



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 43.....26th October 2022



Rodgersia sp.



Some years ago I created a series of art works on paper, combining drawing, painting and printing called 'Leafing Marks' they featured the shapes and patterns of leaves and as autumn is the season of leaves it is my topic for this week starting with the cover, showing the glorious warm yellow leaves of a Rodgersia sp. This is one of a number of Rodgersia sp that we have around the garden all of which we raised from our share of the ACE seed collecting

expedition to China. Here it grows in the challenging conditions of deep dry shade under Rhododendrons, Acers and Pines in the jungle that is our front garden. Most of the year the Rodgersia grows almost unnoticed in the undergrowth but when the leaves turn such a bright warm yellow it screams out grabbing my attention so that I climb in to take these pictures. The colour is matched by the autumn yellow leaves of another plant, Convallaria majalis, that also runs about in this habitat.



Less than a metre away more leaves of the same plant have yet to turn yellow, with their still-green leaves contrasting beautifully as they lie on a colourful warm carpet of fallen Acer leaves.



The small still-green leaves growing below the Rodgersia and Convallaria majalis are Galium oderatum, a great carpeting plant which runs all through the front garden.



Walking up the hill towards our home the early morning sun acted like a spotlight to pick out the top of our cloud pruned tree against the orange reds of the Acer.



The colourful canopy of Acers, Pines and Rhododendrons in the front garden, pictured from an upstairs window.



Below the canopy the fallen leaves, for now, create this stunning colourful textured carpet.



Fungi emerge through the fallen leaves and conifer clippings left from when I was trimming the cloud pruned tree.



The green leaves of *Galium odoratum* mingle among the red leaves and fungi, which I note have not come up in the exact same place as last year but still around the base of the Pine and Acer.



Many plants do not shed all their leaves in autumn; these are the evergreen plants which retain their leaves through the winter, at least until after the new season's leaves are formed. *Aciphylla glauca* is among the evergreen plants and if you look very carefully the remains of the old leaves can be seen lying around the base.



Pines also hold onto their leaves until long after the new growth has emerged; here the needles that are now turning yellow grew two years ago in the spring of 2020.



Pinus nigra is among a number of trees we have grown in pots for over forty years: it is by a long way the tallest, standing at over 2.8metres from the ground, it towers over us. It is much used by the range of birds that visit the garden from the Sparrowhawks perching on its lowest branches to the tiny Goldcrests hunting for protein among the needles.



In addition to the autumn leaf fall and the evergreen subjects there are the Cyclamen which have recently grown their new leaves that will sustain them through winter, spring and into next summer.



These plants bring a wonderful range of leaf shapes and patterns; even a single species such as **Cyclamen hederifolium** is worth studying for their variation.



Cyclamen hederifolium



With no ants in our garden it is up to the gardeners to disperse the seeds of **Cyclamen hederifolium** and we are now seeing the results of our efforts as more plants are becoming established in a range of leaf shapes and colours.



Cyclamen hederifolium



Some plants become more noticeable during the autumn retreat: with most of its companions already gone *Disporum* is among the last of the herbaceous plants standing in this bulb bed allowing us to see the tracery of its yellow stems and the colouring of the leaves as they slowly get eaten and disintegrate, leaving just the delicate skeletal remains shown below.





I capture more images of the autumn retreat as I go round the garden with my camera such as these mostly self-sown tree peonies, still displaying some green leaves alongside others turning through yellow, reds into purples.





Paeonia lutea ludlowii leaves with changing colours will soon drop from the plant as the abscission layer develops.



Autumn leaves form beautiful shapes and colours as they pile up on the ground.



Contrasting colours as the bright yellow Hamamelis leaves are illuminated against the dark shaded background.



More contrasting colours, this time green Acer leaves with the yellow leaves of Hamamelis.



I don't have to look hard to find colour and beauty in the decaying growth and foliage.



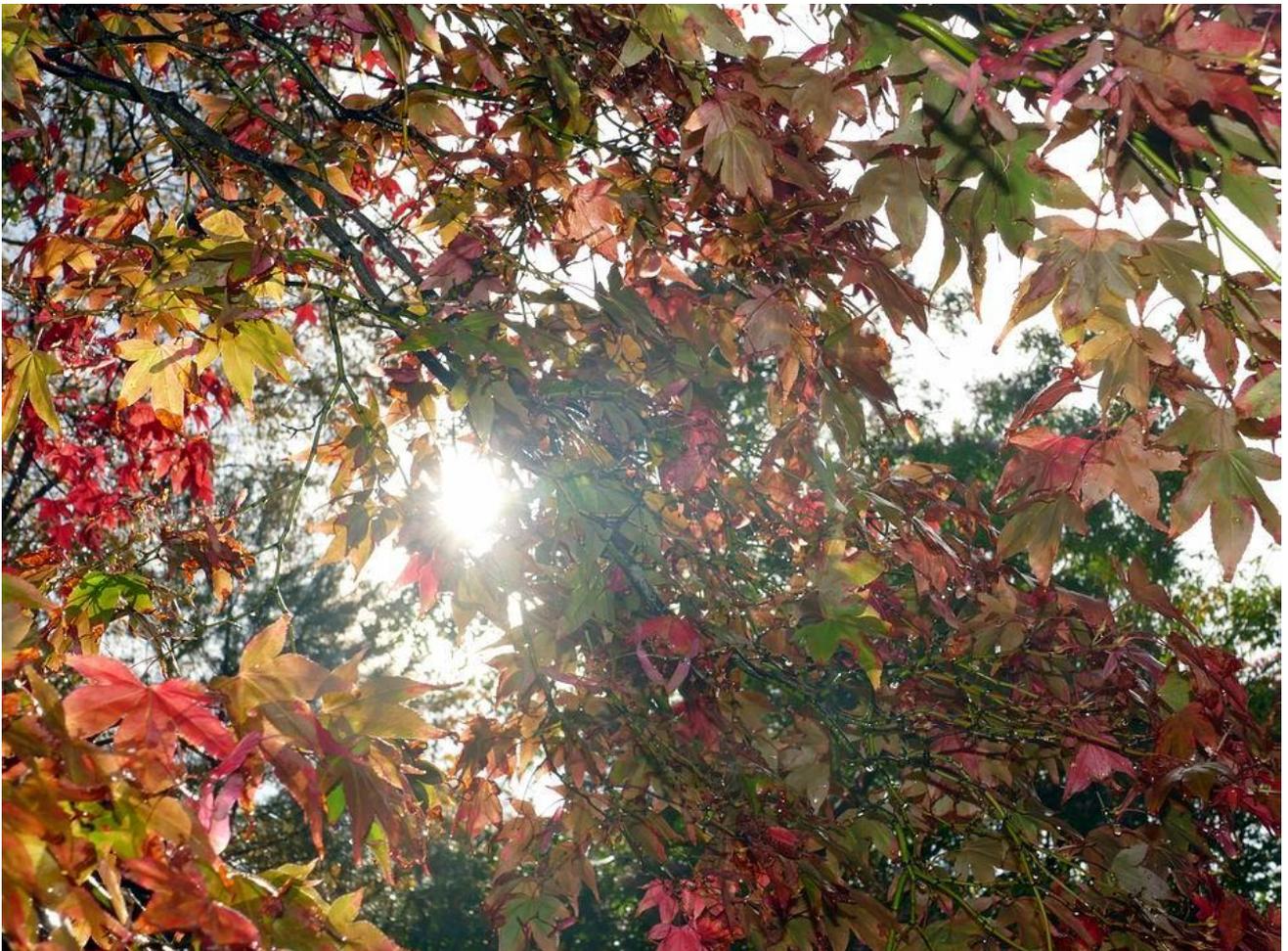


Some colourful fruits and seeds catch my eye including *Paeonia* seeds above and *Fuchsia procumbens* below.





I love the garden in autumn in the full knowledge that I will have a lot of work to do through the winter clearing away the leaves and old growths as we prepare for another year of growth.





While I admire the beauty of the leaves I am also aware there is much we can learn from these miracles of evolution. One of the measures being taken as we seek green energy are photovoltaic panels which convert sunshine directly into electricity and we think of this as relatively new but plants have been converting the sunshine into energy for millennia. Using photosynthesis the plants convert sunlight into energy in the form of sugar and I understand scientists are studying this process to see what the future power industries might learn from this ancient natural process. If you think that in times of plenty the plants store any surplus energy underground in their roots, bulbs, tubers etc. just what we should be doing to become greener in our thirst of energy. So it is not just for their beauty that I am fascinated by leaves.....