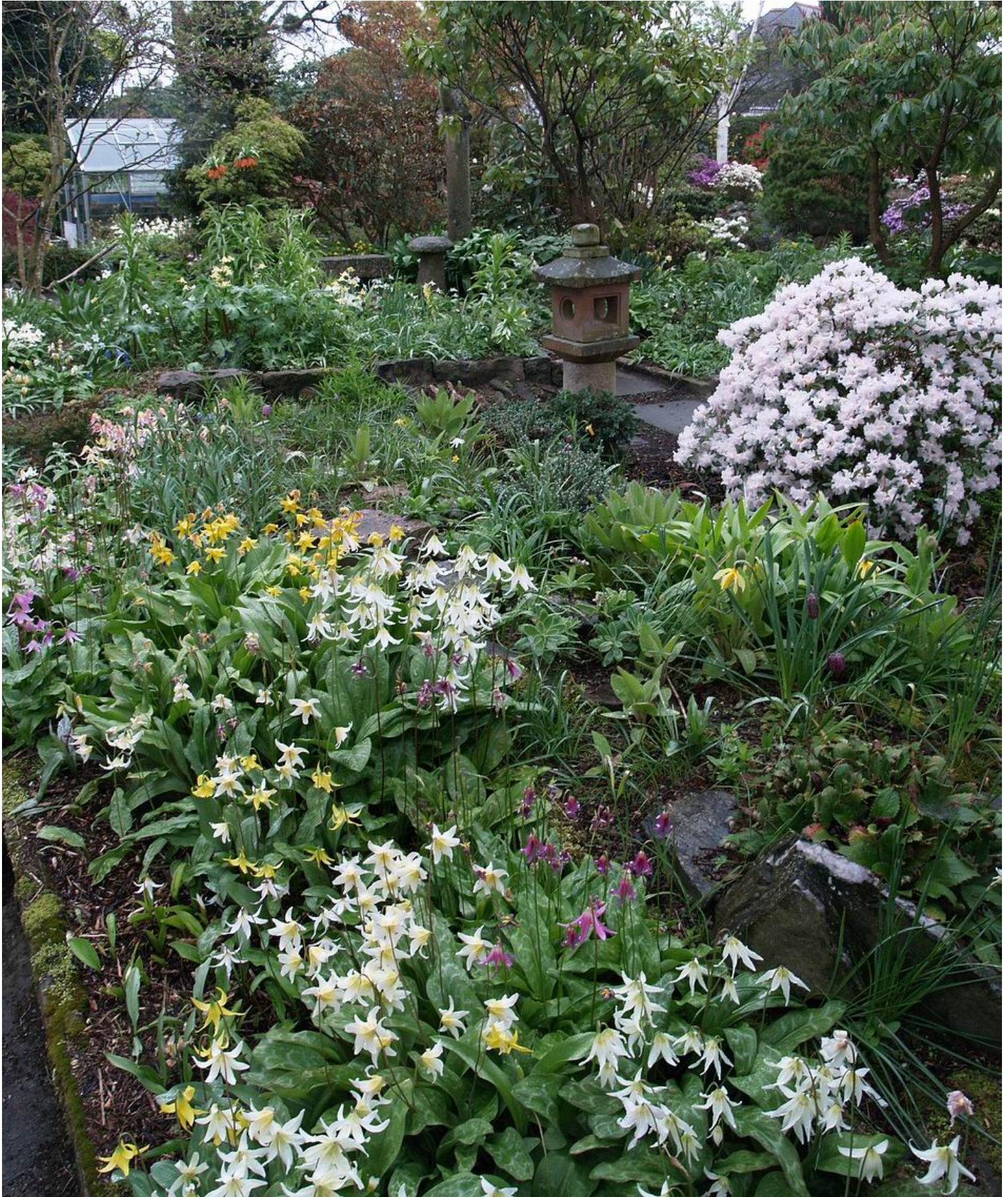


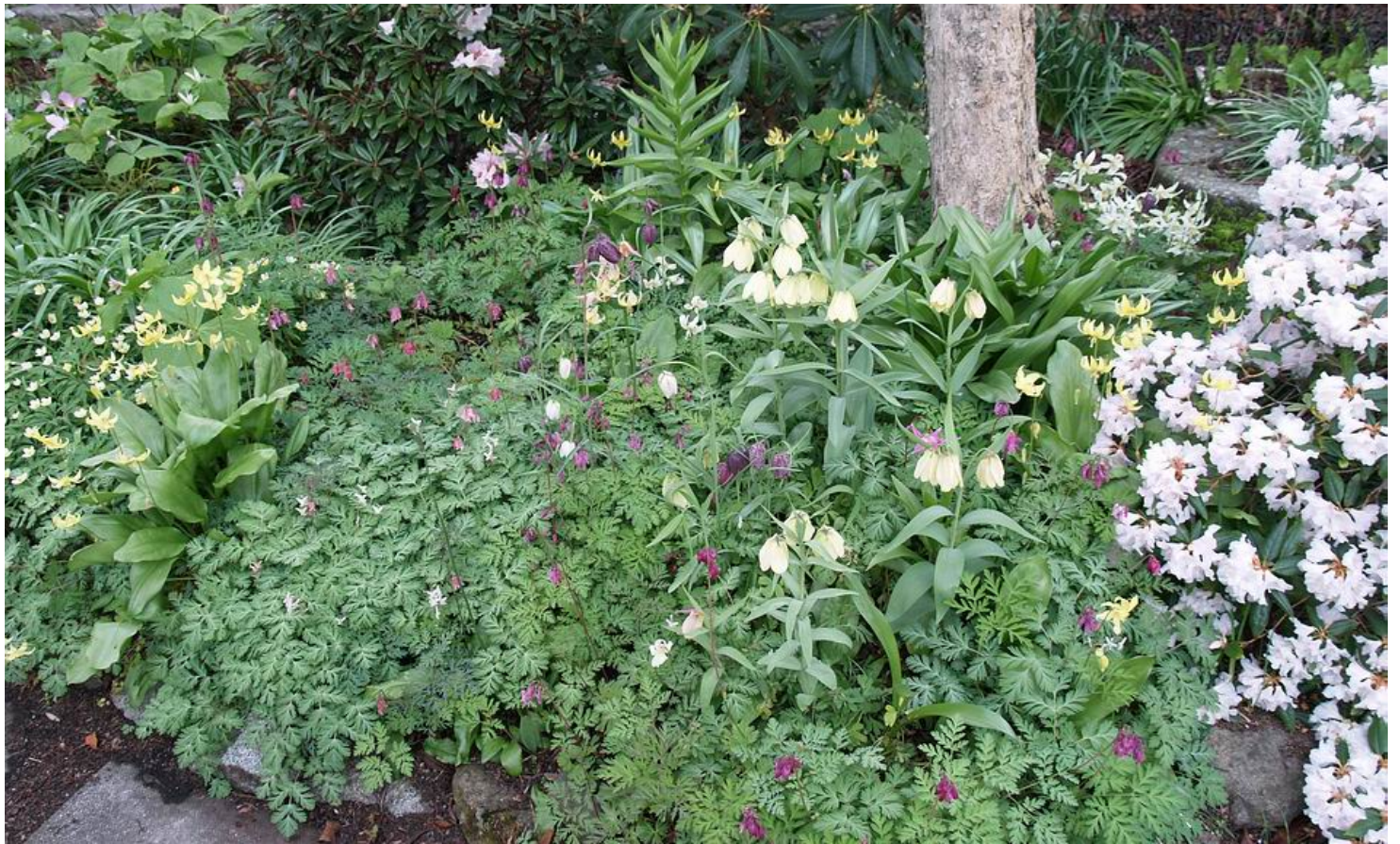


BULB LOG 19.....12th May 2010



Garden view

They say a picture is worth a thousand words so as this is a very busy week as we run up towards the Aberdeen Show on Saturday, this week's bulb log will have fewer words than normal.



I do not like seeing large areas of ground that are not covered by plants so the foliage effect provided by these **Dicentra** make a very welcome foil to the larger bulbs that rise up though the delicate leaves. Earlier in the year this same bed was clothed in the bright colours of *Corydalis solida* which are now setting seed and going dormant; now it is the turn of some of the taller *Fritillaria* such as **F. meleagris** and **F. pallidiflora**.





Fritillaria pallidiflora

Fritillaria pallidiflora is a superb plant and is much more suited to growing in the garden than it is in a pot. We have it planted both in partial shade and full exposure to the light where it makes a very attractive and eye grabbing plant with its pale yellow almost creamy flowers tinged with deep maroon. It is well worth gently turning the flowers to view the beautifully marked interiors.



The well known and easy to please **Fritillaria pontica** is also at home in all the different situations we have.



Fritillaria pyrenaica

I struggle to keep *Fritillaria pyrenaica* happy when growing long term in a pot but it is very successful being cared for by nature in the garden.



Fritillaria affinis enjoys being planted near to shrubs and other plants that will draw up the summer moisture so the bulb can enjoy a warm dry rest. This is a nice yellow form, of this normally dark brown American fritillary, which I raised from seed many years ago. I thought that I had lost it as my last potful died out then I discovered it growing happily under a rhododendron where I had scattered the old potting compost which obviously included some of the rice grains that this species produces enmasse.



Trillium grandiflorum

I have a number of interesting Trillium plants in this bed including my own seedlings grown from a cross between the normal white Trillium grandiflorum and the roseum variety, all set off by the attractive new leaves of a self sown Epimedium plant in the foreground. Epimediums make good ground cover but care needs to be taken when associating them with bulbs and other plants as some forms are fairly vigorous and have thuggish tendencies more suited to a large woodland than sharing a bed with other plants which they can draw the life out of.



Trillium grandiflorum

It is interesting to see the different arrangements of the petals with some flowers being very even and well spaced while others are less attractive looking as if they are missing a fourth petal. I have recorded this feature over a number of years and it is genetically fixed.



Trillium seedlings

There was a time many years ago when I collected every single seed produced in the garden nowadays I am not so rigorous in my approach. I keep an eye on certain key plants perhaps new or rare ones that I need to concentrate on building up stocks of, while others that are more familiar I often tend to be too late to collect the seed. Sometimes this is by accident and sometimes by design as I am happy to have plants ‘naturalise’ and self seed around. Plants

that self seed save me a lot of time and space that growing them in pots would require and there is a cost: there will be more failures in allowing the seeds to sow themselves and you will end up with less plants than if you sowed them in a controlled environment of a seed pot.



Trillium flexipes Kentucky

Among the many Trilliums we grow is this plants that we received as the Kentucky form of *Trillium flexipes*.

The seedlings vary mostly in the size of the flowers and this is the biggest having good sized flowers.

I have it growing next to another group of seedlings that I raised from *Trillium erectum* which I suspect are actually a hybrid group between *T. erectum* and *T. flexipes*, see the picture below.

My hope is that these will cross further and give us an even wider range of colour forms of these attractive erect trilliums.



Trillium flexipes and T. erectum cross

Here are the two flowers I hope will become partners and produce an interesting range of hybrids. I will watch and collect any seeds that are set by these plants.



It is when you see Erythronium flowers in the rain that you understand why they have evolved such shapes.



The pagoda swept shape protects the reproductive parts perfectly from the wet and in warm sunny conditions they fully reflex to better attract pollinators.



A number of *Erythronium oregonum* seedlings: I think from the long narrow shape of the filaments that the two on the right may have hybridised.



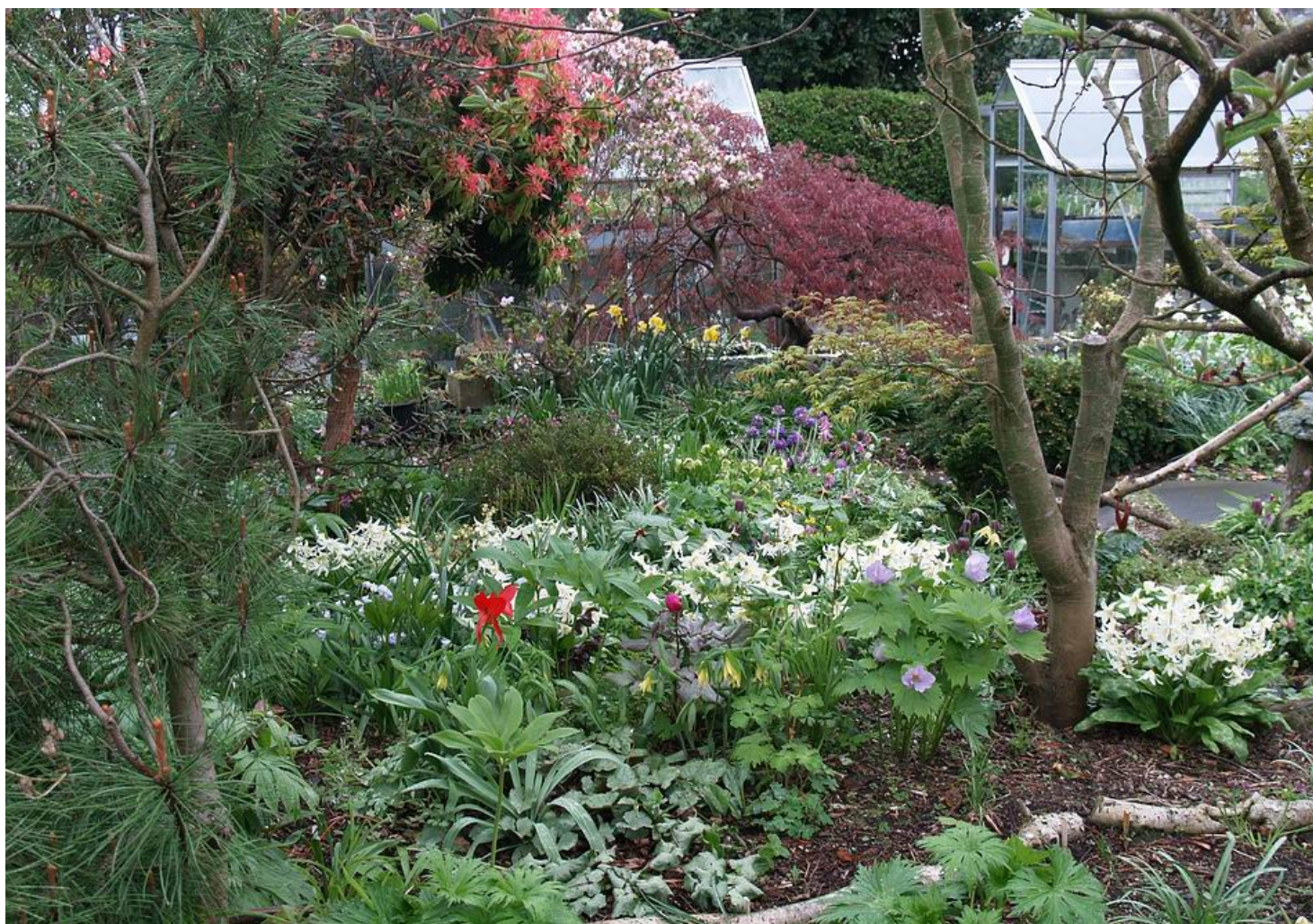
Erythronium montanum

It is only now after many of the Erythronium are starting to go over that the first flowers on Erythronium montanum start to open. In the wild this species is a mountain plant flowering as the snow line retreats and so it is a late riser that will be difficult to grow in many gardens warmer than ours. There are two reasons for our success with the beautiful species first is our garden is cool – a squally snow shower is falling as I write, and secondly because I am several generations of garden collected seed down the line from my original introduction – each new generation being more adapted to our conditions.

I have never noticed before that the anthers are twisted once they dehisce – I will have to observe the other plants carefully as they flower to see if this is a consistent feature across them all.



Erythronium montanum



I will leave you with one more view of the garden and then I must go and get on with the work of being a Joint Show Secretary.