



SRGC -----

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 16.....21st April 2021



(Pseudo)Trillium rivale



Why do I think rock gardening is the best? Well there are many reasons but let's start with space: by building this wall which is approximately 1800mm wide, 700mm at the high side and 300mm on the other and by planting up the

faces as well as on the top we increase the growing space from 1800 to 2500 without increasing the footprint. By using rocks and building up height we also create a range of different habitats and importantly to me we can start to mimic what we might see in a natural setting.



On the top surface under the pine tree and among other suitable plants I am establishing a colony of *Trillium hibbersonii*.



Trillium hibbersonii



This group of **Trillium hibbersonii** seedlings are self-seeded from the original pot of seed raised plants that I planted here. When trying to create a self-seeding colony like this it is important to start off with a group of seed raised plants. this ensures that they are different clones which will greatly increase the fertility of the colony.



Trillium hibbersonii

Depending where they are growing *Trillium hibbersonii* can vary in height from just a few centimetres in hard growing conditions up to 15cms in rich conditions.



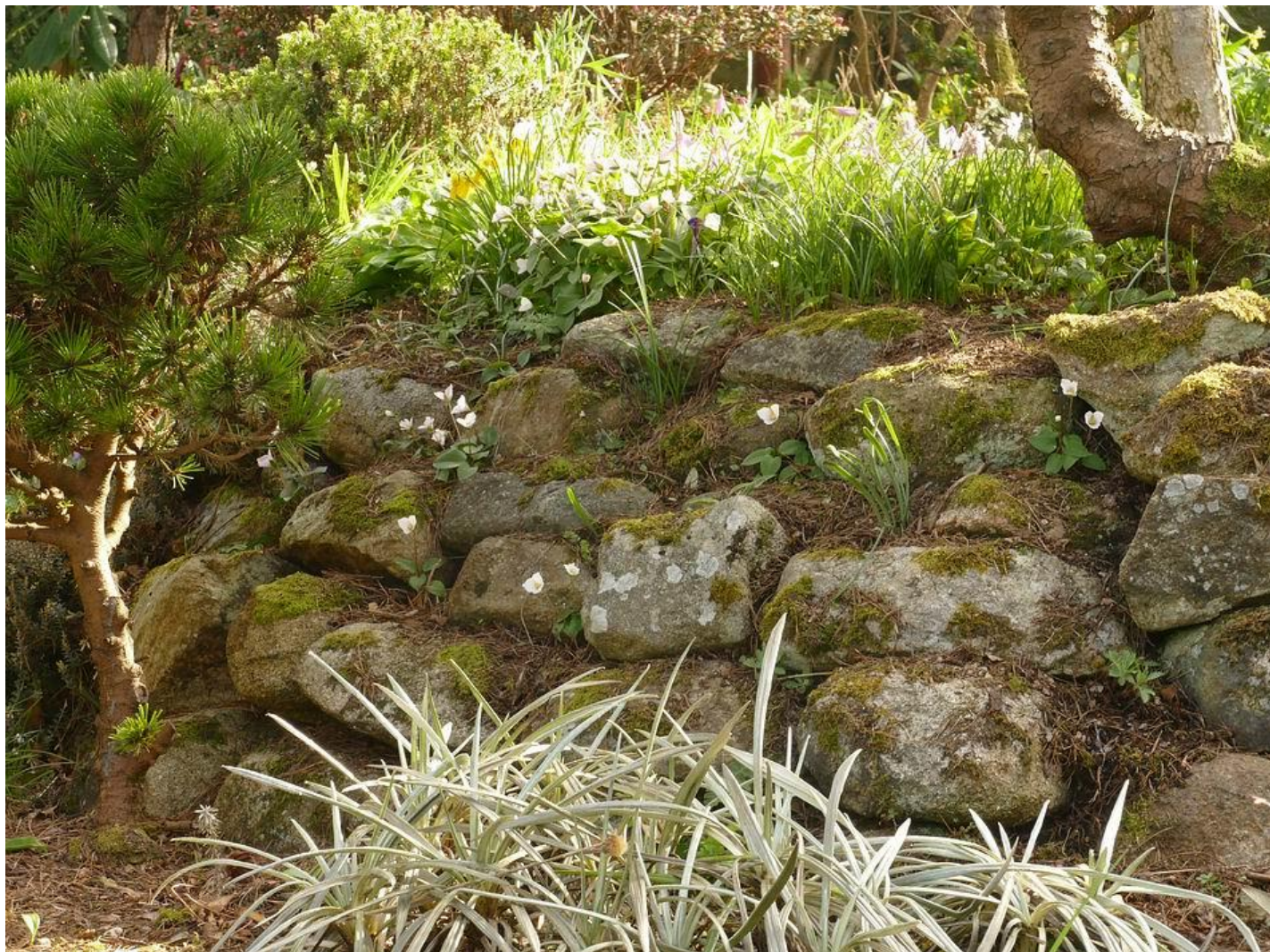
Tucked into this crevice between the rocks two *Trillium hibbersonii* seeds are germinating which is just the sort of situation that you might find in the wild where the seeds try and grow where ever they end up and hopefully these will succeed.



Trillium hibbersonii



This view of the wall from the high side shows the sides are not vertical but have a slight slope.



Some years ago when touring Western North America I visited a steep, rocky, wooded river bank in Southern Oregon where I saw *Erythronium citrinum* and colonies of *Trillium rivale* growing between the rocks. I was so impressed by the spectacle that I decided to try create something similar in our own garden and the sloping wall of this raised bed was the ideal place.

I have known and loved this plant as *Trillium rivale* for so many years that I find hard to adjust to it being reclassified as *Pseudotrillium rivale* – hence I put the ‘pseudo’ in brackets.





Trillium hibbersonii seed leaves

Sticking with the old name does not mean that I do not agree with the view that *Trillium rivale* might be a of different genus because as a grower I have always recognised significant differences such as the seed leaves, which among all the other Trilliums I have grown, including *Trillium hibbersonii*, the first seed leaf is typically long and narrow while in (*Pseudo*)*Trillium rivale* the first leaf is broad as shown below.



(*Pseudo*)*Trillium rivale* seedling leaf.



(Pseudo)Trillium rivale

One lesson I have learned is that gardening is like a journey, to be observed and enjoyed, not just the quickest way to get to a destination: so I have been establishing this habitat slowly by spreading seed around five years ago and then encouraging the resulting plants to shed their own seeds as shown above where the flowering plants are surrounded by seedlings of varying ages



Here the **(Pseudo)Trillium rivale** is joined by Erythronium seedlings which have also seeded down from the plantings across the top of the bed.

No one would have thought that these bulbs could be used in crevice beds but the plants show us the way.



Erythronium have also seeded and are growing in the crevices between the rocks of this wall and are doing so well that I am encouraging them to contiune round the corner onto the shaded side shown below.



Erythronium for crevice planting.



I am returning the other wall for a few more pictures of the plants there, especially (Pseudo)Trillium rivale.



(Pseudo)Trillium rivale



Erythronium krylovii



Erythronium krylovii



Erythronium sibiricum complex – krylovii?

Naming plants is a complex and often confusing topic but first and foremost I would say - never let not knowing the name put you off growing and enjoying plants for their beauty. You can start getting into the names later if you want to do research and I will point out that quite often it is they case that there is no consensus even among the so called experts to the names of plants. Plants don't care about names they just want to send their genes into future

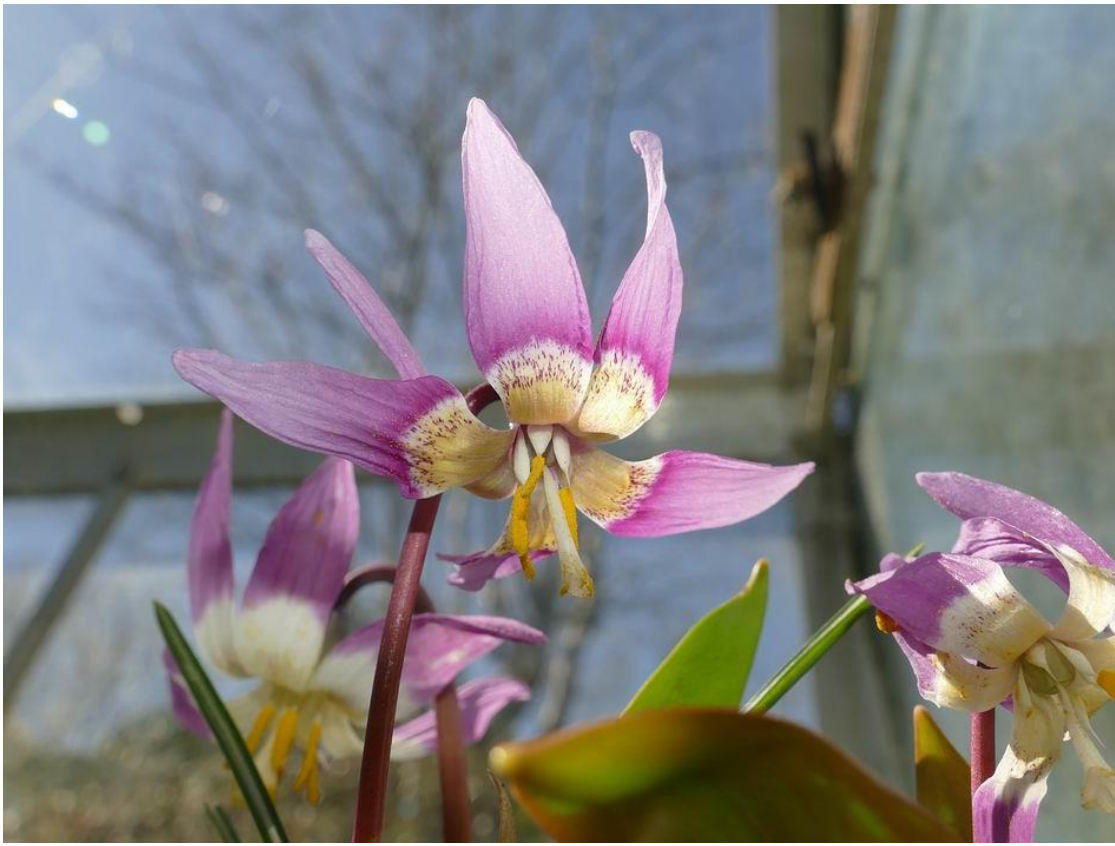
generations.

For years I have been trying to find out more about the plants that were lumped under the name

Erythronium sibiricum.



I have grown them for many years and long thought that they were not a single entity but a complex of closely related species like the two flowers sharing this seed pot are a good example and shown in detail below.



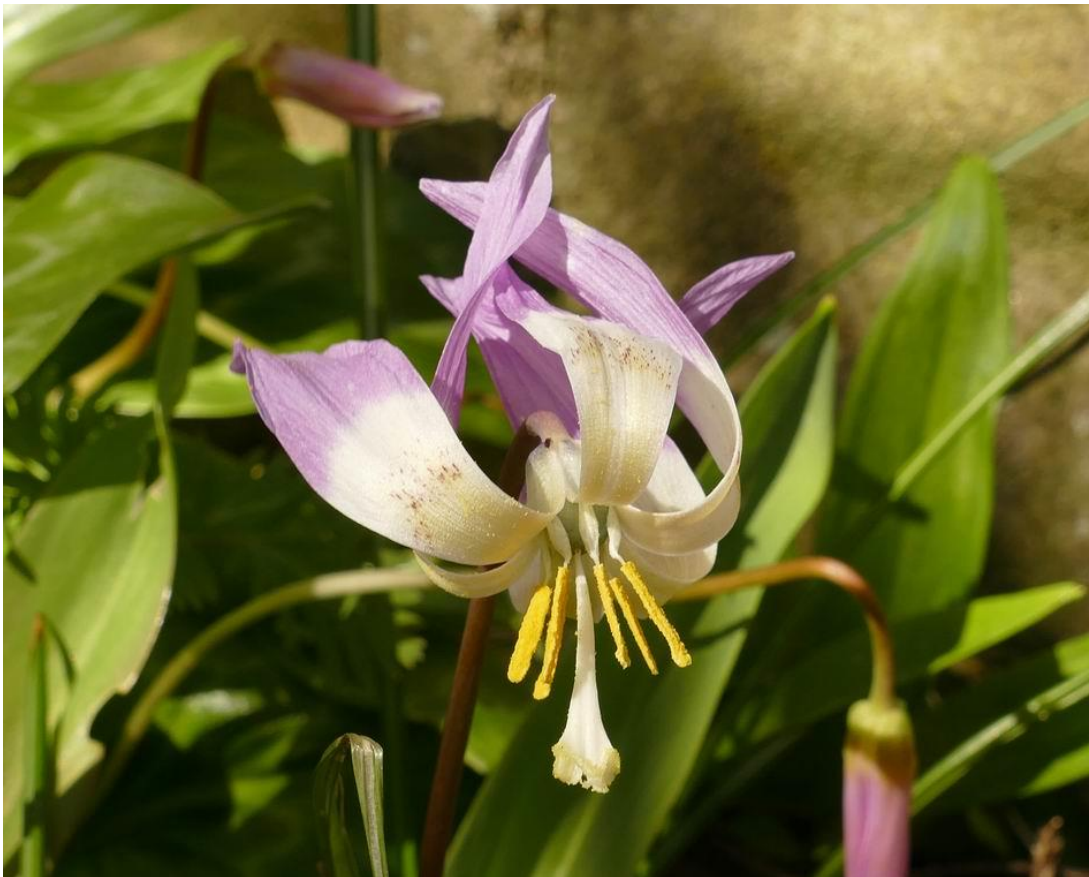
This type has patterned leaves the style is generally longer than the anthers, the filaments taper into a thread like point which is so weak the anthers often drop off and, rightly or wrongly, I think of this as *Erythronium sibiricum*.



These flowers are noticeably different, the style is shorter generally the same length as the anthers, the filaments have a different shape and the flower colours are distinct enough to be able to identify it from a distance. I used to believe that this was included in what had been called *Erythronium krylovii* but in the paper it is described as only having white flowers with so now I revert to lumping it in the *Erythronium sibiricum* complex.



In the west it had long been thought that *Erythronium sibiricum* always had yellow pollen - because that matched all the forms we had in cultivation - but in wild populations anthers and pollen can be yellow, brown or violet, as seen in this seedling raised from our garden.



The best way to understand the relationship between plants is to study wild populations looking at the morphology across a large population, along with the sampling of the DNA, only then will we get close to understanding the relationship between forms.

Of course growing such a range of plants side by side in our garden further complicates the issue as forms that would be geographically prevented from cross pollinating in the wild can share their genes and the form shown on the left has characteristics that are intermediate between the two shown above.

Plants that may have once been part of a single continuous population may in the course of geological time become isolated and evolved into related but distinct species and we may inadvertently bring them back together in our gardens.



For now I will continue to enjoy them as beautiful garden plants and stick with referring to them as the **Erythronium sibiricum complex.**





In the bulb houses the majority of the bulbs have flowered and it is time for me to add a supplementary feed of potassium (kalium) I simply sprinkle a small amount of the white powder on the top of each pot then water it in and in the sand beds I just scatter it across the sand before watering. As the flowers fade is exactly the time the bulbs need potassium to help build the bulb and encourage the formation of next year's flower bud.



Naming can also be a problem with Narcissus especially when they are growing in the sand beds with no labels so we have to rely on our memory and being to identify the species, I think these are both forms of **Narcissus rupicola**.



This flower immediately attracted my attention. Only sown in the autumn of 2019 this is as quick as I have grown a *Narcissus* from seed to flower. This single seedling has flowered while the other seeds sown in the same pot are at least a year away.

I received the seed from a friend labelled as *Narcissus bulbocodium* but he has since identified it for me as a naturally occurring cross between *Narcissus bulbocodium* subsp. *validus* and *Narcissus obovatus* – the hybrid vigour could be the reason it has flowered so quickly.



Narcissus bulbocodium* subsp. *validus* x *Narcissus obovatus

Narcissus obesus

Narcissus obesus is one of the later flowering of the Narcissus and the many seed raised forms we grow bring welcome colour to the bub beds.



Narcissus obesus flowers punch through the tangled jungle of the earlier flowering Narcissus leaves which have grown to such an extent that they have collapsed.



Narcissus obesus



Narcissus obesus

Please join me on this [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) garden walk as I view the plants recovering after the storm with Trillium, Erythronium, habitats and so much more.....