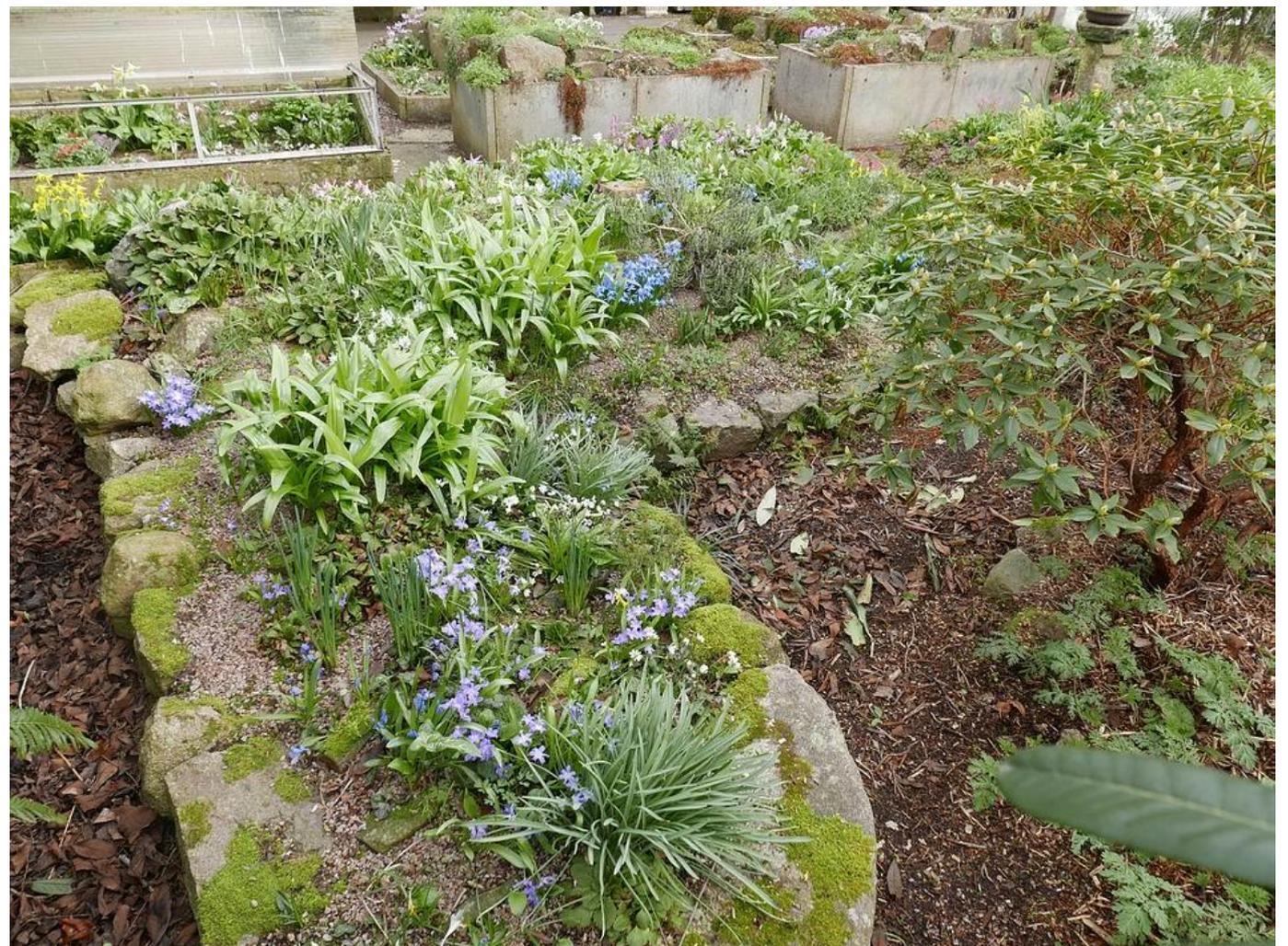
**Crocus tommasinianus**

Now I will share a small selection of images giving a flavour of the changing nature of this area in as the season progresses.











*Dactylorhiza* and *Ranunculus myconi*



*Dactylorhiza* and *Meconopsis*



We did not plant any of these *Meconopsis*; this welcome invasion is entirely down to them self-seeding.





**Roscoea alpina**



**Colchicum agrippinum**



**Crocus banaticus**



**Crocus speciosus hybrid.**



Beds now



Looking forward to April.....