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Bulb Log Diary

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Rhododendron yakushimanum



Last week I concentrated on foliage but now I am returning to flowers because you simply cannot ignore the spectacle of *Rhododendron yakushimanum* in full bloom. We have a number of plants of this species but I am showing the best one which has a spread of 3metres and hangs out over our front wall grabbing the attention of passers-by. The flowers, as shown, start with a pink flush which fades to pure white as they open fully. Although I am back showing pictures of

the flowers don't forget the importance of foliage to the plants and appreciate the longevity of the decorative values in our gardens. If you can choose plants that have both good flowers and decorative foliage that is a bonus and *Rhododendron yakushimanum* scores maximum points with flowers like these, stunning new foliage covered in silver indumentum plus the structure their evergreen, low mound forming, growth brings to the garden.



The yellow **Rhododendron 'Curlew'** is growing alongside the above and is a similar: a low growing shrub which after 40 years can achieve quite a wide spread. Both of these plants can be seen from the street as well from the house and inside the garden where they can be seen inter twined with various *Vaccinium* and other plants.



Rhododendron 'Curlew'



Still in the front garden these Rhododendrons, 'Curlew', 'Dora Amateis' (and this forgotten named pink one!) have been cut to the ground and regrown on more than one occasion. Not all Rhododendrons will regrow from old wood if they are cut back hard but many of the dwarf hybrids like these do.



Ledum palustre

This is one of a number of plants which, after DNA studies, have been subsumed into the genus *Rhododendron* but I am fond of and will stick with the old name *Ledum palustre*. This is one of a number of plants we raised from seed collected in Japan.



Ledum palustre



This view looking east through the front garden shows the almost secret area in the centre hidden from view by trees and shrubs on either side although you can get tantalising glimpses through from both sides.



Moving through to the back this is one of a number of forms of **Rhodendron campylogynum** we grow.



Rhodendron campylogynum on the left, Vaccinium nummularia towards the back and Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'.



Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'

One of the questions I am often asked is 'what can be planted to grow with, then flower after, the early flowering bulbs'? Here are a few of the next wave of growth that we grow in our garden and climate.



Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'

In the autumn the foliage of this plant forms a neat mound of growth then in late May/June we get these clusters of lovely purple flowers before the foliage then dies back in the warm dry summer only to reappear again as stated.



Another plant that brings flowering interest to the planting is **Uvularia** which only emerges as the early flowering plants are dying back.



As a result of it seeding around we have a number of colonies of *Uvularia* growing around the garden.



Uvularia



Uvularia perfoliata

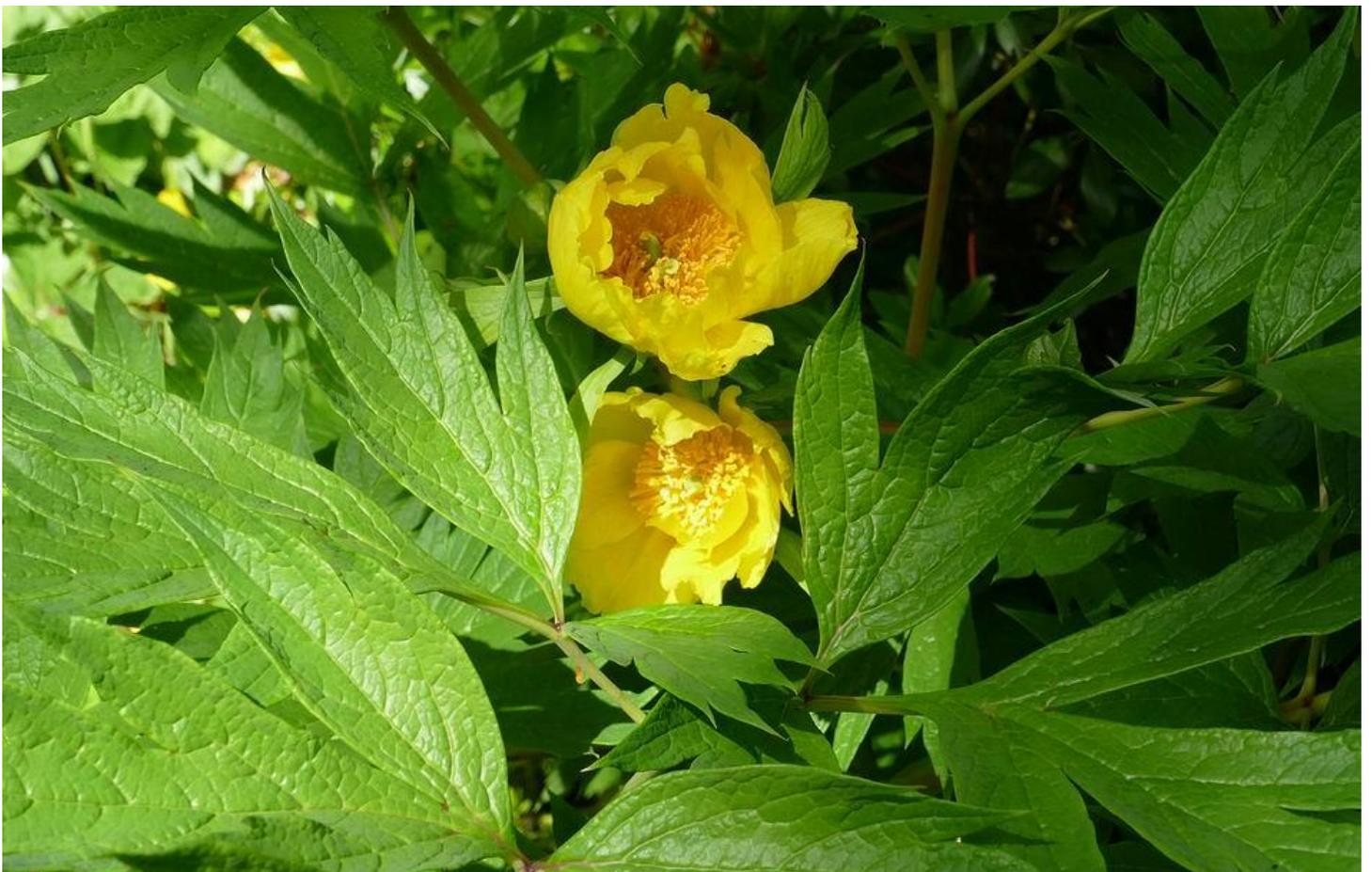
There are subtle differences in the yellow of the flowers from a pale yellow, above, to richer warmer yellow below.





Uvularia grandiflora

I am always fascinated to observe the way similar coloured plants appear in different seasons creating links around the garden.



The yellow and green of *Uvularia* is picked up by ***Peonia lutea ludlowii***.



Although *Uvularia grandiflora* and *Peonia lutea ludlowii* have very different stature and form the common colour combination draws your eye encouraging you to move around the garden. These same colours are picked up by another self seeder, *Papaver cambricum*, which is just starting into its long flowering season. As all these plants seed around in the garden so this colour coordination is entirely down to nature.



As in most of the garden the flowering of *Uvularia* forms marks the fourth sequence of flowering in the bed in the foreground where it is joined by Bluebells and as these flowers fade a forest of *Arisaema*, fuelled by the recent rain, will rise to take over the space.



Walking round the garden I find a yellow flowered form of ***Fritillaria affinis*** that picks up the colour association.



Fritillaria affinis yellow form



It may be my artistic training or just the way my mind works but wherever I am my eye is drawn to find associations in form, shape and colour. My walk round the garden was led by the yellow/green theme bringing me to the yellow Fritillaria which then leads me to the other species, **Fritillaria pyrenaica**, growing close-by whose flowers are yellow on the inside with brown outers which in turn takes my eye onto the next subject.



I love the brown striped stems and flowers of **Arisaema nepenthoides** rising above the carpet of foliage.



Arisaema nepenthoides



I am then attracted to the brown/red Trillium flowers growing with another colony of *Uvularia grandiflora* which takes me back to yellow and green association where this walk started and so it continues.



The colour combination of this Trillium hybrid seems to reflect the purple *Dicentra* flowers it is growing with.



Most of the Erythronium flowers have gone past now but now I spot the pure white **Erythronium montanum** flowering on the rock garden bed.



**Narcissus
triandrus
hybrid**

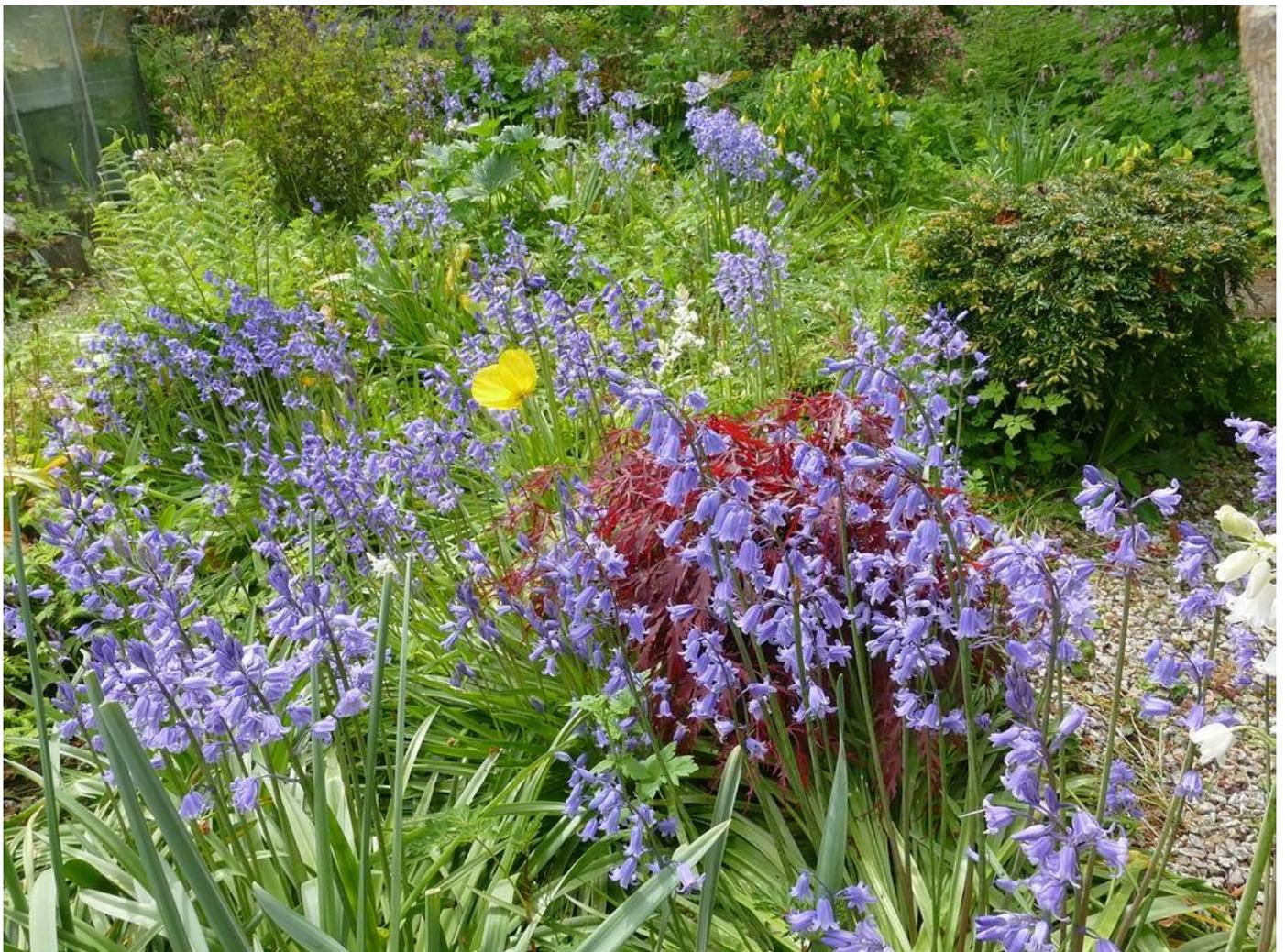


The garden will get more lush as the larger herbaceous growths extend through the coming weeks but for now the Bluebells, or Wild Hyacinths as they are known in Scotland, are flowering. Their flowers form rivers in shades of blue flowing across the beds with occasional pink and white forms appearing.





We have both *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and *Hyacinthoides hispanica* plus a whole range of hybrids between them.





I spend pleasant hours exploring the garden seeking out the season's delights that change from year to year.



I will round off this week as I started by sharing **Rhododendron fortunei** another of the many species and hybrids that we grow. Unlike the low mound forming *Rhododendron yakushimanum* this one has grown to become a tree with the majority of flowers 3-4 metres above my head – you can spot it in the previous picture.

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