



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 26.....28th June 2017





Week twenty six sees us half way through another year - a time when plants in parts of the garden have finished flowering leaving the foliage to provide ground cover, decoration and interest. I am always on the search for plants that will continue the sequence of flowering through the summer that will also fit comfortably into our densely planted garden. *Primula alpicola alba* and a good coloured candelabra hybrid are in flower at this time but they do best in ground that is dug annually with added humus and ours is a no-dig garden; also not all can survive long term in the drier parts of the garden. *Dactylorhiza* and the blue *Meconopsis* flowering will soon be over while the self-seeding yellow *Meconopsis cambrica*, now reclassified as *Parameconopsis cambrica*, will continue to flower

through the summer.

Self-seeding plants are often regarded as uninvited pests but I regard many as welcome volunteers often introducing them in the first place. They greatly add to our natural style of planting and their flowers help link the different parts of the garden. Provided you apply appropriate control, such as removing unwanted seed pods, you can decide where they are allowed to stay- if they grow where you do not want them, simply remove them.

How difficult would it be to plant up the narrow cracks between the paving slabs yet there is no shortage of plants germinating there - Maggi constantly has to 'weed' there to keep it tidy-ish. We do choose to



allow certain plants, such as this *Geranium robertianum* to remain, others such as the *Aconitum* will be removed.



Geranium robertianum

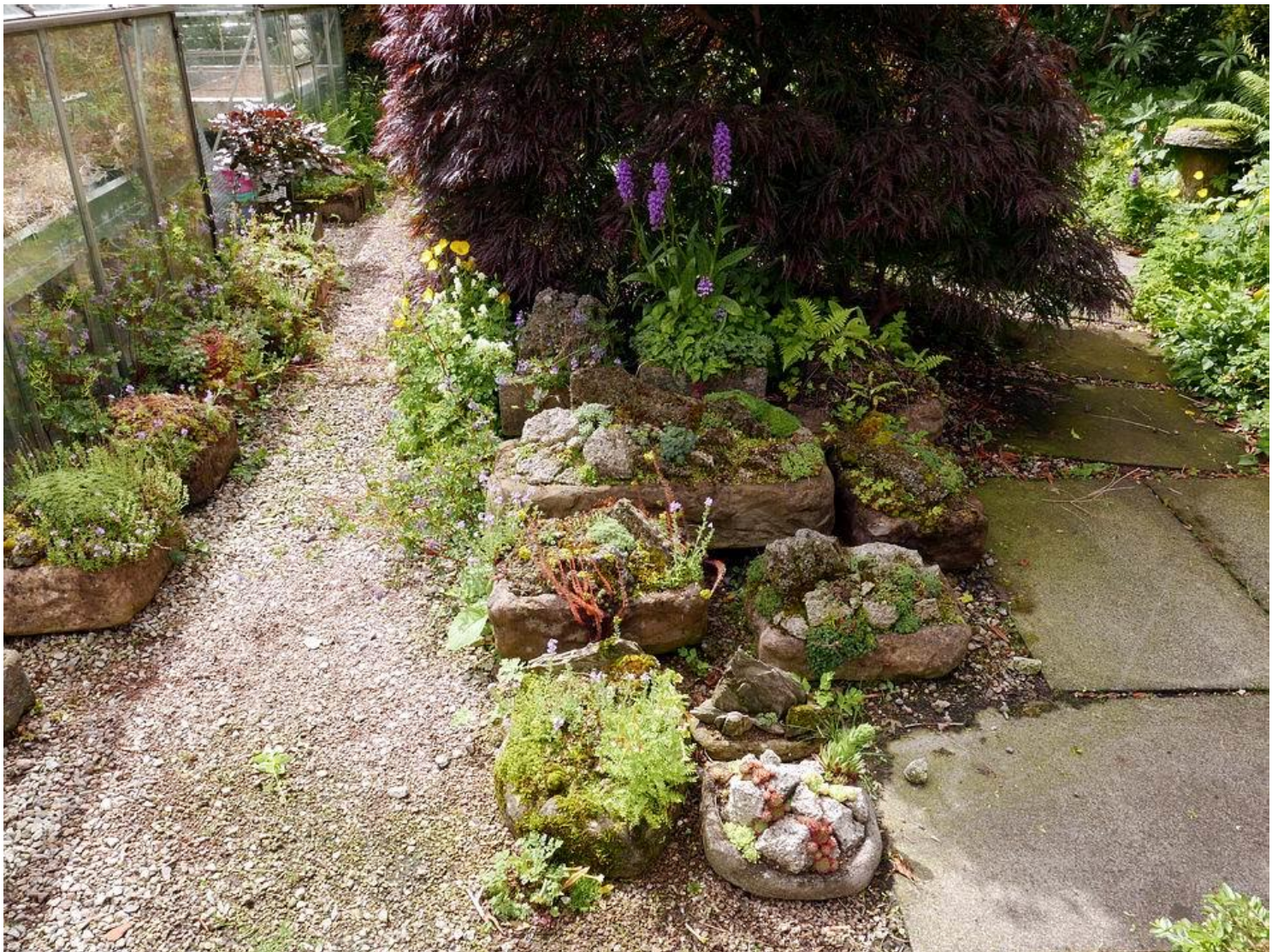
These opportunist plants will often grow in spots that we would never have considered planting. The fine foliage and pink flowers of *Geranium robertianum*, above left, beautifully softens the scene among various rock samples on our back doorstep where it is growing in accumulated blown in sand and debris trapped in the corner. A white flowered form, along with a small yellow *Oxalis*, is sharing a trough with mini-*Hostas*.



Geranium robertianum



A short shaggy grass that seeds around gently has also been allowed to stay.



Troughs

Troughs are always an interesting addition to a garden - each can be landscaped and planted differently - some are grouped together while others are laid out along the path at the side of the bulb houses.



Polemonium pauciflorum

We first grew *Polemonium pauciflorum* over thirty years ago then it apparently disappeared from the garden however some seed must have been lying in wait in some compost for favourable conditions to germinate. I often recycle old potting composts and a few years ago a seedling appeared in this trough and now we have re-established this plant. Seeds will often lay dormant like this, buried in the ground waiting for the prompt to germinate. For some types the trigger is exposure to light so when you turn over the soil you are exposing dormant seeds to light and triggering germination often resulting in a mass of seedlings, some wanted some not - the soil is nature's seed bank.



This is the simplest of small troughs made free form with some left over cement then landscaped with broken concrete block and planted with single rosettes of Sedums – one year on it is starting to show character.



Self-seeding plants have added a soft naturalistic feeling both in and around this grouping of troughs



Corydalis mairei



We introduced *Corydalis mairei* some years ago and while it is not the most decorative or long lived species it has stayed with us, moving annually as it seeds around freely. It is one of the plants seeded beside the group of troughs in the previous picture and as it marches across the garden it has also reached the open bulb frame where it is flowering in many of the pots. As the chosen occupant of the pot is currently dormant this invasion is not a problem – in fact it could be an advantage as the *Corydalis* will use moisture and help prevent the resting bulbs becoming too wet in our damp summer weather. The red stems, dissected leaves and masses of small blue/purple flowers give some decoration and I have been scattering the seeds into the more woodland type of beds where this plant will be better suited – whether it adapts to grow and stay there I have yet to discover.



In addition to all the volunteer self-seeders, we have grown the majority of the plants, including the trees and shrubs, in the garden from seed.

We grow two small *Hypericum*s in this slab bed one, the matt-forming *Hypericum reptans* is not in flower yet but the lovely dwarf shrubby one, that we can never remember the name of, is flowering – both can be increased by seed or cuttings.

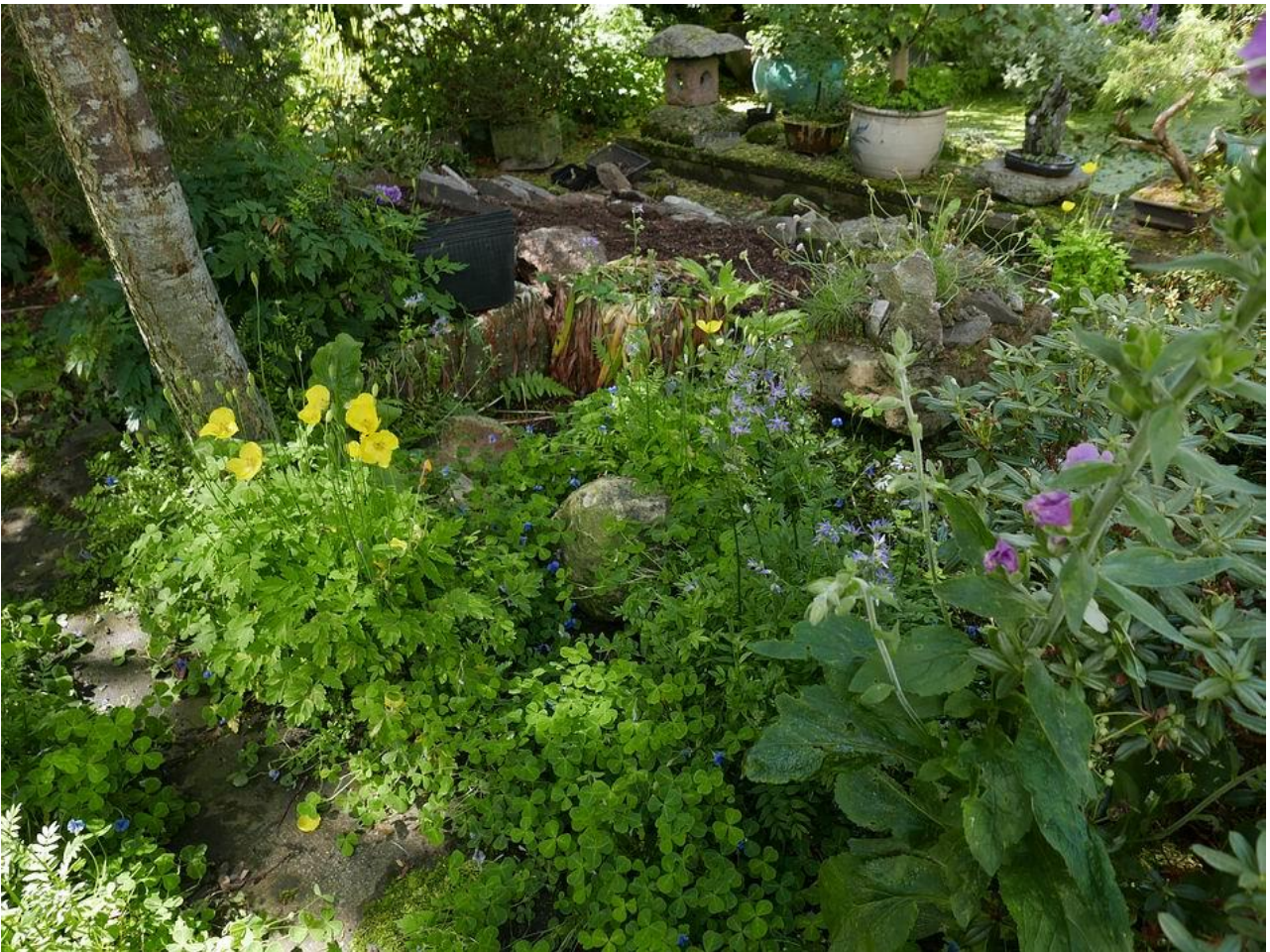


Hypericum ? in flower with the spreading Hypericum reptans in bud to right and Cyananthus microphyllus behind plus self-seeders Oxalis, Viola and dwarf Aquilegia.

Polemonium caeruleum is another plant we grew from seed many years ago and it has looked after itself ever since then forming a small seeding colony at the edge of the raised wall it has also jumped the path to grow near where I am making the new bed (below). I intend to incorporate the Polemonium into the new bed to link it into the surroundings.



Polemonium caeruleum



Looking towards the new bed with *Polemonium caeruleum* and other self-seeders acting as link plants encouraging the eye and the viewer to move around the various areas of the garden.



View

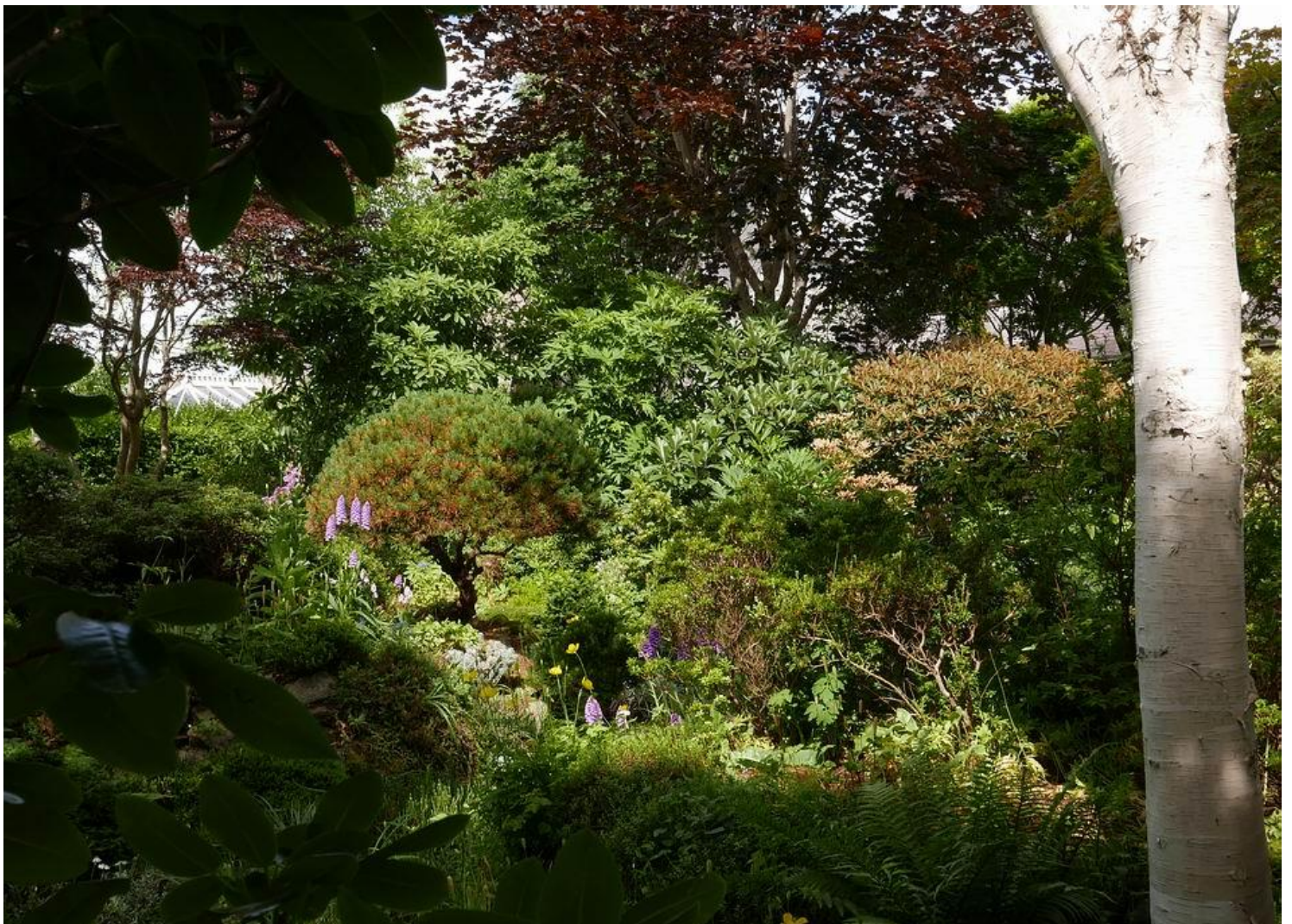


Oxalis magellanica and others now take their turn sharing this part of the gravel where *Corydalis*, *Narcissus* and *Erythronium* flowered in April - see below.



You will see plenty Erythronium seed pods in the foreground - all have seeded into the gravel, a process I am happy to allow to continue.

Digitalis purpurea is another plant we allow to seed around in appropriate places. This one first flowered last year and as I did not want to have to pull masses of seedlings from the gravel I cut back the flower stem as the flowers went over, this stimulated more flowering shoots to grow from the leaf axels extending the season - I similarly removed these as the flowers faded. Finally I cut the stem down near the ground where there were two small side growths which has resulted in two flower stems this year.



View



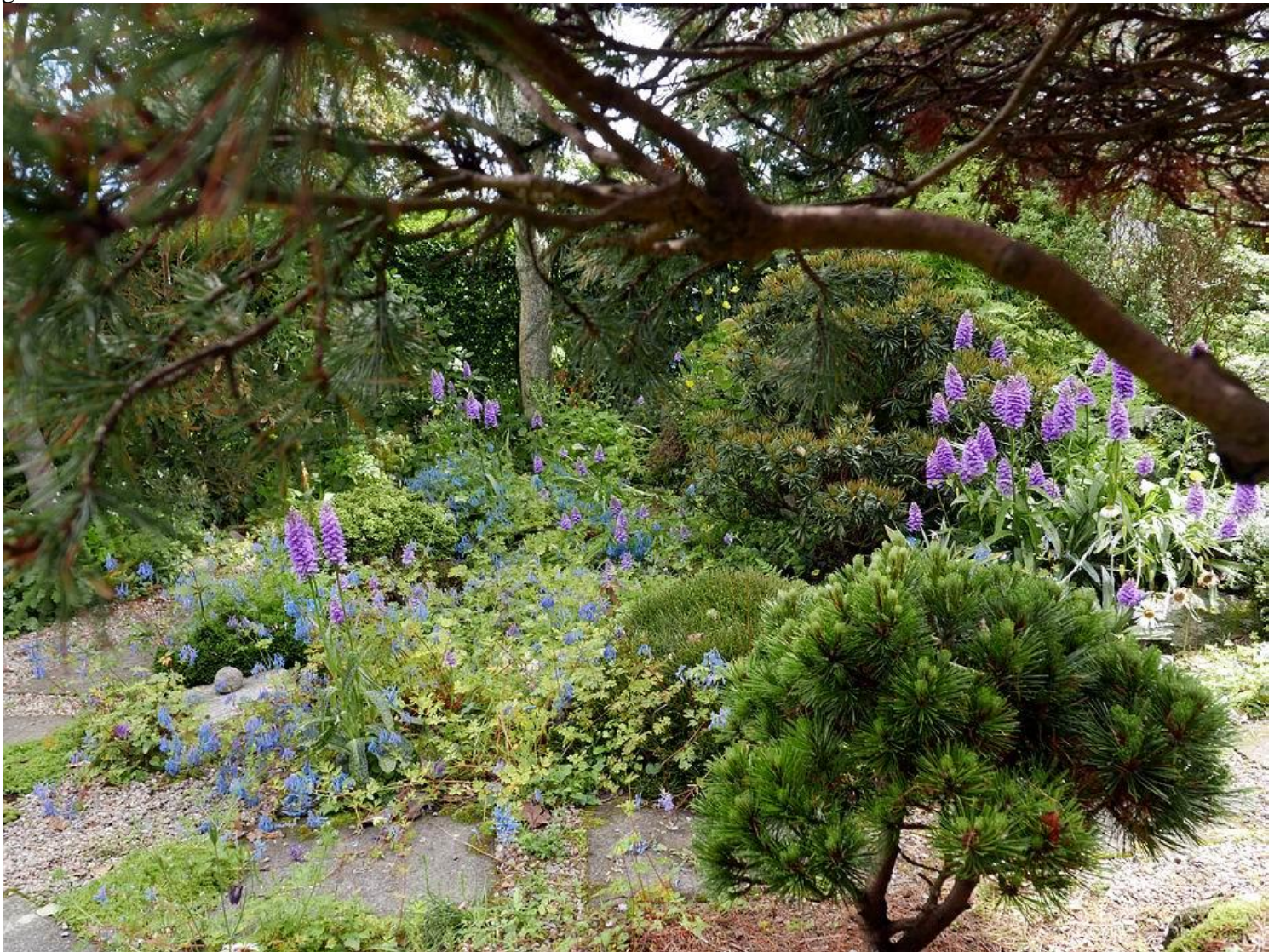
Looking towards the pine on the raised wall where a group of *Dactylorhiza* feature, acting as link plants with other beds and areas. If you look down and to the right of the tallest orchids there are a group of shorter pale ones – these are *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (below).



Dactylorhiza fuchsii



Dactylorhiza fuchsii is one of the species that have led to the various larger hybrids that have seeded around the garden.





More *Digitalis*, lilies, ferns and others bask in the changing light at the south end of the garden using the space now the *Erythronium* and *Trillium* are in seed and retreating underground.





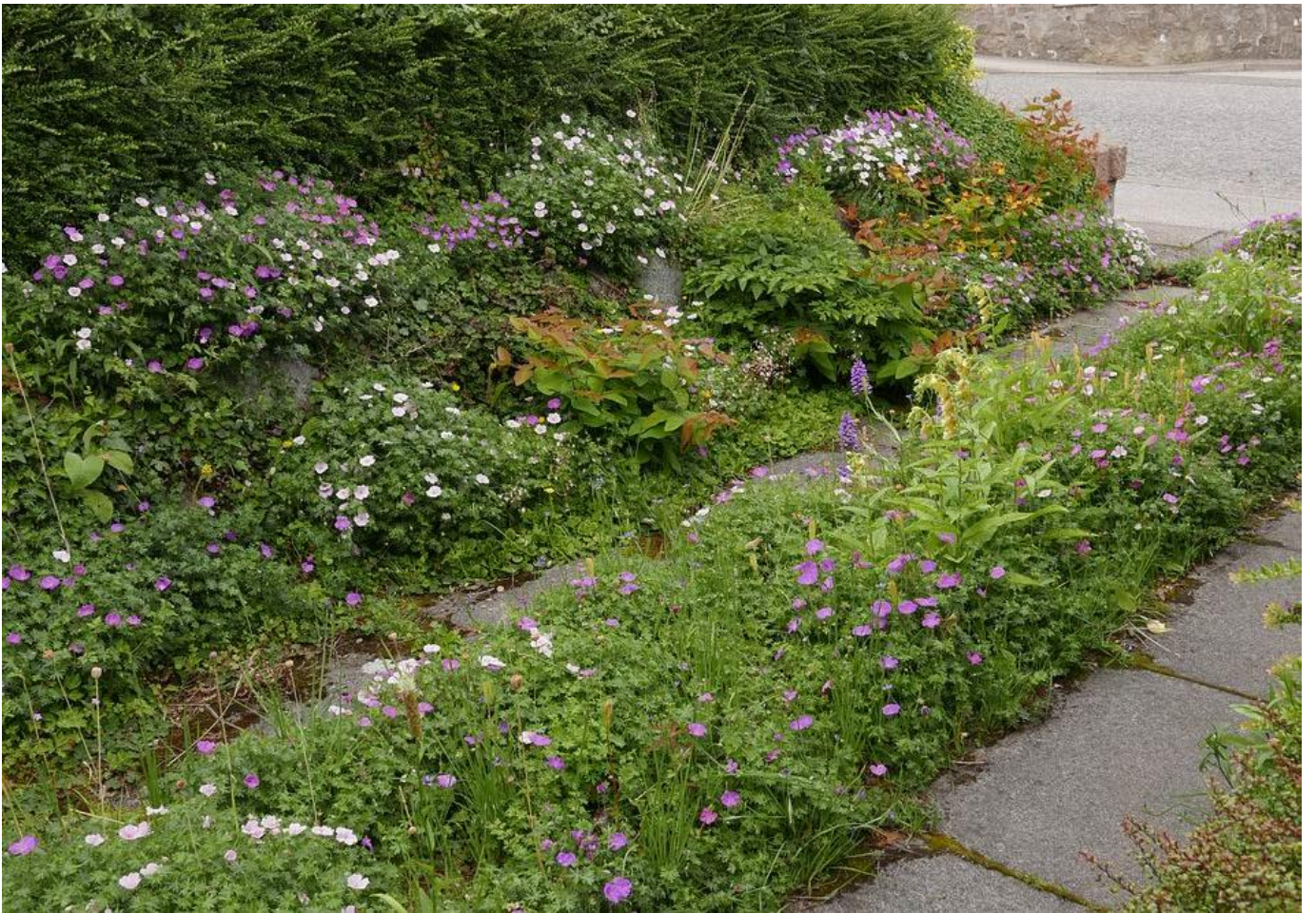
Dactylorhiza white seedling

Among all the hundreds of Dactylorhiza seedlings we have only two white ones. I would love to have a strong growing white form that would increase as well as the others unfortunately neither of these are looking as vigorous as the normal coloured forms.



Dactylorhiza white seedling

When I was working at propagating the white cultivar Dactylorhiza 'Eskimo Nell', by lifting and dividing every year, we built up quite a number but it is not a strong plant - as soon as you leave it alone in the garden it starts to dwindle which goes some way to explain why it is a rare plant that may disappear from cultivation.



The front drives are looking wonderfully wild now the Geraniums and other plants are coming into full summer growth – we keep getting leaflets through and callers to the door offering to block or tar our ‘weedy drive’!!!



Would tarmac really look better than this?



Digitalis grandiflora

The west drive is only used occasionally for visitor's cars so we allow some slightly taller plants (60cms) to grow. Cars are not permitted to come in until they have set seed.



Geranium sanguineum



Volunteer Hypericums add colour and texture to both drives – these are allowed to flower and when the seed capsules form and turn colour they get cut back to the ground before they shed seed, the plants grow again next year.





Some views into the front garden from the street showing the wild natural planting.





View from the front door.



Click the link to see more of the front garden and drive plantings in the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement...](#)