



BULB LOG 28.....9th July 2014

600th Bulb Log



The Bulb log is now in its 12th year so today's log is the 600th – if you told me that when I started in January 2003 I might never have started. Wondering how tempting it could be not to write the log some weeks lead me to think that much of what happens in the garden, as in life, **is down to what we do not do as much as what we do do**. If that sounds like a Donald Rumsfeld quote - "*.... there are known knowns; there are things that we know that we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know*" – I agree, both sound like garbled nonsense but I see some sense in them. In my vision the opening picture suggests candles used to celebrate a significant date such as birthdays – in this case Bulb Log 600 – but it also reminds me of a task I did not carry out last year. I intended to split the *Dactylorhiza* as they are increasing so well that they are encroaching on the area where we have various forms of *Roscoea humeana* - including the very beautiful white form. Because I have not taken action we cannot enjoy the *Roscoea* flowers - which has been flowering unseen over the last three weeks - without poking around in the depths of *Dactylorhiza* foliage to find them. If I do nothing we could lose the *Roscoea* completely so I must both split the *Dactylorhiza* and move the *Roscoea* to an area where they have more space at flowering time.



Roscoea alpina has the space to thrive and self-seed around in the rock garden bed in the same space where *Crocus*, *Narcissus* and *Erythronium* flowered earlier in the year. This is a much more successful association of plants in my 'time share' beds where the subjects share the same spaces but grow at very different times of the year.



The *Rhodohypoxis* have been in flower for some time but also serve to remind me of something else I did not do. To keep them dry over winter I move the *Rhodohypoxis* troughs under the staging in the glasshouses -this winter I placed them in the fritillaria house. As the fritillaria do not come into growth until well into January I do not go in it so often to observe what may be happening. This allowed the rodent population to feast, unchecked, seriously

depleting our numbers of *Rhodohypoxis*.



Fortunately *Rhodohypoxis* increase relatively well so in a few years I should be able to build up our numbers again.





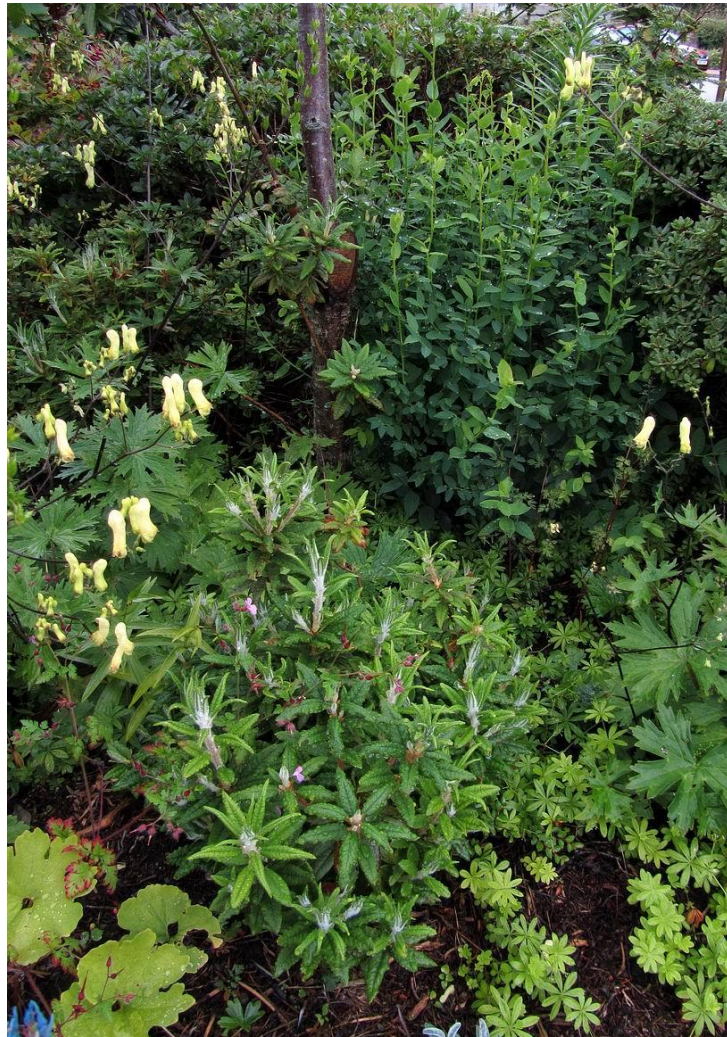
Nomocharis flowers are so attractive and repay close inspection – this is the largest, height wise, form that we have with stems taller than I am.



Nomocharis



Recently we cut back many Rhododendrons in the front garden – some we removed completely others we hoped would bud back from the cut off stems. All but one, a Yakushimanum hybrid that we left more in hope than expectation, are now showing good buds.



Buds are forming almost down to ground level on this Rhododendron, left, the picture on the right shows the regrowth on a *Ledum* in the foreground and a *Vaccinium* behind– these were cut back one year ago.



The lower section of the front garden is now wearing its summer colour dominated by Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'



Compared to the spring colour summer seems a quiet time in our garden but it is a time to realise that gardens are not just about flowers which are only around for short periods but also the huge variation of foliage. Even herbaceous plants have leaves that are with us for so much longer than their flowers so we should be using their shape from and texture when planting out our gardens rather than colour coordinating the flowers.



The vicious spiny foliage of an *Aciphylla* contrasts beautifully with the soft ferny leaves of *Dicentra*.



Sanguinaria, *Podophyllum* and *Dactylorhiza* leaves rise up through a carpet of *Dicentra* and *Corydalis* – water droplets and the occasional flowers provide highlights.



I don't think I have shown this scene along our front path before - a row of troughs is supported by the yellow flowers of *Pseudofumaria lutea* and *Meconopsis cambrica*.



The front drive which should be more familiar to you is now in its full summer colour dominated by *Geranium sanguineum* var. *lancastricense* which will give a succession of flowers for the next 3 months.



The *Fritillaria* have already seeded, the last of *Erythroniums* are about to shed their seed as *Digitalis lutea* flowers rise up.



More colour up and on top of the wall where *Corydalis*, *Erythronium*, *Narcissus*, etc. flowered earlier in the year.



A rambling rose, which I grew from a cutting, climbs up through a Crinodendron forming a lethal impenetrable barrier along the top of the fence.



I have been planting up some of the newly opened up areas in the front garden but first I have to break up the ground and mass of roots. The best tool to use is a mattock that cuts and breaks roots and hard ground then I work in some good garden compost with a fork before planting some Primula.



Some more foliage contrast to be enjoyed over many months include Trillium, Fern, Hellebore and Hepatica. Green is a colour feared by many artists because it has so many variations and is one of the hardest colours to mix.



I showed this form of **Trillium ovatum** with the dark markings on the leaves flowering for the first time in an earlier log and I am delighted to see that I have some good seed now ready to collect and sow.



There has been much discussion over the years as to whether you should remove the fleshy attachments, elaiosomes, before planting. Some suggest leaving it on can inhibit germination others suggest it causes rot but I have had successful germination most years without removing it.



I do remove the worst of the moisture and some of the elaiosomes by rubbing the seeds gently in some dry sand that I have first passed through a kitchen sieve – I then pass it back through the sieve to separate out the seeds ready for an immediate sowing



After 600 Bulb Logs I hope that I have got the message to grow your bulbs and all plants from seeds whenever you get the opportunity. Another lesson I hope that you may have picked up on combines my two interests of Art and Gardening and that is of observation, you must not only *look* but also *see*. While capturing this picture of a Cypripedium flower I was stuck by the similarity of shape to my sculpture so I reframed including them both.....