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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 10..... 15th October 2025





To help me write the Bulb Log I try and find a theme or a story that I can walk through in my head. It may not always be obvious to you dear readers, but it helps me in my struggle with words and writing that I weave around the pictures I have chosen to share this month.

This time it is paths and windows that I have in my head plus of course the weather is always present.

This is the view to the North Sea looking down the hill from our front doorstep it shows the exposure we have especially when the wind is from the north or east.



What have windows got to do with the garden you ask? In our case the large windows had a big influence on how we formed the garden always thinking about the view we would get from the windows. This is from my seat in the sitting room looking towards the west, across the troughs and raised slab beds which each form a landscape in themselves as well as when combined. With the rocks and other hard landscape elements this view looks interesting at all times of the year with seasonal flowers adding colourful highlights over a long flowering season.



Although I had just cleaned the windows the picture looks much clearer when taken from outside. As a side note we don't often clean the windows as I have a theory that they very quickly get dirty again and then do not get any dirtier. This was partly proved after storm Amy moved on: the wind and rain had covered the windows in dirt again.



The large spreading **Cyananthus lobatus hybrid** is one of the plants that I can see and it still has plenty of flowers.



The *Cyananthus* grows out from a fairly compact dense cluster of roots its trailing stems forming a mat so there is plenty of opportunity for bulbs to be growing underneath. ***Crocus banaticus*** is one of those bulbs that flower in the autumn appearing through the trailing mat. The mat will die back and be removed long before the *Crocus* leaves want to grow.

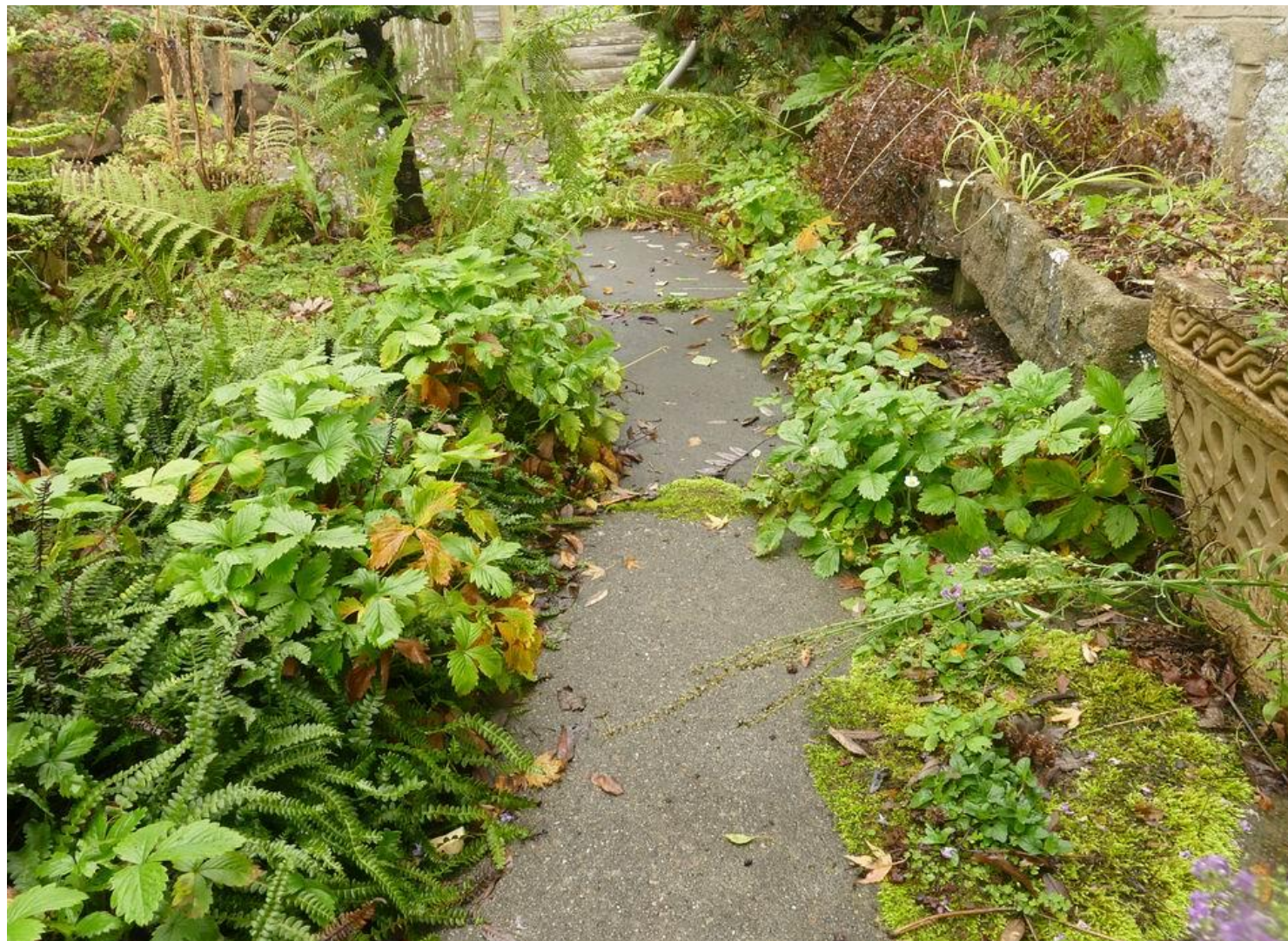




There is something very special about the Crocus that flower in the autumn. They are often referred to as late flowering while in reality they are the early flowering ones: the others will hold on to their flowers through the winter blooming in the spring. This group is a mixture of out garden hybrids and **Crocus pulchellus** shown in the detail below. Once they settle in and start flowering they will seed around.



Crocus pulchellus



Ah- paths! These are important to move around the garden and when we first started the garden, we sowed a lot of grass then we gradually laid out the paths by cutting concrete paving slabs into the grass.



Near the house we created a paved area for the troughs and slab beds. At first, we kept the area around the slabs clear of plants but gradually selected plants that provided some benefit were allowed to stay. One of those plants was the wee alpine strawberry which line the path in front of the house and provides us with very tasty treats almost every day from June until winter sets in.

Regular readers will be familiar with this Crocus. It started as a single flower many years ago when a seed must have fallen between the cracks.

The corm has increased year on year producing so many corms I could see them squeezed into the crack getting forced towards the surface. Curious birds would peck at them scattering some of the small corms on the surface which I planted into the slab beds. These are what we refer to as the Crocus garden hybrids.

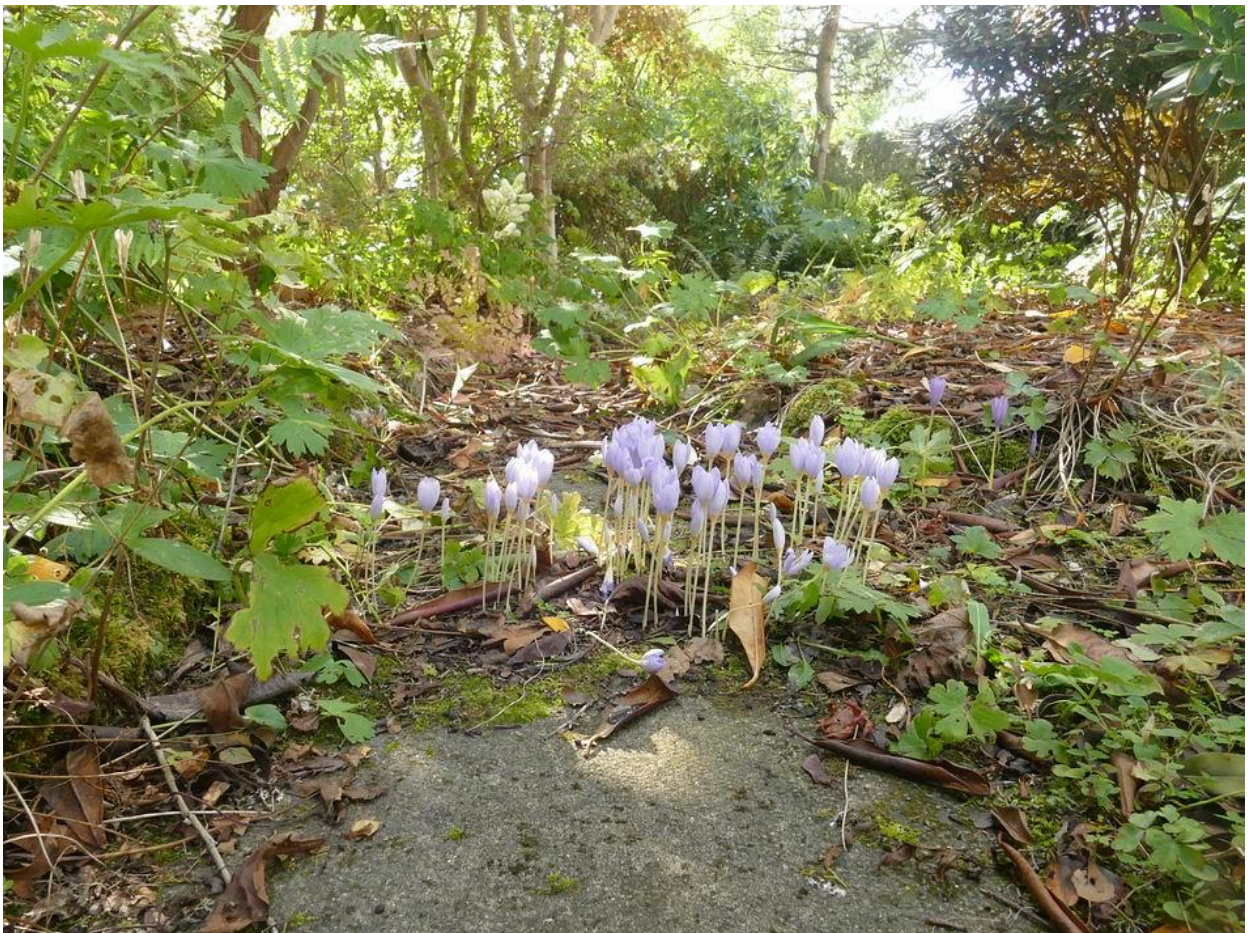
Crocus pulchellus, kotschyanus and xantholaimos are in their parentage. They are fully fertile producing seed as well as increasing at the corm.



Crocus garden hybrids



Over the years the garden evolved and we cut more and more planting areas into the grass until all the grass was gone and the areas between the paved stepping stones was filled with pea gravel. The lifted grass was stacked to rot down which provided us with a key component for the potting mix we used for the bulbs over many years until it eventually ran out. The many areas of gravel became the perfect seed bed for all sorts of plants from bulbs to trees.



And so paths, in our garden, have become a place for plants such as **Crocus pulchellus** seeding around in the path.



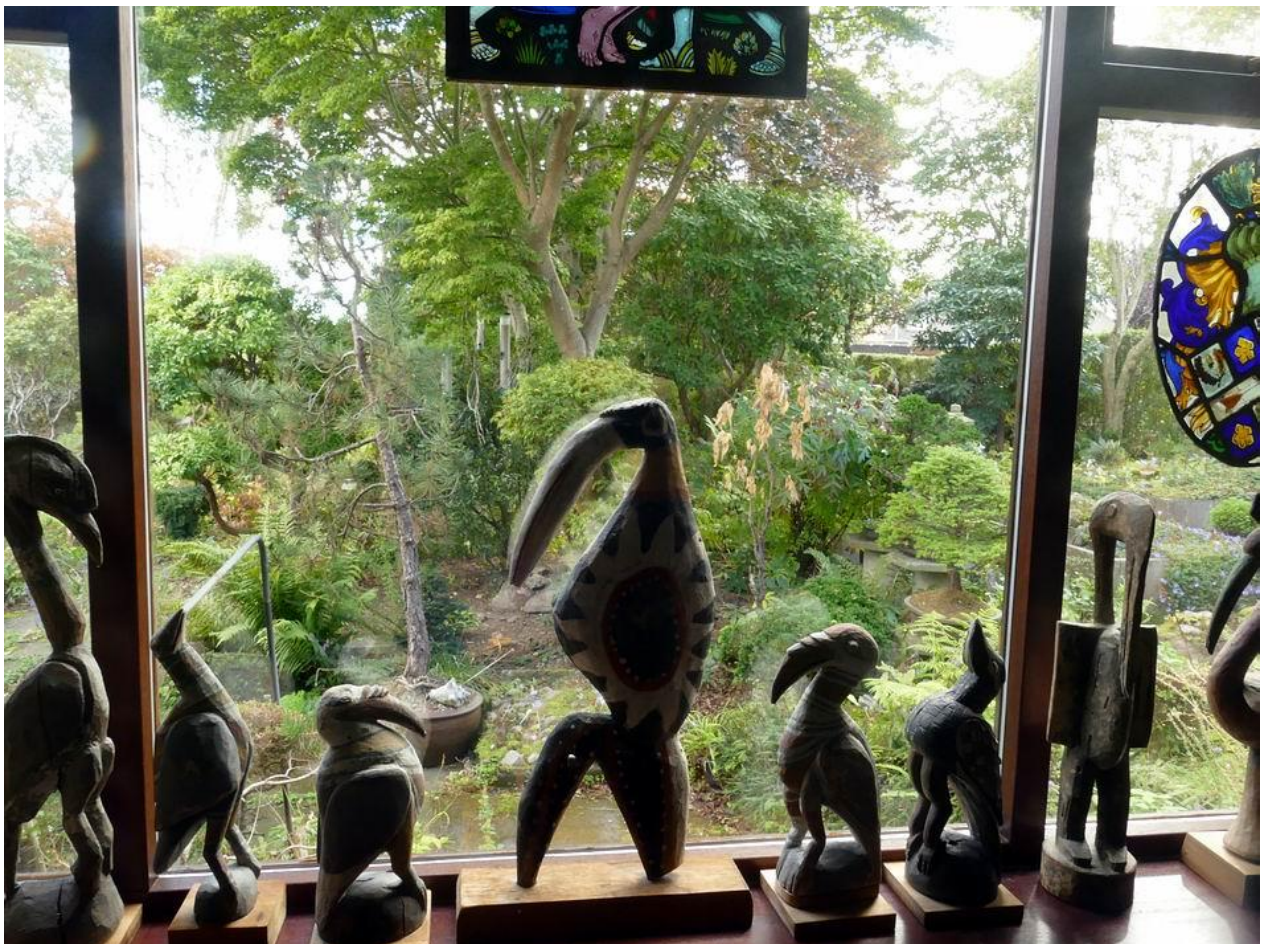
Mixed Crocus growing in a slab bed do not necessarily stay there: they will shed their seed and start to spread out.



The narrow gravel path between these two small plunge beds for *Erythroniums* is now full of Crocus flowers most arrived by seed but *Crocus speciosus*, in purple and white forms, also runs about by stolons.



These **Crocus banaticus** are, for now, staying within the bed where I planted them but any seed that falls out onto the gravel areas are more likely to grow than those that fall on to the organic mulches used on the beds.



Back to windows and birds inside and out. We have positioned the bird feeders so they can be seen when we are in the sitting room.



We get a great deal of delight from watching the birds at the feeders which we keep stocked up all year round. I can also see these from my worktable where I am writing and right now there are a number of birds and a wood mouse on the feeders sharing the sunflower hearts. It is not just the feeders that attracts the birds they are also drawn to the habitat we have created with layers of trees, shrubs as well as extensive ground plantings. The birds forage busily among all the habitats and seem to find plenty natural food





I am fascinated by the many yellow dandelion like flowers but find them difficult to identify accurately. This may be *Scorzoneroide autumnalis*, the 'Autumn Hawkbit' or it may be some of the many other micro species.



It is not considered to be a weed in our garden where we welcome its cheery yellow flowers that appear through the collapsing and retreating foliage of the summer growing plants.



Looking the other way from the window towards the glasshouses - which survived the winds of Storm Amy. They said Amy was the first named storm of the season but not in our garden. The first 'Storm Ian' is applied to the bulbs houses at the beginning of September to wake the bulbs from their summer dry period. A second good soaking is applied at the beginning of October and all through the winter as required.



Growth appears quite quickly after the first storm, and the bulbs are not allowed to dry out again until they start to die down naturally as next summer approaches and it starts to warm up. The bulb houses will bring us flowers, mostly from the Narcissus bulbocodium group, all the way through from September to June depending on the weather. It has been, and still is, warm so the Narcissus are a bit later into flower this year.



I am deeply envious of those of you who can grow and flower Sternbergia in your open gardens the only place it will grow and flower for us is in the bulb houses where it flowers best in the sand beds



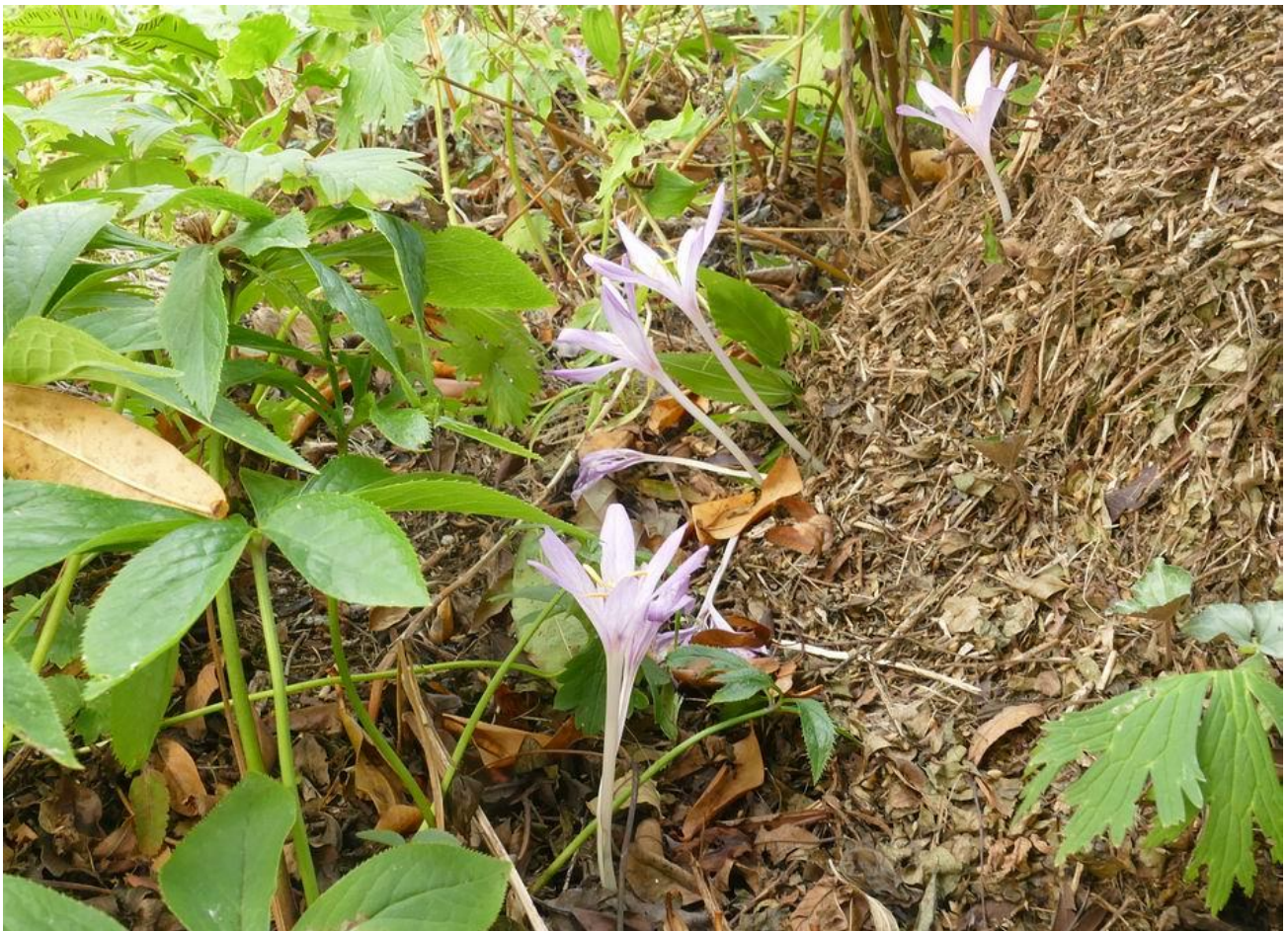
Sternbergia lutea* and *sicula



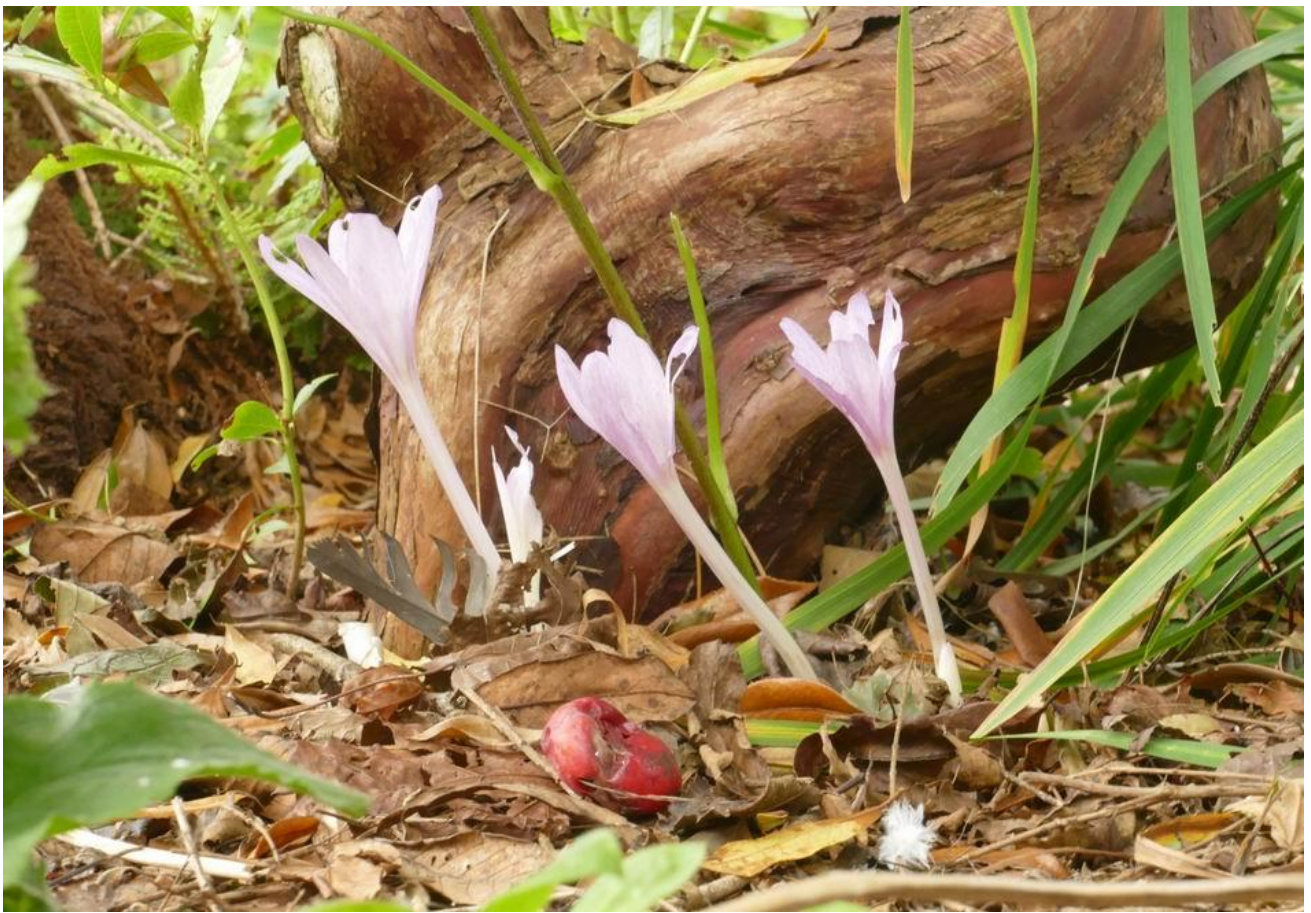
Now for the autumn flowering *Colchicum* which must not be called autumn crocus because they are autumn colchicum. I think this is *Colchicum variegatum*, that is what we got it as many years ago and while it produces several flowers there has not been any increase of the corm like the similar looking *Colchicum agrippinum* which quickly forms clumps.



When I shred the hedge clippings, I make piles in the areas where I want to spread the mulch and I try and remember not to pile it where there are autumn flowering bulbs. I do not always get it right as here I have dumped it on top of some *Colchicum* which find no problem in growing up to display their flowers through the top of the pile.



I narrowly missed doing it again here. The growth of bulbs allows for them to rise up if they find themselves buried deeply in the short term. Bulbs are remarkable because as well as being able to flower when hidden like this the bulbs have the ability to gradually move up or down in the ground if they find themselves buried at an unsuitable depth.



Colchicum davisii



It has been suggested that my unknown Colchicum, that appeared in with the Erythroniums, is a form of autumnale.



The trees are starting to show the signs of autumn as the leaves that were not ripped off in Storm Amy start form to their autumn colours.





The final sequence of pictures for this week shows some of the beauty that lurks within the autumn chaos.



Cyclamen hederifolium



Crocus banaticus and Crocus pulchellus

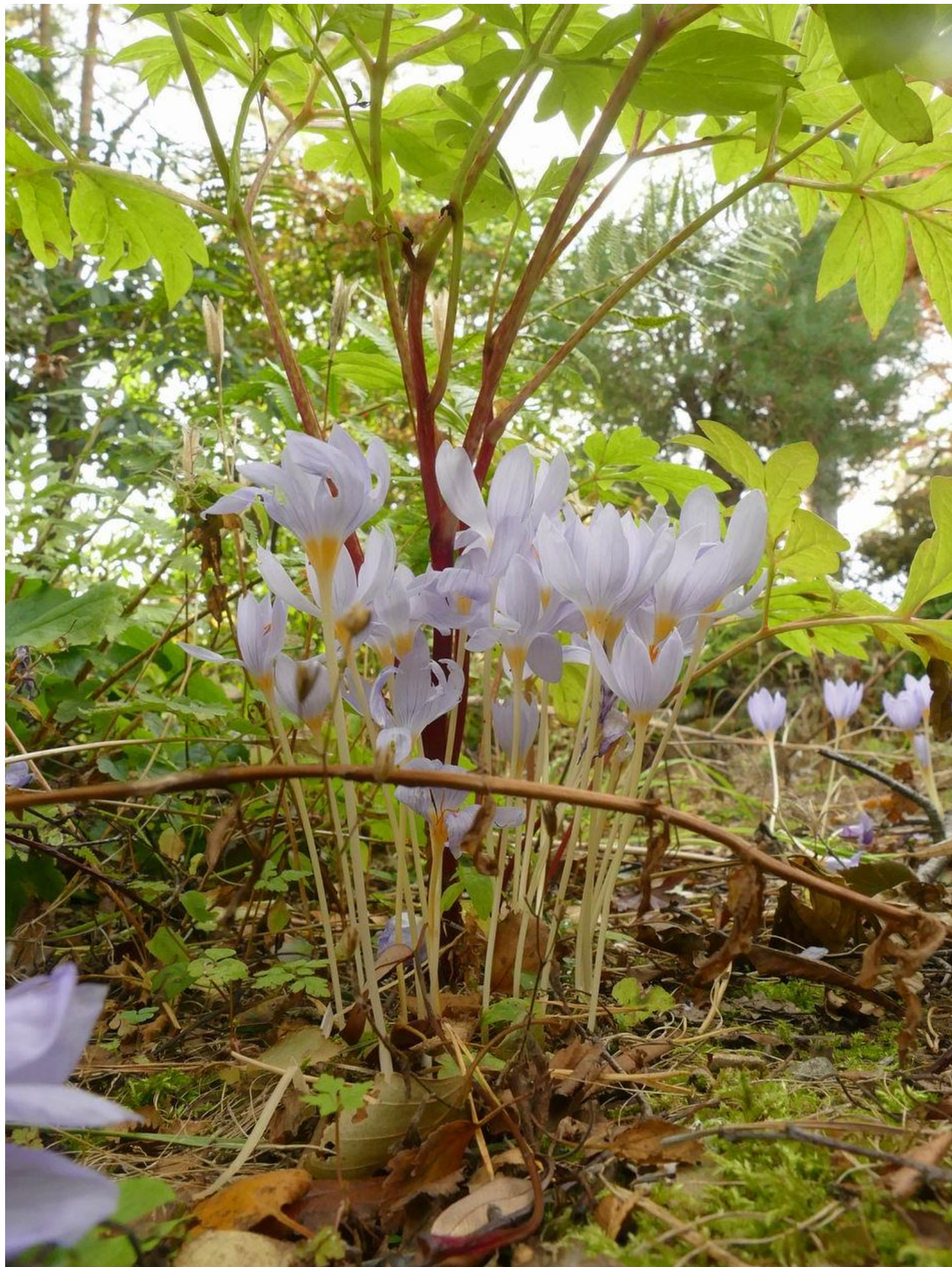


Crocus pulchellus and garden hybrids



Crocus banaticus





Crocus pulchellus flowering under a **Paeonia veitchii** var. **woodwardii** both having seeded into the paths and looking too beautiful to remove from their chosen home. At times walking round the paths is made difficult by all the plants that grow around them but we are happy to see them there and just step carefully from slab to slab.