



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 30.....24th July 2019

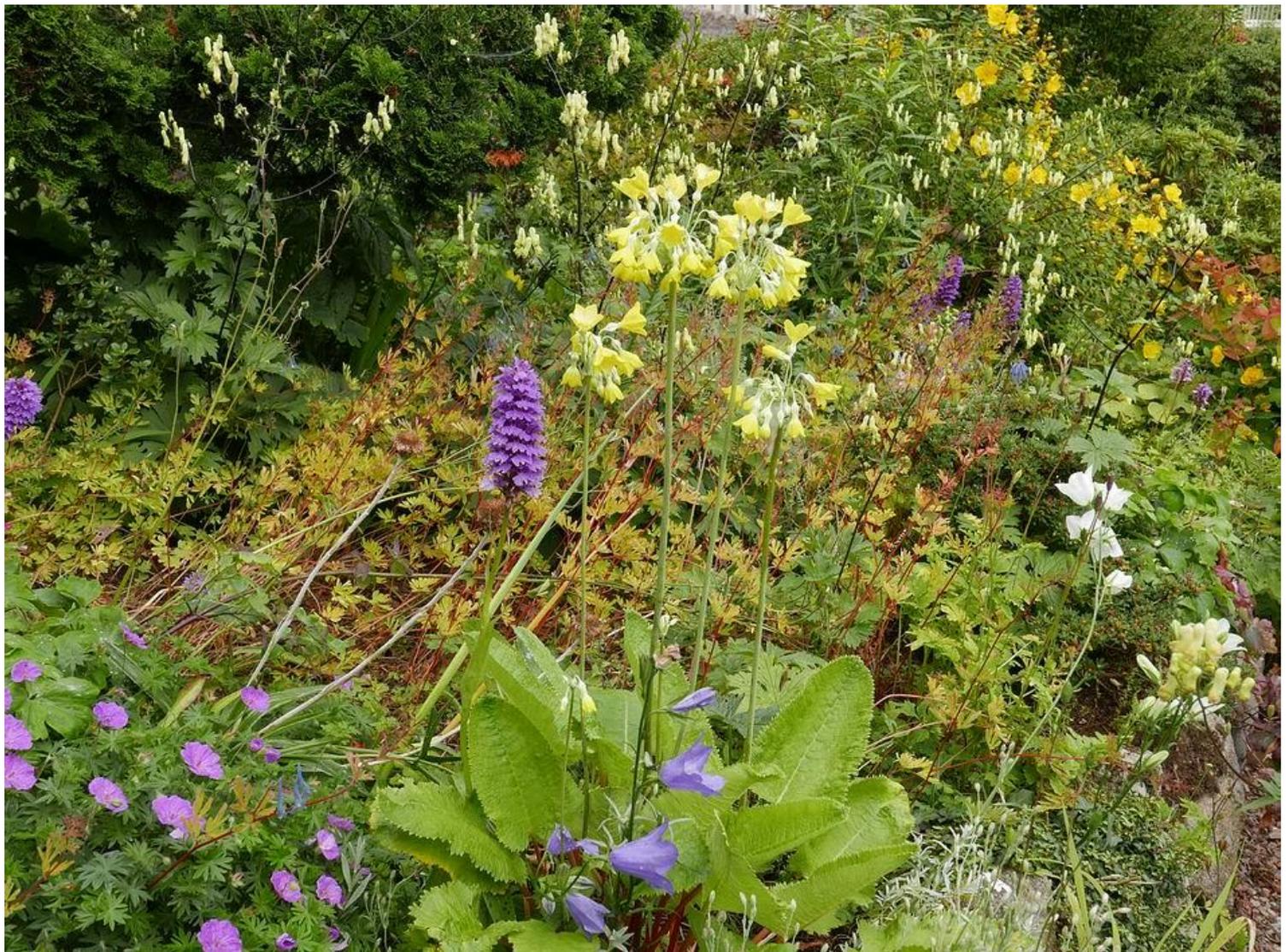


Geranium sanguineum



It is interesting to reflect back comparing the look and feel of the garden in February, as the first of the plants started to brave the cold dark days, with the tall lush growth that now dominates the very same spaces. The early plants, which are mostly bulbs, are now resting underground and not in the least bit bothered that these more flamboyant plants are now time-sharing the bed. In fact these plants are helping the bulbs stay dry by taking up the copious amounts of water from the regular rain this summer is delivering. As the days start to shorten these summer plants will start to retreat, opening up the ground again just in time

for the early flowering bulbs that will start to appear as autumn approaches. You may have realised that this is the front garden and the bit of gravel in the bottom right, which is the path way to the front door, is the only area that we keep clear of plants.



Primula florindae stands out among the many others here and its beautiful scent welcomes us to the front door.



On the east drive the *Dactylorhiza* that I showed a few weeks back are going into seed, the clover flowers are also browning so can be pulled off allowing more light and air into the mass flowering of the *Geranium sanguineum*.





The Hypericum are excellent plants especially Hypericum androsamum in the foreground which is one of those willing volunteer plants delivered to your garden by the birds.

I cut them down to the ground later in the year allowing them to regrow next year.



Around the garden we have a number of Hypericum species and forms, all raised from seed.



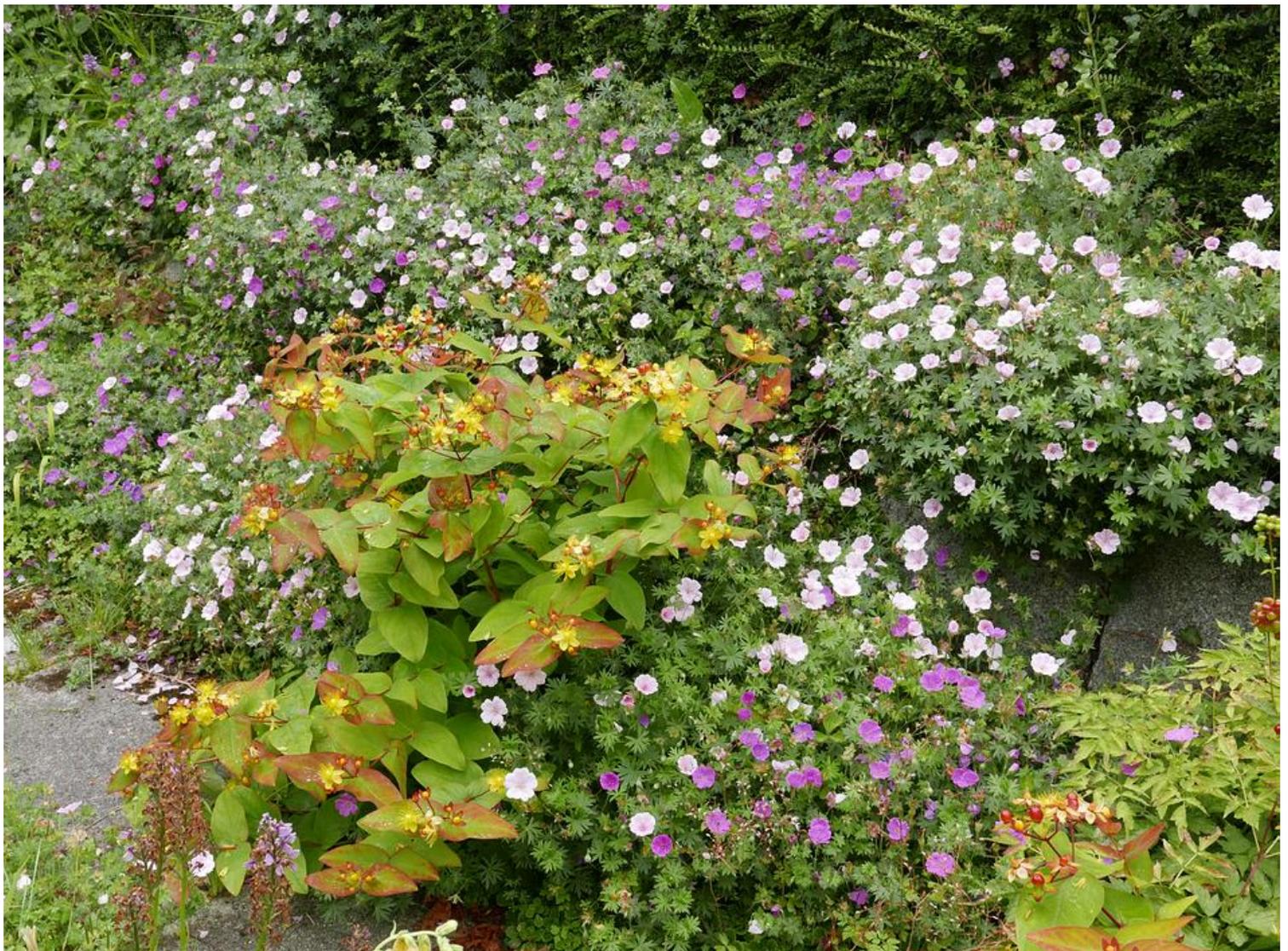
Corydalis 'Craigton Blue', *Aconitum vulparia* and *Dactylorhiza* all play their part in the flowering sequence.



Geranium sanguineum



The *Geranium sanguineum* on the west drive way are also in full glorious flower on the gravel and up the wall, along with more *Hypericum*.





A climbing rose I raised from a cutting scrambles over the gate forming a canopy of beautifully scented flowers.





We have planted bulbs at the base of the street trees for many years and last year I scattered wild flower seeds to bring some summer interest at the moment we have flowers on **Matricaria discoidea** and **Tripleurospermum inodorum**.



These are similar plants except that the flowers of **Matricaria discoidea** do not have the decorative white ray florets.



Tripleurospermum inodorum



I was anticipating a fine seeds harvest from the *Tripleurospermum* which I could distribute around the area where its cheery flowers could provide an additional food source for insects and passers by could enjoy its cheery flowers however I was thwarted by the council who, having not maintained these areas for years, decided to send workers round today who have stripped it bare.

As I left to take Molly a walk we admired the flowers when we returned a short time later the area was scraped bare and they were gone!

Leucanthemum vulgare

Another wild plant with a daisy like flower that I admire is *Leucanthemum vulgare* – fortunately this one is growing in the safety of the front garden so I will get the seed.



Leucanthemum vulgare, Tanacetum parthenium, Aconitum vulparia and more Dactylorhiza



Tanacetum parthenium



Some *Tanacetum parthenium* choose to grow in the narrow crack between the paving slabs and the sides of the slab beds where they bring softness to these hard landscape features.



The sides of the slab beds are further softened by the trailing growth of ***Hypericum reptans***.



Hypericum reptans

There are some plants that would not survive our garden conditions so we have to grow them in pots – one of those is *Eucomis autumnalis amaryllidifolia* JJA3.330.050 which is now accepted as a separate species, ***Eucomis amaryllidifolia***.



Along with *Eucomis schijffii* shown below these plants are perfectly happy growing outside where they enjoy the summer wet as long as I bring them under the protection of glass in the autumn where they are allowed to dry out completely until around May when they start back into growth again and need watering.



Eucomis schiffii





A few weeks ago I collected some seed from ***Pulsatilla vulgaris*** which I immediately sowed carefully holding them by the feathery attachment and pushing the actual seed into the potting medium. I placed them in the mist unit and now have a great germination. For comparison I sowed a third pot which I placed outside and it is also germinating, just a wee bit later.





I am taking advantage of any cool wet days to work in the glasshouse repotting the bulbs growing in pots.



With all the rain my freshly mixed potting mix, equal parts of 6mm gravel and a bought in John Innes 3, can be a bit too moist to pot the resting bulbs into, so I spread it out on a tray to allow some of the excess moisture to evaporate.

I love handling the bulbs and we can learn so much by observing them – especially from their shape.

Typically a bulb should have a rounded form if they are elongated like shown here they are looking to be growing deeper if the pot allows. The remains of the old tunic at the top show the position and shape of the original bulb and how it has grown down seeking to be deeper.

Bulbs are not looking for an optimum depth at which to grow instead they are looking for an optimum condition which is most likely to be a combination of temperature and or moisture levels.



Some of these seedling bulbs are bent because they were still seeking depth when they hit the bottom of the pot



I do not routinely repot seedling bulbs after just one year, I usually wait until the end of their second or third growing season, but here my curiosity got the better of me so I tipped out this pot of **Narcissus fernandesii** seedlings which were sown last autumn. The seed was sown deeply two thirds of the way down the 7cm pot.



It is always worth taking care as even though they are dry some bulbs such as these **Muscari bourgaei** can already be forming new roots – note also that even though they will not appear above ground until next spring the shoots are prominent.



Some bulbs seem to thrive even when squeezed into a pot – these **Tropaeolum tricolorum** have grown and increased so much that they have distorted the shape of the pot.



I only replanted a few of them back into this pot.



I have completed replanting one 30cm section of the sand bed and you can see above the now reduced number of bulbs spaced out before I covered them over with sand again.

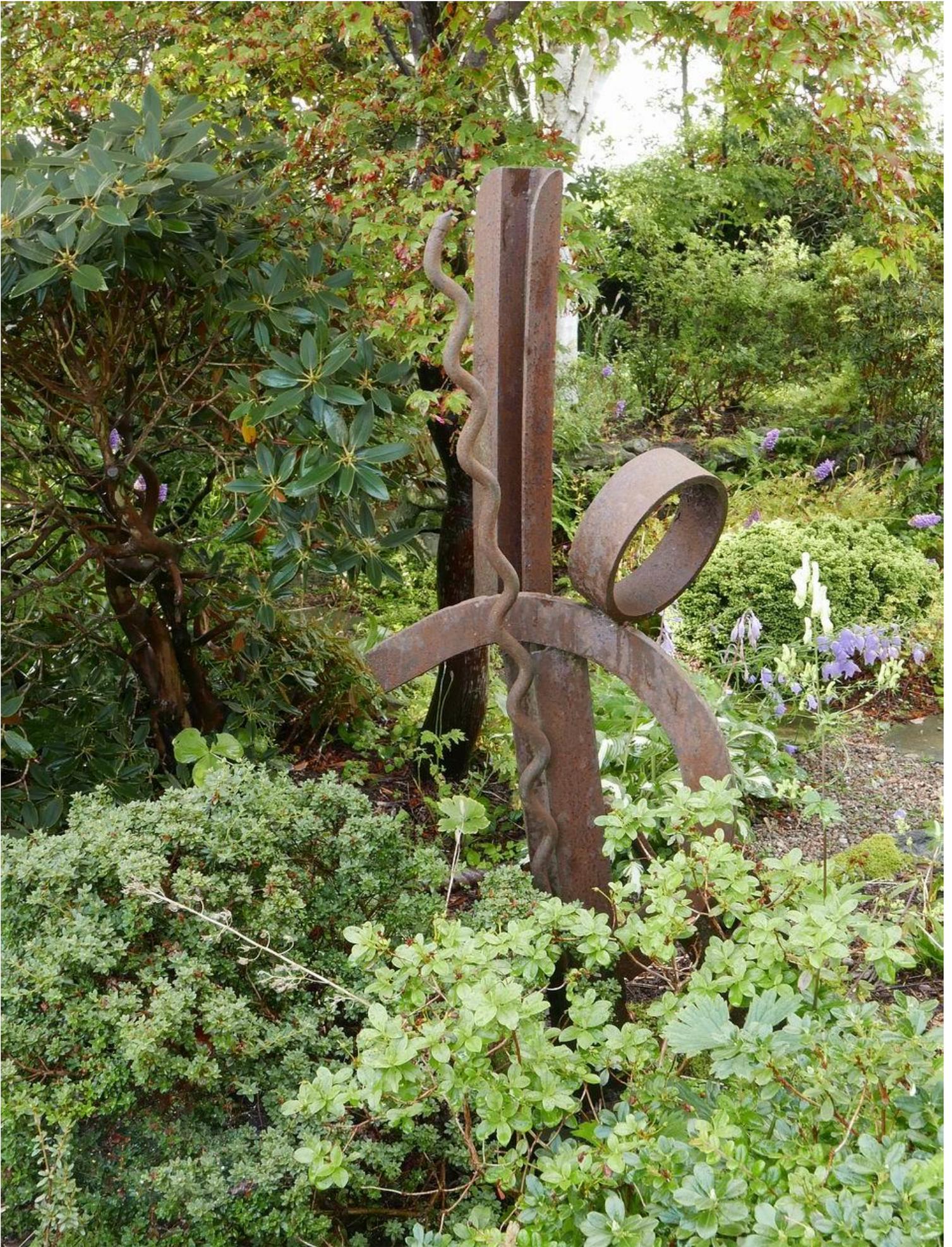


On the left you can see the narrow strip which I have now covered over and I will work on the next 30cm.



We have a giant ***Digitalis purpurea*** which is currently 2.5 metres tall and unusually the side branches are flowering simultaneously. I normally cut them back as the flowers of the main spikes go over which stimulates the side branches into growth. Those below are more typical in having flowers open on just the main spike initially.





I will round off this week with one of my early sculptures in a contemplative mood.....