



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 11.....13th November 2024





Through October and into November the warm colour gradually fades as the garden moves into full shut down mode although, provided it does not get too cold, some of our trees will hang onto their leaves well into December. If you watch the trees the leaves start to turn colour long before the temperature drops so it appears they react to shortening daylight more than the cold. As soon as the day length becomes noticeably shorter the first leaves start to turn and drop. As we come out of winter the Sorbus are usually the first to come into leaf and they are also the first to drop in the autumn.



The colour provided by the Acer and Sorbus trees is a welcome spectacle to cheer us up as the days get shorter and darker. The other side of the annual leaf drop is all the work lifting the piles of fallen leaves.



Sorbus frutescens is a lovely small tree for any garden with a temperate climate. It rarely grows more than two metres tall has fine pinnate leaves, pretty flowers in the spring followed by masses of white berries in the autumn.



Our garden is guided by nature and here I reflect some of the sights I see on my daily walks to the fields and woods. It is easy to see why this fungi got the common name **Turkey Tail Fungus** - I see it on fallen trees where along with the moss it forms part of nature's recycling team.



Turkey Tail Fungus above and below is the same scene with different light.





The ground in the woods are carpeted by yellow and tan autumn leaves. The same colours are reflected over my head by the leaves that are yet to fall.





It is exactly the same situation in the garden with a wider range of leaves and plant types.



Gardening is a bit like a mystery tour - when I start a task I have no idea where it will lead me. I will leave the smaller leaves on the beds where they will act as a natural mulch but I do have to clear them from the paths, yes there is a path up the middle of this picture. I scoop the leaves into a big green bag then carry them to the composting heaps located against the wall at the bottom corner of the garden.



As I squeeze through between the shrubs towards the leafmould heap I pass a flowering Ivy. This is such a valuable plant for nature with its dense growth against the wall providing shelter and nesting sites for birds and insects with the flowers and fruits being a source of winter food.



As I make my way through my eye is drawn to this spike growing deep in the undergrowth which I immediately recognise as another **Orobanchae hederae**, the ivy broomrape.



I have found increasing numbers of **Orobanche hederae** in the garden always growing in association with the Ivy on which it depends.



When you garden over a long time you get used to losing plants but is always sad to lose trees. This conifer started out its life in the front garden but when it reached three metres tall - we moved it to this location where it has grown well for over 30 years but the winds of the last two storms has blown it to lean over to the point that it must now go.



From the house and the top end of the garden it looked okay standing apparently upright behind the white birch it was only when I went into that corner to the compost heaps that I realised the extent of its lean.



There is also a dead Sorbus that I will take out – it planted itself from bird sown seed and I have noticed a gradual die back over recent years to the point that it is completely dead and rotting.



Last year I noted that there was a lot of die back on our **Sorbus hupehensis** and I thought it was also in decline. When I was checking it last winter with a thought to take it down, I noticed a lot of swelling buds so it got a reprieve and now it has a lot of healthy new growth with a good crop of berries that are being eagerly devoured by the wood pigeons. I now suspect that this die back was most likely due to the unusually warm dry periods that we experienced.



I will use my long reach lopper and pruning saw to remove the dead branches this winter and hope for the best.



The red acer leaves add a seasonal colour note to the already attractive **Cyclamen hederifolium** leaves



Cyclamen hederifolium



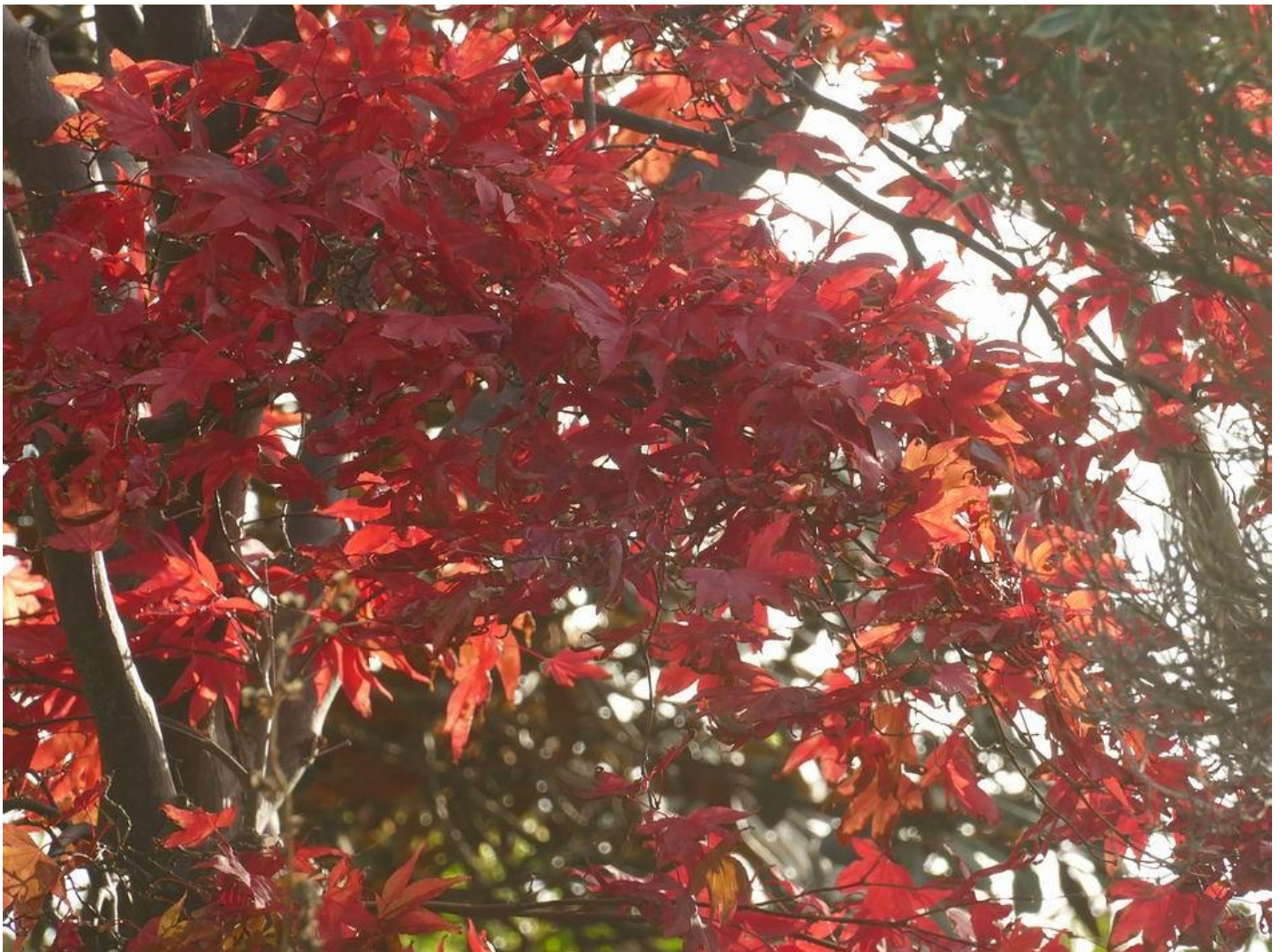
Cyclamen hederifolium



Getting down low to lift leaves can give you a new look at a familiar scene.



I never cease to be attracted by the way the low light illuminates the leaves especially at this time of year.



Lifting fallen leaves often reveals bulbs on the surface. Towards the top right is a typical bulb of **Dicentra cucullaria** a typical woodlander type bulb where the main large scales are surrounded by many smaller ones. Now look diagonally towards the bottom left and you will see a scattering of the rice grains that have become detached and will grow to flowering size in a few years' time, These bulbs have evolved to grow near the surface in the leaf litter rich top soil if you plant them deep they will not flower until they make their way back to the surface. I will mulch these with a thin covering of composted material.



Snowdrop shoots are also visible as I clear the old growth and the larger Acer 'Crimson King' leaves I will leave the smaller Acer japonicum leaves that are yet to fall as a natural mulch on these beds.



For most of the year the garden is alive with the song birds but the numbers always drop for a few weeks around this time of year however the wood pigeons have been busy eating the *Sorbus hupehensis* berries and foraging around on this bed. I know a lot of seed has been shed here mostly from the prolific self seeders and these are my garden helpers reducing the number of these seeds that will germinate and grow.



Having done the plant survey of the fields and woods I am now recording the wildlife that use these habitats. This Heron is hunting for voles, shrews or aother small mammals or amphibians.



I only use a small compact camera so I can only take pictures of the birds that will pose for me such as the Heron and this male Kestral.



The Crocus are now over in the cobble bed with these white hybrids of *Crocus speciosus* being among the last.



White speciosus hybrid with *Crocus kotschyanus leucopharynx*.



Crocus banaticus



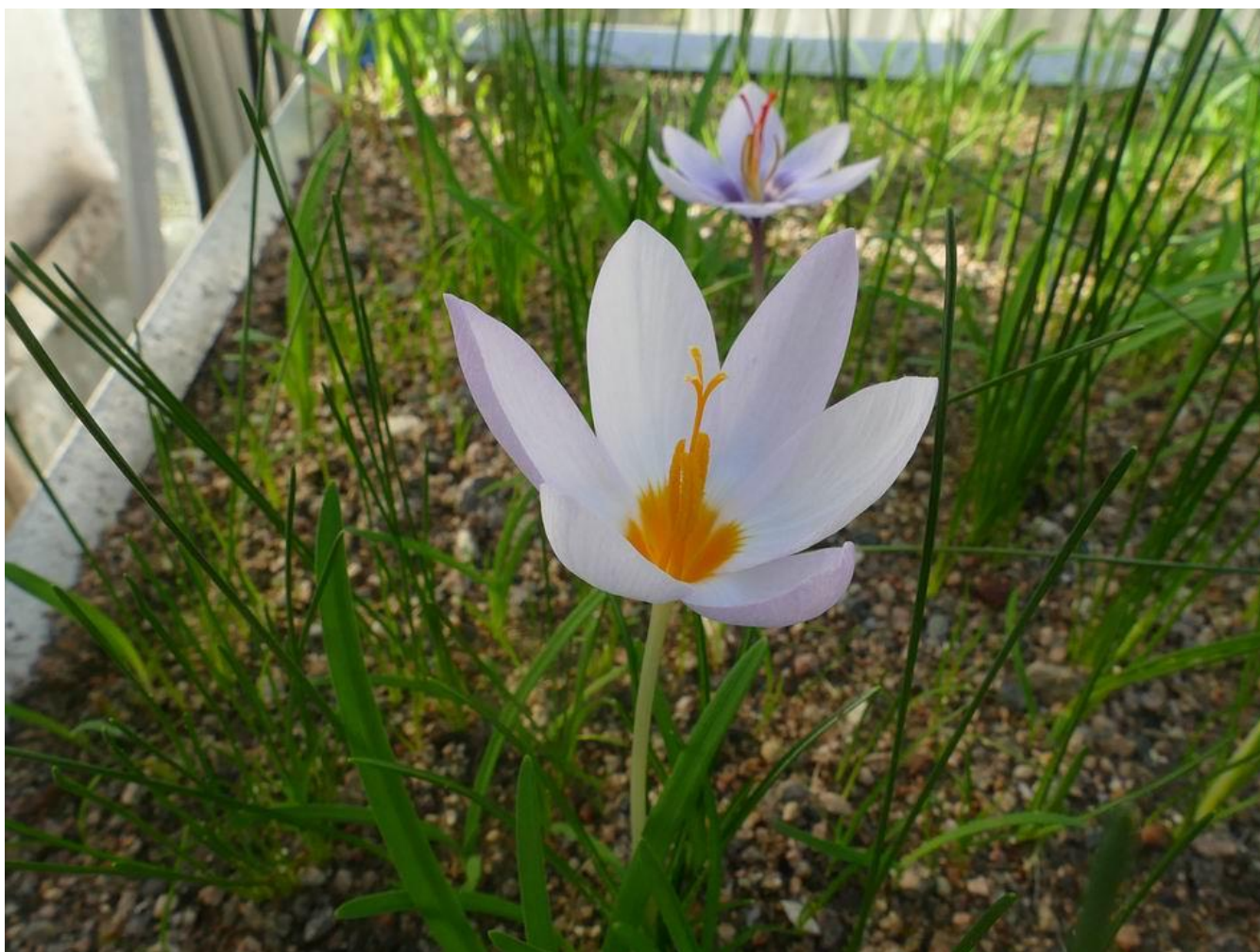
In the bulb houses some flowering in the sand beds **Crocus longiflorus**



Crocus wattiorum



I have planted so many Crocus in these sand beds that it becomes difficult to instantly recall all their names without doing some research but that will not stop me enjoying nor sharing the beauty of their flowers.



If you want to help me by suggesting their names that would be great.



I will sign off this month with a full page picture of *Crocus banaticus* flowering just now in the garden.....