



BULB LOG 32.....10th August 2016





For the last five years almost every picture I have shown in the Bulb Log was taken using my trusty Canon compact camera. I must admit that while I am not careless with my camera it is just a tool and it is always in my pocket or lying around where I am working and so is often exposed to dust and dirt. While I was in Alaska I noticed spots appearing in some of the pictures which were caused by dirt that had got inside the elements of the lens – by knocking the camera on my hand I dislodged some of the dirt, so it did not blemish the image but not all of it.

When I returned home I forced the front element off the lens and cleaned the dirt away however a few spots which were most visible in light subjects and at certain focal lengths still appeared on images. Part of the problem is that there are so many opportunities for dirt to get inside the lens with the number of moving sections required to achieve a 14x zoom.

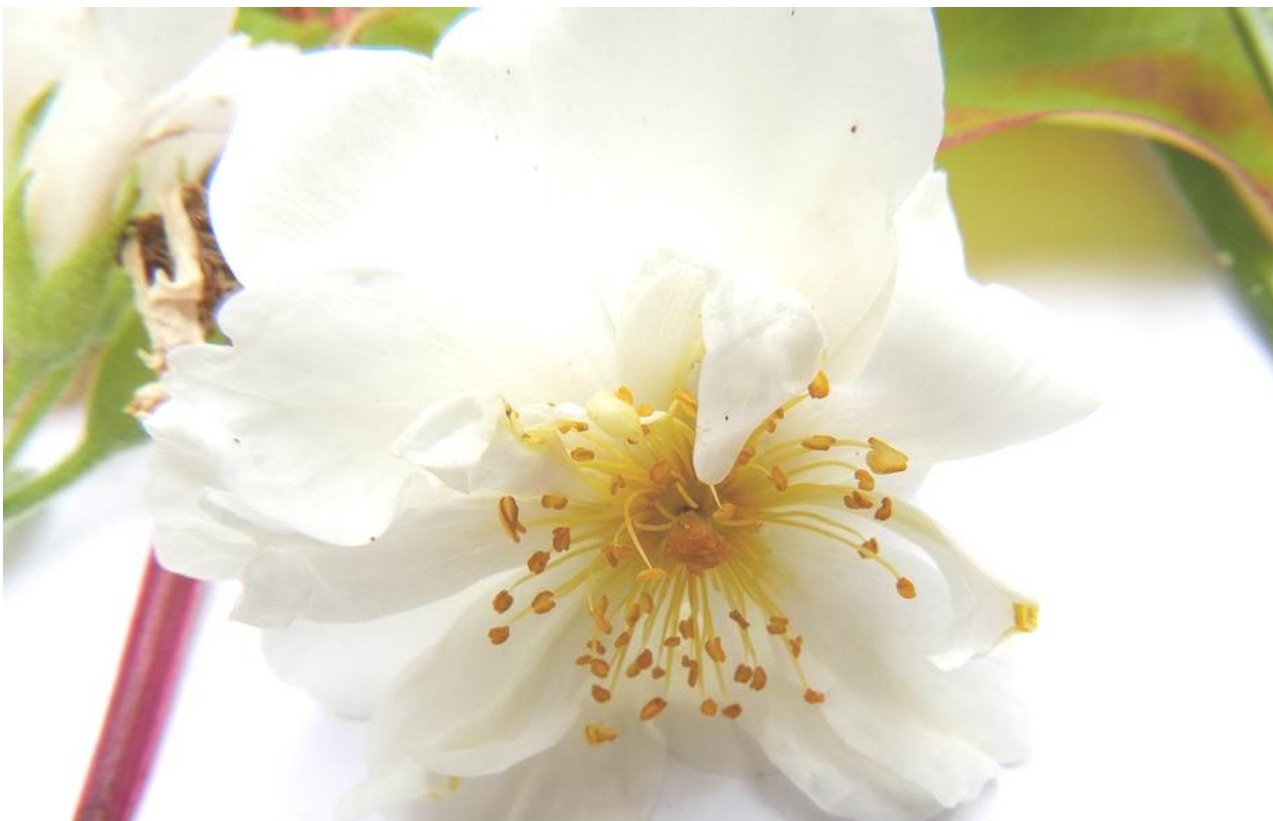
Having decided it was time to get a new camera I listed the main criteria I required then read reviews and specifications on-line to see what was available.

I wanted to stick with a compact that would give me manual control of exposure and focus. I also wanted to handle the camera before I bought so I went to [Jessops](#) in Aberdeen where I could try out my short list between an updated version of my old Canon and the [Lumix DMC LX100](#) which I was attracted to from the reviews. Every camera is a compromise and the Lumix fell down on a few of my criteria namely it was a bit larger than I wanted nor did it have a built in flash but I loved the controls and the ease of use. Manual focus is controlled by a ring on the lens, as is the aperture - shutter speed is a dial on top as is the exposure compensation; in fact it works just like old style cameras I was so familiar with before digital. There is a single button to push for intelligent automatic (iA) where everything is set by the camera plus there are many more settings and adjustments available using the controls and the viewing screen that I have yet to explore.





The first thing I do when I get a new camera is learn how to use it and while it is very easy to use this one it is going to take me a few weeks or months to explore and learn the full facilities it offers. To check how accurately it recorded colours I gathered a selection of flowers from the garden and photographed them on a sheet of white paper and I am pretty pleased with the results.



Exposing for white is a problem as automatic settings want to make it grey but it was easy using the exposure + compensation in conjunction with the live view on the screen to get a satisfactory result. I walked around the garden taking a series of pictures to

help me get used to my new tool learning how to get the best results.



Cyananthus and Papaver

These flowers and colour-test pictures, also the ones on the next page, were all taken using the intelligent auto (iA) setting where the camera sets exposure, ISO and focuses.



Mutisia and Rhodohypoxis



Hypericum and Tropaeolum



Geranium



Fern

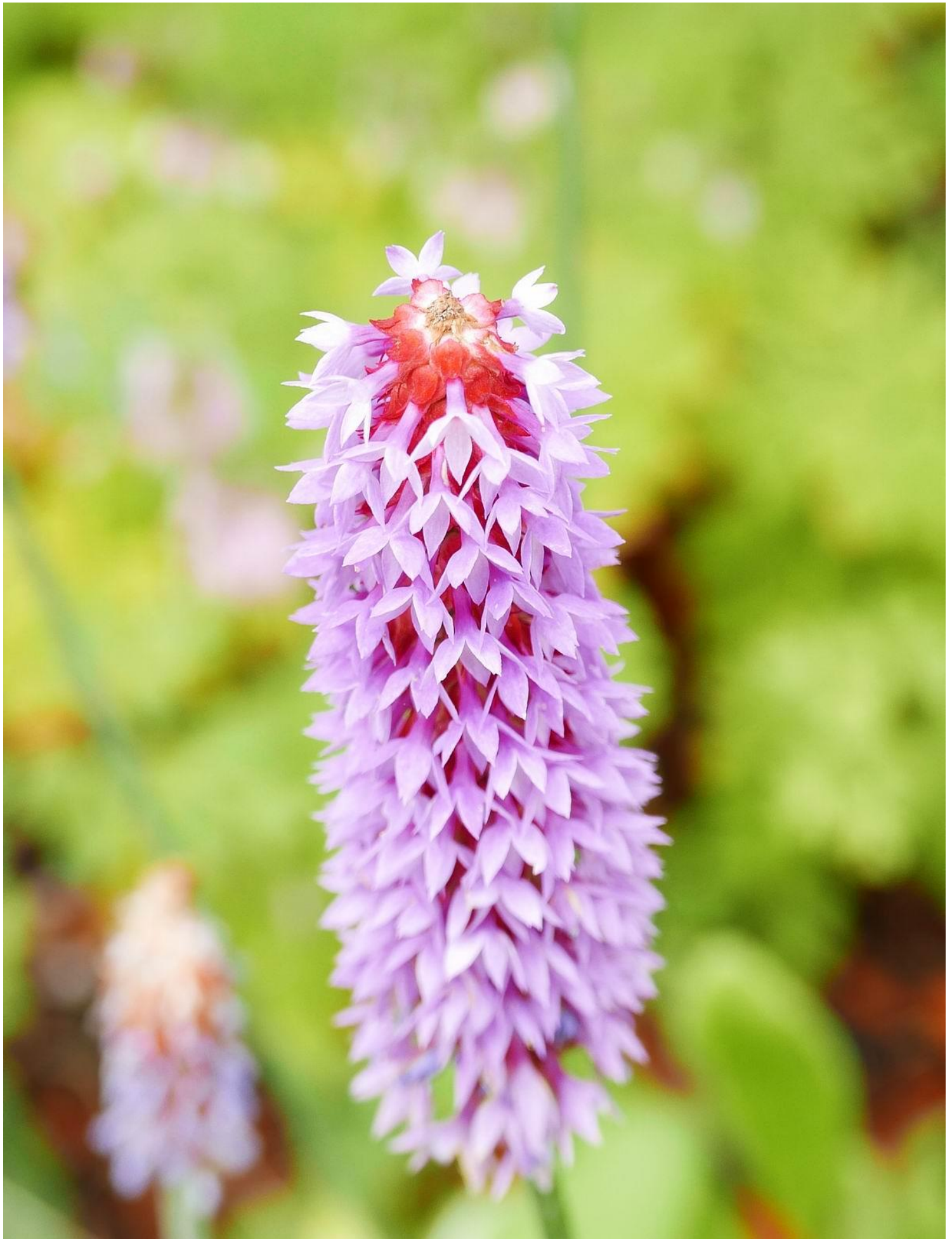


Geranium



I was trying out the manual focus with these pictures of **Primula florindae** and the magnified image seen through the electronic viewfinder, which switches on and off when you put it to your eye, helped me to sharpen the focus where I wanted it to be.





Primula vialii

Having manual control over the focus is important because the automated systems do not always pinpoint the area of an image that I want to be sharp, here I was able to focus on the top of the inflorescence while blurring the background to minimise distraction. Also focusing this close the depth of field is shallow so the lower flowers are also out of focus.



I was playing with the auto-macro focus for this **Dactylorhiza** subject.



This close image of a **Digitalis** was taken using the iA which is so easy and for the most part seems to produce excellent results as the next sequence of pictures shows.



Arisaema, fern and other leaves.



Here the white *Pseudocorydalis* flowers are a bit over exposed using the iA setting but everything else is good, if I wanted I could switch to another mode and under-expose, by around one stop, to correct the white but that would darken the rest of the image.



While I was walking around trying out the camera I noticed how much of this *Trillium* had been eaten by snails.



I have found some difficulty portraying **Corydalis davidii** to my satisfaction but here I am reasonably pleased, above is using iA and below I switched to manual exposure and minus 2/3 of a stop to capture a bit more detail in the flowers.



Corydalis davidii



Corydalis davidii

For this close up I used fully manual settings.



Fuchsia procumbens has proved fully hardy in this raised bed for over thirty years. It dies back underground every winter reappearing in early July spreading further every year - it will flower later in the season.



Light is important when taking photographs - strong sunshine will cause exposure problems with all types of cameras because it produces strong contrast between light and shade. I note a setting on this camera where it will take three images with different exposure settings and then it combines them into a single image – I have yet to try that out. However I did want to point out how some flowers also react very quickly to sunshine, having photographed this **Romulea rosea** (?) I immediately downloaded the image into my PC for the Bulb Log – when I saw the image I thought I would take a close up of one of the flowers however in the no more than five minutes since the first image the sun had gone behind a cloud and the flowers had closed as shown below.



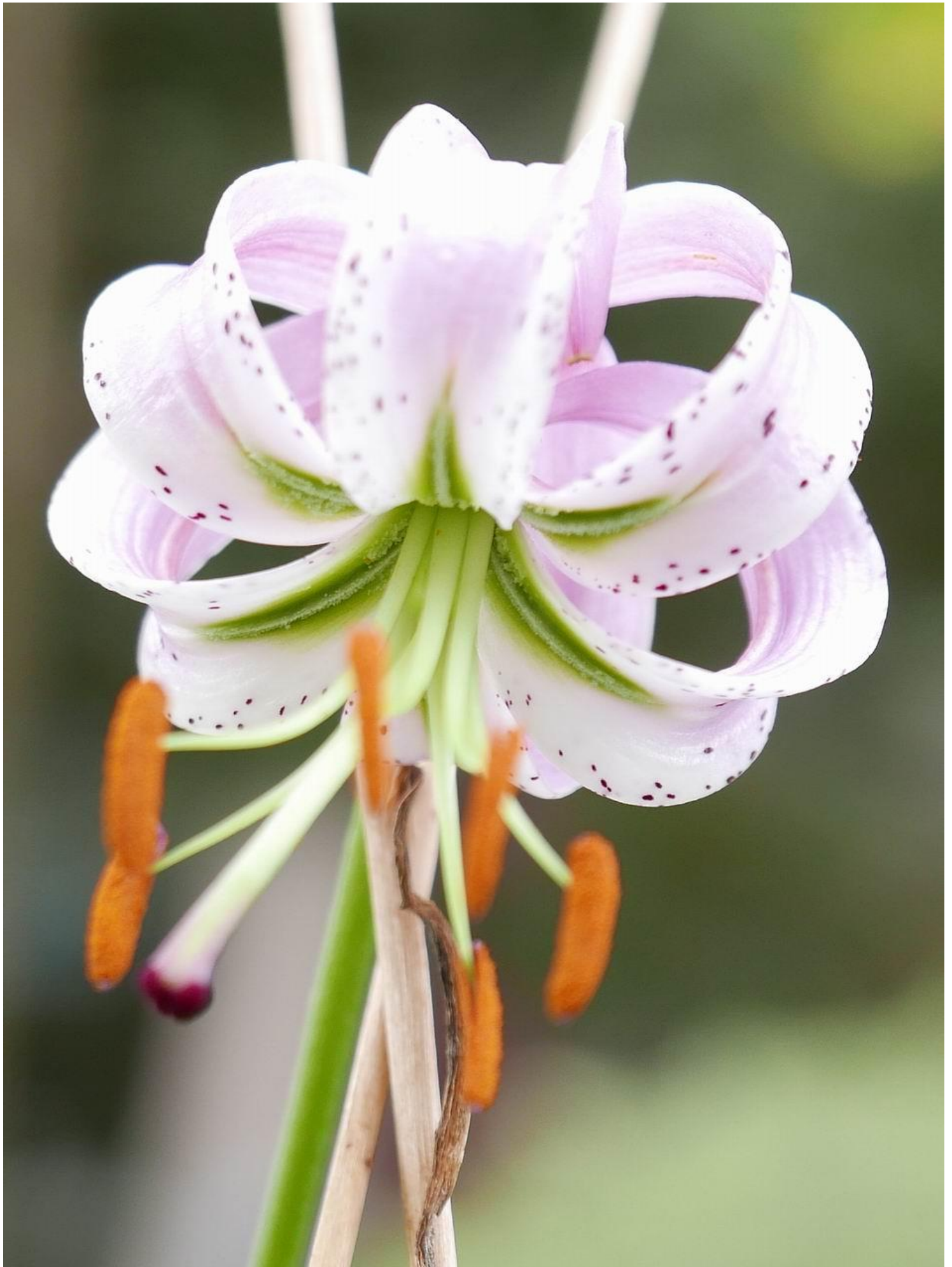


Cardiocrinum gigantium* and *Lilium szovitsianum

These pictures were taken just before I left for Alaska – I meant to show them earlier – I wanted to illustrate the height that some lilies can reach - in both cases they are significantly taller than I am.

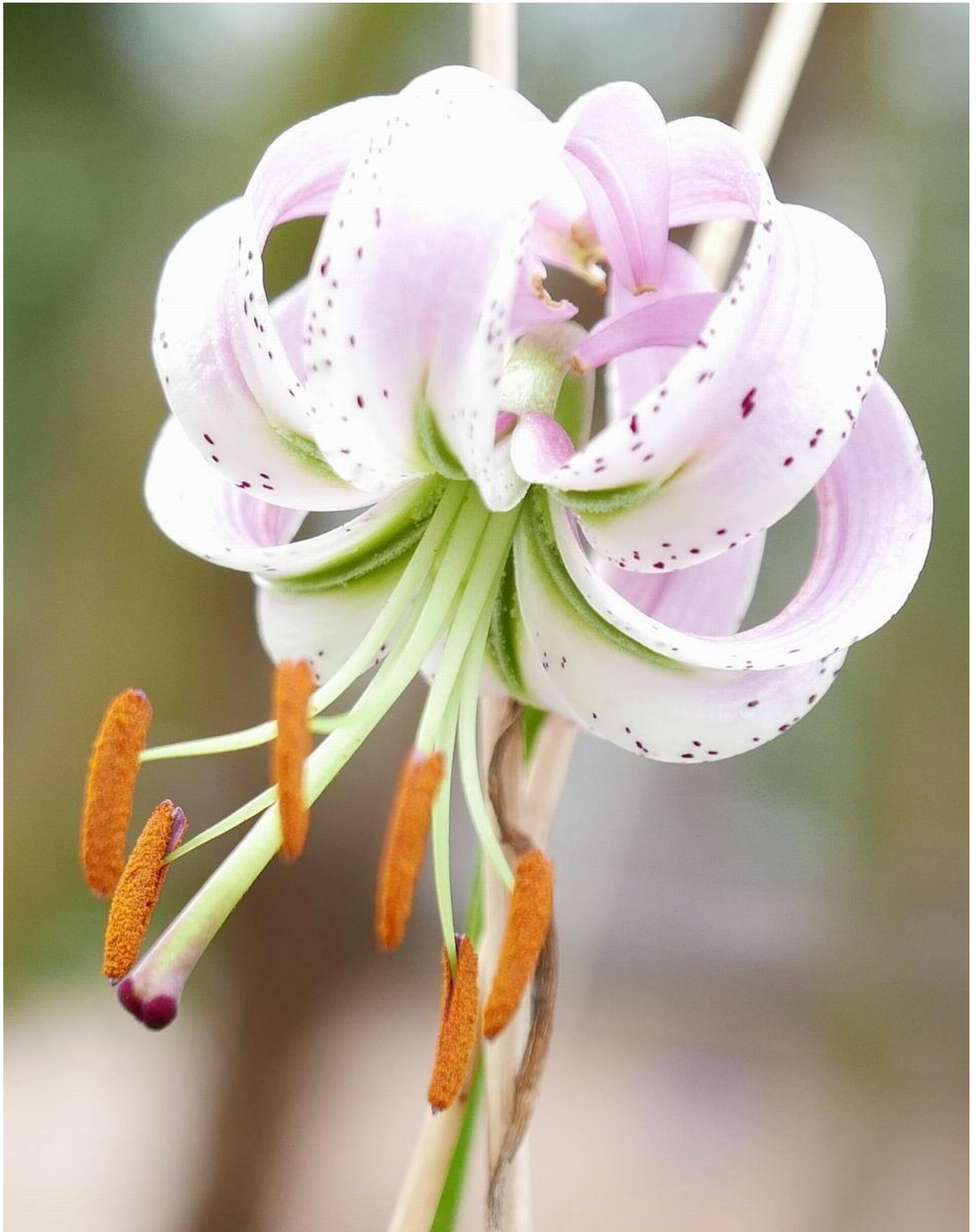


Lilium nepalense



Lilium langkongense

This sequence of pictures of *Lilium langkongense* is to illustrate how important sharp focus and depth of field are in a photograph. The only area in sharp focus in the above image is the green areas at the base of the flower; the out of focus anthers and style are a distraction.



Depth of field refers to how much of an image can be in focus at one time, it varies according to focal length, aperture and the distance the subject is from the lens. This picture was taken at f16 and works better than the previous picture because more of the depth is in focus – while your eye is initially drawn to the sharp focus of the green throat then down to two of the anthers but the out of focus anthers in the foreground remain a distraction.



I moved back a bit from the subject and used the zoom to frame the flowers for the next two variations: above there are some areas that are sharp enough to draw your eye and sometimes that is enough to make a successful image but using manual focus and f16 for the picture below I am able to get the most important parts of the flower into sharp focus.



Lilium langkongense



Now I take a few views to learn how the camera records them.





Tropaeolum speciosum with Vaccinium nummularia berries forming.

So far I am very pleased with my new camera which will serve me well for a number of years and I look forward to trying more of its features but for now hedge cutting must take priority.....