



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 17.....22nd April 2020



Erythronium americanum, *Jeffersonia dubia* and *Erythronium revolutum*



Jeffersonia dubia

The sunny dry weather continues but the cold east wind coming off the sea, which is only 2 miles away and visible from the garden, is keeping the temperature cool which is ideal for many of the plants we grow. It is because we

rarely get very high temperatures even in full sun that so many of the woodland type plants grow so well for us.



Jeffersonia dubia, a woodland plant native to China and Korea, was established in our garden by raising it from seed. Growing plants from seed permits you to plant them out in groups of mixed clones resulting in a more efficient cross pollination and better seed sets. Through each subsequent generation of garden raised seedlings we raise the plants will become more adapted to our garden conditions.

Collecting, sowing and sharing seed from our gardens is becoming increasingly important to keep as wide a

range of plants as we can in cultivation. Acquiring seed collected in the wild as well as sending seed across international borders is becoming increasingly problematic.



Another plant that we have been raising through generations of our own garden collected seed is **Trillium rivale** - now renamed as **Pseudotrillium rivale**. The resulting seedlings display a wide variation in petal shape and colour which I will return to at a later date but you can click on the link to view a [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) where I concentrate on this species. I like to plant them out in mixed groups to both highlight the variations as well as increasing the opportunity for good seed sets.



Trillium rivale - note the small yellow Erythronium to the right.



Erythronium species, aff. grandiflorum. from Mount Prevost, Vancouver Island



Here is yet another of the plants that we introduced by raising it from seed.

Some years ago we received five seeds three of which I raised to flowering size and even managed to get one seed capsule from their first year of flowering to start off the second generation of garden plants. Since then I have received another packet of seed from the habitat which is important because it will allow us to establish a bigger gene pool in our garden population.



Tropaeolum azureum and Tropaeolum tricolorum



Tropaeolum azureum



One of the questions that I am most often asked is where to get some of the plants that I show. You are unlikely to find anyone offering tubers of many of them, such as *Tropaeolum azureum*, so the only way is to look for a source of seed. Our original seed came from a John Watson collection way back in the 1980's since when we have kept it going both as the original tubers and more importantly by getting our plants to set seed. Well grown seedlings are quick to flower - these are last years, seed sown late August, that started to germinate in September, see [Bulb Log 4019](#) , which are now producing their first flowers. I will cross pollinate these hoping to get seed later in the year.



Crocus seed pods

On the left are the now dried remains of crocus leaves indicating those two corms that were not fertilised went dormant some time ago while the very same clones on the right which are setting seed are still green and feeding the corm as well as forming the seed. So often you will read that you should dead head your bulbs when the flowers fade because they say 'allowing them to set seed will weaken the bulb' – THIS IS NOT TRUE.

This is one of the myths that is too often repeated without those who write or say it understanding the science. I have done many trials on this and can tell you that in good conditions a bulb that is setting seed will grow on for four to six weeks longer than the exact same bulb that is not setting seed - this extra period of growth is more than enough to ensure that you will not only receive the most perfect gift from nature, a nice pod of seed, but also that the parent bulb will be well grown and sometimes even larger than the ones that did not set seed.

My curiosity always gets the better of me and, as the leaves start to yellow, I cannot wait to peek into some of the pots to see how the bulbs and root system has grown. To get good sized bulbs and healthy plants you need good roots: this nice dense growth of roots is what I want to see. Getting a good root growth requires a suitable potting mix for your conditions then a complete watering at the correct time of the year which as regular readers will know for me begins on 1st September when I apply the first storm.

I will have to wait until June/July to see how well many of the bulbs have grown this year although the top growth does give me an indication of what I might expect to see underground.



Galanthus



This is how the 'U' shaped sand plunge looked on 27th September compared with how it looks this week, below.





With everything that is flowering in the garden, especially the erythronium, it is very easy for me to be distracted away from the Narcissus that are still flowering in the bulb houses.



Narcissus obesus



Narcissus obeseus



Narcissus bulbocodium



Narcissus x cazorlanus

Narcissus x cazorlanus is a hybrid between Narcissus bulbocodium and triandrus which increases well and is easy to grow. I find most hybrids involving Narcissus triandrus grow well while I struggle to keep the species alive.



Narcissus 'Bell Star' is another hybrid involving Narcissus triandrus.



I have no recollection of this Narcissus that has appeared in one of the sand plunge beds, it could be a seedling or something I was given if you have any idea it would be great to hear from you.



**Narcissus
assoanus**

Different colour
forms of
Narcissus
assoanus that
you may get if
you raise them
from seed.



Narcissus rupicola

Two forms of *Narcissus rupicola* showing the colour variations that you can get from seed raised plants.



Out in the garden **Erythronium grandiflorum** is growing through a carpet of *Anemone x lipsiensis* – you will note it is significantly larger and different from the Mount Prevost form shown on previous pages.



Erythronium americanum



In a typical mixed planting are *Erythronium americanum*, *E. revolutum*, *Trillium rivale*



Plants in our garden are not grown in isolation but are always grouped in mixed associations of plants of a similar stature and vigour: a style that you will see repeated in the next sequence of images.



Trillium kurabayashii



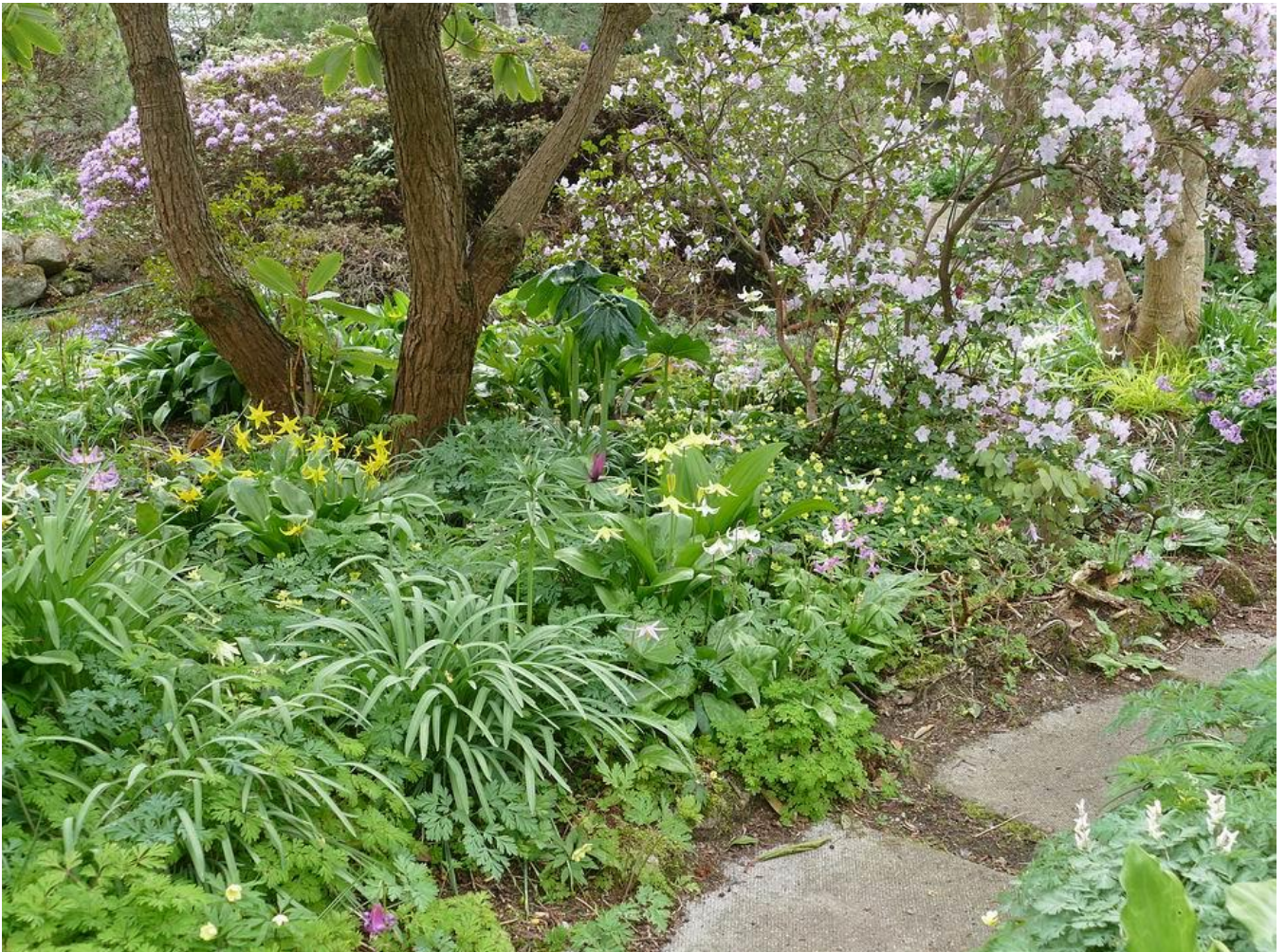
Trillium rivale, Trillium kurabayashii and Erythronium revolutum



Erythronium revolutum



Erythronium revolutum escapes from the beds, seeding all over the gravel paths.



Erythroniums mix in with some the other plants and bulbs flowering at this time.



Mixed plantings





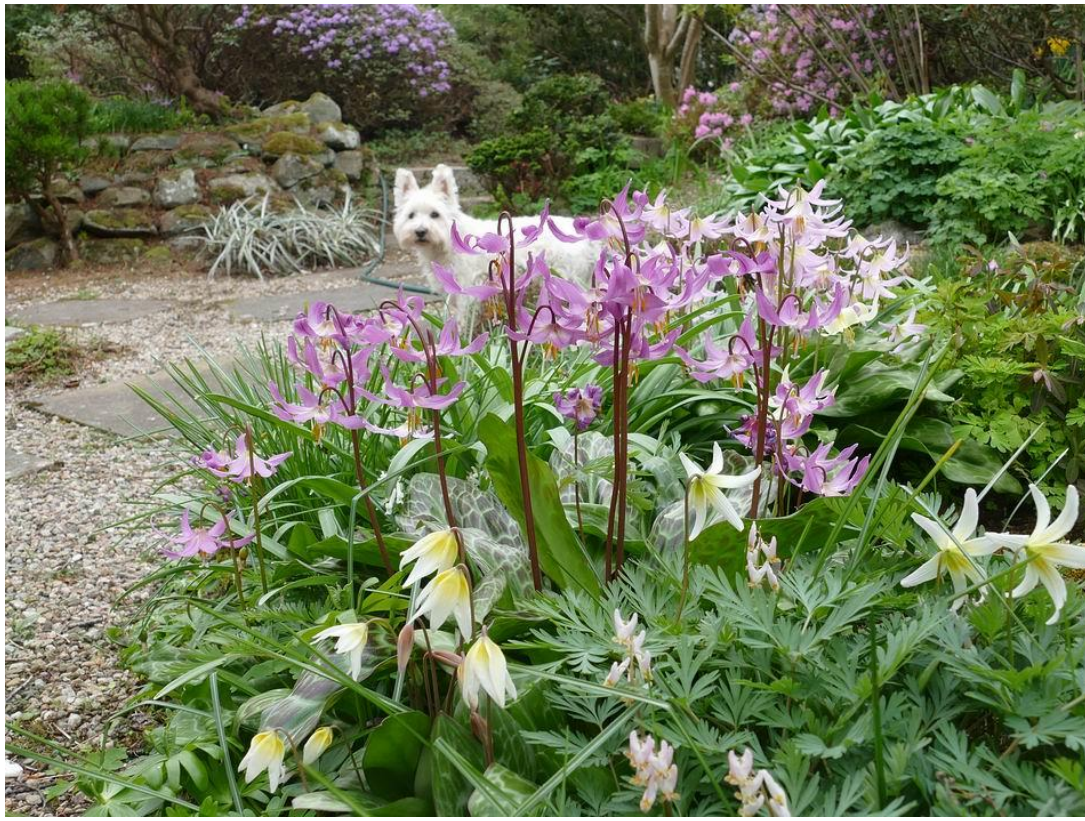
Mixed plantings





One of the Erythronium plunge beds.





It is important that we maintain and conserve the plants that we have in our gardens and indeed add to them by supporting the many specialist nurseries, many of whom are offering mail order so we can still buy plants during the lock down. Check out the list of [Nurseries](#) compiled by David Nicholson a few years ago.

As international sources of seed become less available the importance of seed from our own gardens greatly increases save it, sow it, share it with friends or through the many excellent seed exchanges run by the SRGC, AGS, NARGS, etc.

Two good commercial sources of seed are:- <https://www.jelitto.com/> <https://www.chilternseeds.co.uk/>



One more link to the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) looking at the design and layout of the garden....