



BULB LOG 30.....28th July 2021



Allium



I did start into repotting the bulbs in pots the other week but then the weather changed and it get too hot for me to work in the glasshouse. Like many of you we have recently experienced a heat wave resulting in some very hot temperatures - on the hottest day I measured an air temperature of 27C with the temperature of the south wall in full sun reaching 37.5C. This is way too hot for me and little work was done however I am pleased to say that here in the North East of Scotland the soaring temperature was moderated by the North Sea and after a few days of open skies a blanket of cloud moved in from the sea cooling everything down

to a more tolerable level up to a maximum of 20C – still too hot to resume the repotting.



The beauty of plants does not stop when the life has gone from them – to me the sun-dried remains retain a striking beauty, like these flower stems and seed heads and I am driven to do something with them. The photographs are the first stage but I have a desire to find another way to incorporate them into my art.



Here are the bulbs and dried stems of and bulbs of *Ornithogalum* sp.: they flowered quite recently but did not set any seed.



Some of the *Narcissus* hybrids do not set seeds so the flowers just keep going until they eventually fade on the stems - like on this group of *Narcissus bulbocodium* hybrids where the dried out remains of the leaves and flower stems reserved some of their beauty and are similar to a herbarium record.



The year on year increase in the number of bulbs of this form made this so remarkable that I named it **Narcissus romieuxii 'Craigton Clumper'**.



Narcissus romieuxii 'Craigton Clumper'.

There was not enough room in the pot to accommodate all the bulbs that came out of it.

Surplus *Narcissus romieuxii*
'Craigton Clumper'

After only one year of growth the increase of the number of bulbs is such that I can cram the original pot full again with enough left over to fill another pot or to be passed on.



Erythronium tuolumnense

While on the subject of pots full of bulbs, how about this basket of *Erythronium tuolumnense* - it has not been replanted for around 3 years and the increase in the number of bulbs has been so great that the mass of bulbs is distorting the shape of the basket.



On one of the cooler mornings I made a start to the annual task of cutting the hedges. I do not 'trim' the hedges but give them a really hard cut back so they do not increase in size and they will not need cut again until next year. By

late July early August the birds have finished nesting and the new growth is quite shaggy so I get a good harvest of mulching material after it has been shredded and composted.



This is the driveway where our wee car sits and you can see clearly from these pictures the effect on plants by excluding light on a near permanent basis, nothing grows directly under where the car sits while beyond the car towards the road there is a green carpet.



Possibly because of the heat the first flowers on the *Cyananthus* have opened a few weeks early this year and the colour of the flower is also noticeably more towards the violet than blue.



Scabiosa columbaria nana



Scabiosa columbaria nana

Above is how the flower appears before it fully opens which is shown below.





Campanula persicifolia

Flowering in our garden is very much concentrated in spring and autumn so summer is not the most floriferous time of year especially when the weather has been so unusually hot and dry. I am always searching for plants that will grow in harmony and extend the flowering sequence and that is where plants that seed around, such as *Campanula persicifolia*, are so welcome.



Campanula persicifolia comes in pale blue and white with various shades in between.



There is a tiny form of this plant that we know as *Campanula nitida* which is ideally suited to raised beds or a rock garden – this picture shows the difference in size between the typical and diminutive forms.



Campanula nitida alba



Campanula nitida



Aconitium lycoctonum flowers through the summer bringing colour to the bulb beds as well as feeding the bees - here it is joined by a tall Allium flower just starting to open.



The leaves of many alliums as early as the winter and are often dying back by the time the flowers appear those of **Allium prattii** leaves along with the flowers.



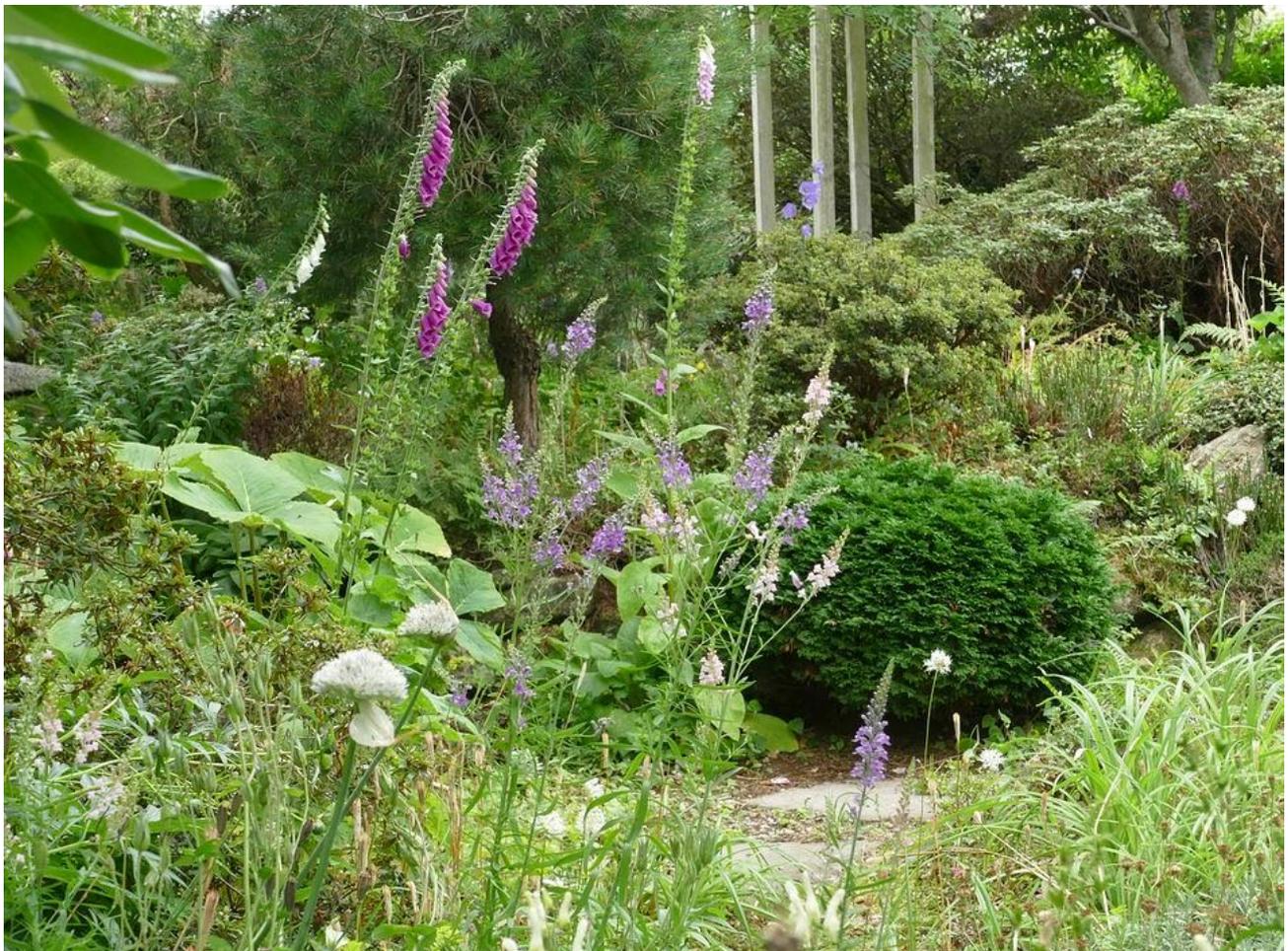
The white flowers of *Allium prattii* can be seen here flowering among the *Erythronium* seed stems with the splashes of pink and purple in the background provided by *Linaria purpurea*.



We are very happy to let the likes of *Linaria purpurea* seed around utilising the ground under which so many bulbs are now resting for the summer.



Linaria purpurea



Linaria purpurea* and *Digitalis purpurea



Another welcome volunteer that can cope with the very dry conditions is **Tanacetum parthenium**.



I am glad that rain is forecast this week which will come as a welcome relief for the many plants that are suffering in the long dry conditions. Normally there would be plenty water in the ground to keep the foliage turgid and the plants growing for longer but this year even plants that can take some dryness like *Cardamine heptaphylla* have collapsed early – fortunately the fat rhizome like roots can survive long periods of summer dryness.



The recently emerged *Roscoea* that need water to grow are among the plants that are not doing so well for us this year but once again they will survive to come again, hopefully in wetter conditions.



The emerging growth of *Eucomis bicolor* will be supported by the tuber until the rain penetrates the ground.



Mutisia spinosa grows on our south facing wall and loves the sunshine.





Mutisia spinosa



The Mutisia can be seen growing on the right but it is the alpine strawberries growing in the gaps between the paving slabs that I want to highlight: these along with the other strawberries growing beside the bulb houses provide us with refreshing snacks.



These strawberries were brought to us by the birds and as you can see give us a reasonable harvest.





I also find snacks on my walks where I found a patch of alpine strawberries that produces much better clusters of berries than ours do so I collected a few runners to root up and plant in the garden.



I will round off this week with a handful of raspberry and strawberries that I foraged to eat on my walk.....