



BULB LOG 29.....21st July 2021



What appears in the Bulb Log is mostly the plant related subjects that have been interesting me through a week and while it typically involves the comings and goings of plants in our garden, it may also include things I see on my travels which have been far ranging. Over the years I have been invited to give talks in many countries, from New Zealand to Alaska, and I record what I see with photographs then write up a summary in my weekly diary. Sometimes these travels have been to other parts of Scotland mostly to remoter areas such as Shetland, the Western Isles, Inverewe, etc where there is an interesting natural flora. As a result of Covid I have not travelled since February 2020 so all my explorations have to be more local, mostly in the garden or within walking distance of our home. It is interesting to reflect that the picture of wild flowers that I selected for this week's cover was taken within a 10 minutes' walk of home; but is an image which could equally have taken in many of those places I have previously visited. The lesson we can learn from this is that no matter where you live you should explore your local area to check out the flora and fauna - you may be surprised what you find growing there.



A recent campaign to encourage people to leave their lawns uncut for the good of nature has also caught my attention. I could not agree more; like many others I have been encouraging people not to cut their grass so short or often for years but for many 'neat and tidy' is what seems to take precedent. Aberdeen Council have left some areas to grow however that has attracted a counter campaign from some that it was untidy and they are pushing for the grass to be cut.

It is very difficult to achieve that 'perfect' lawn in our northern latitude and it takes a lot of dedication and chemicals to get an effect like this one which like all the other pictures this week I took on a walk within 15mins of home. While I admire the knowledge and work that goes into a garden like this it is far too artificial and boring for my liking - I am much more interested in the more 'un-kept' lawns where plants other than grass get a hold and that I can explore.

I would rather have a lawn like this where I would encourage other perhaps more colourful wild flowers to grow that would also provide a resource for insects and wild life.





If you want a perfect look you may want to consider plastic grass like above but that is an even bigger assault on nature and be warned this one is relatively newly laid while the one below was laid some ten years ago and is now full of weeds and moss as nature tries to reclaim this artificial environment.



Moss and weeds growing in synthetic grass which they will take over completely – hooray.



This is a good start where the finer grasses are for now being left to grow which means various wild flowers have established and can start to seed around.



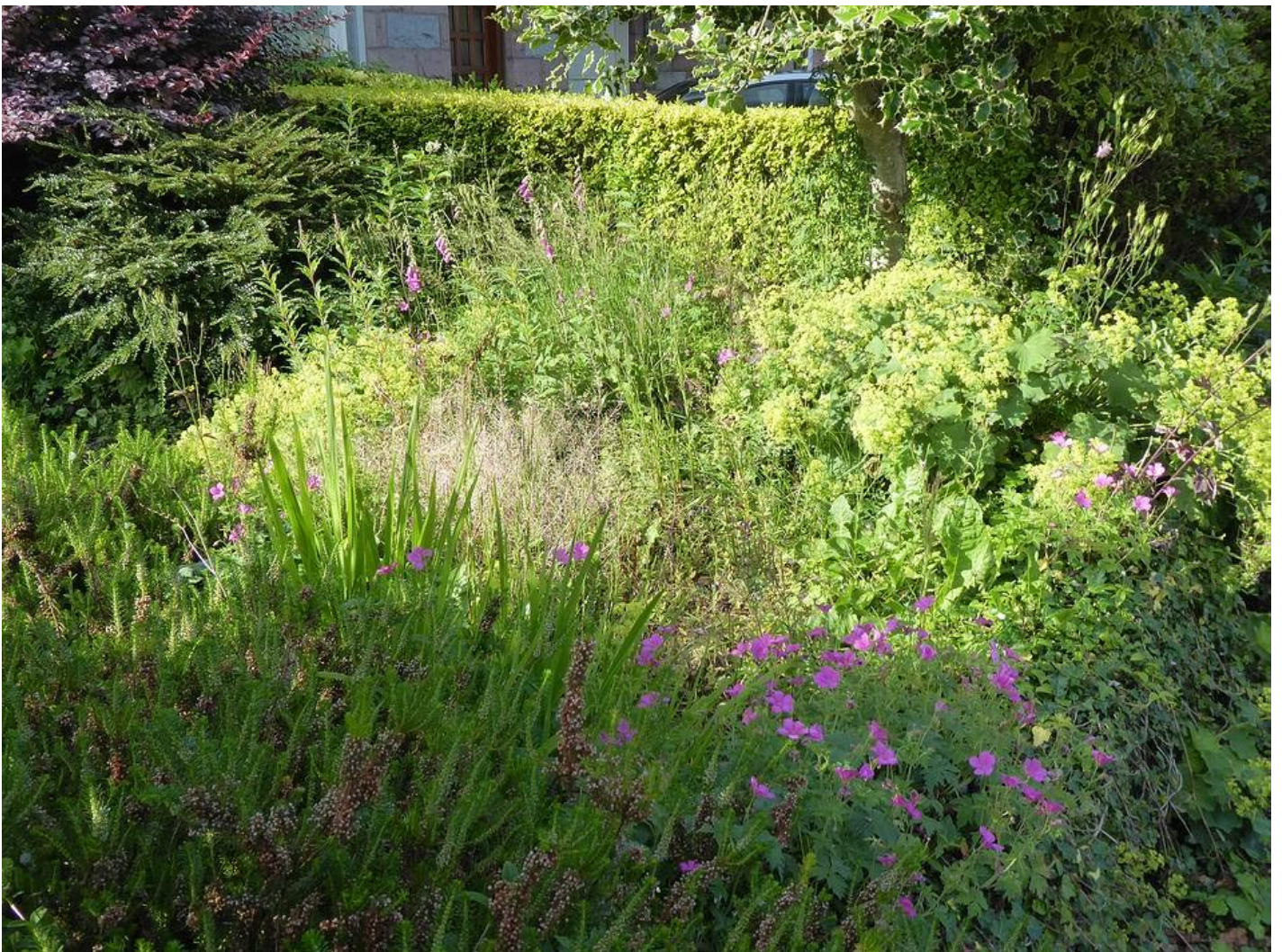
Turn it into a thing of beauty with a good wild flower seed mix also providing a much richer biodiversity.



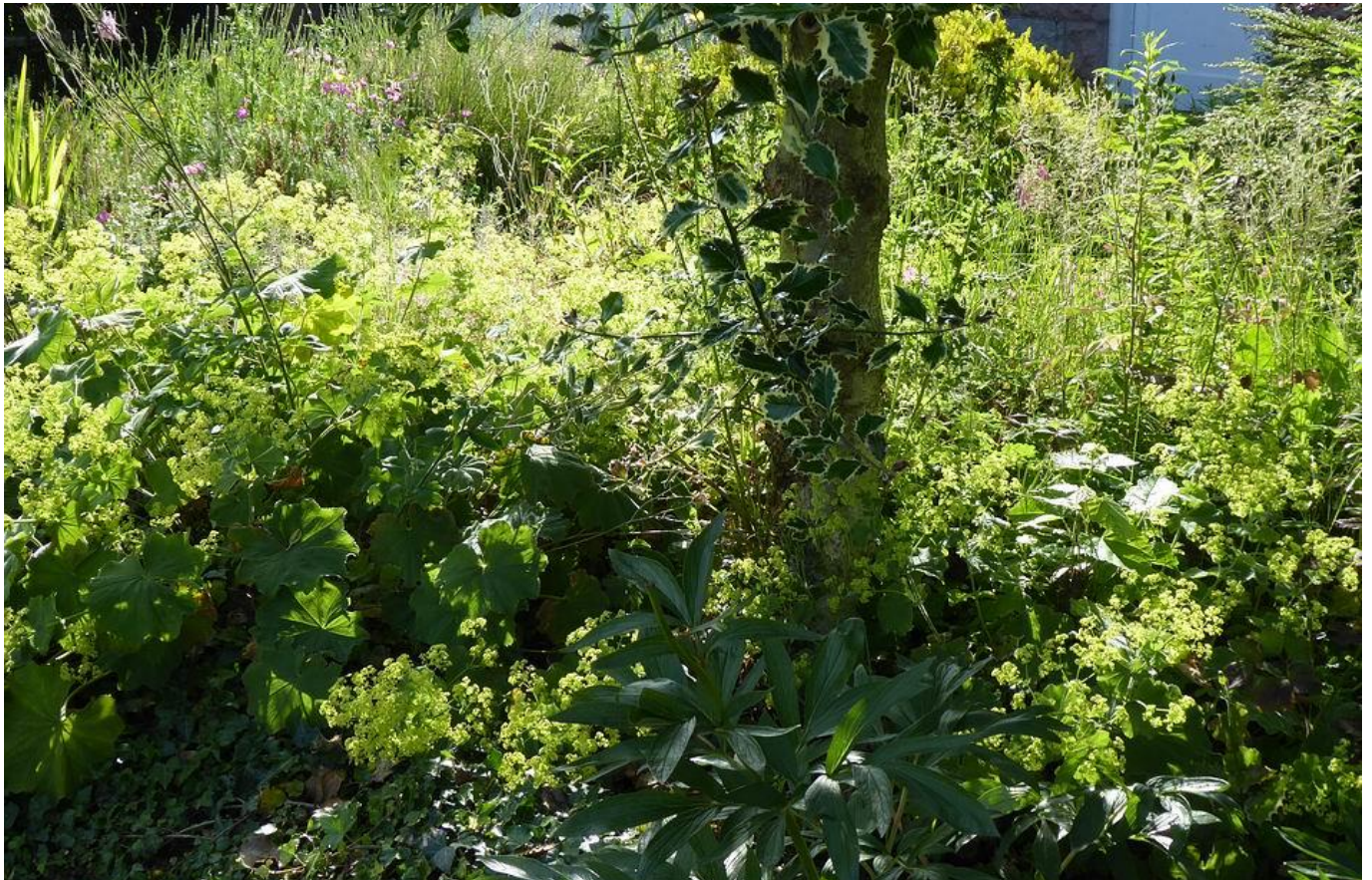
I am also dismayed by the number of front gardens that have been paved in lock block but be warned that this creates the ultimate crevice garden and I was delighted to find this one also being reclaimed by nature mostly the dandelion-like *Hypochaeris radicata*.



Hypochaeris radicata



I took these two views almost directly across the road from the very manicured lawn I showed in the first picture now this more my type of garden although many I am sure would think this is untidy and 'neglected' but it is much more nature friendly than the prim grass and I also believe it is better environment for the human spirit.





I love the plantings in these two gardens that I pass; both have a mixture of wild and cultivated plants





Magnificent Hedge



Walking on past the gardens I am heading to explore a more natural area and on my way I pass a magnificent hedge.

Here is something else we can do better. The hedges we inherited with our house are like the majority - a monoculture most of which is Ligustrum with a small area of Lonicera but if I were planting a hedge now it would be more like this with a mixture of suitable trees and shrubs including the roses.



Whatever the colour, these roses smell wonderful – and attract many pollinators.



Ranunculus repens and Trifolium repens –
This beautiful grassy area is full of Buttercups and Clover.



Ranunculus acris and Ranunculus repens



This is part of a research area where seed mixes have been added to the grasses and illustrate beautifully what could replace many lawns to make gardens a much more valuable natural resource to the benefit of all.





Leucanthemum vulgare



Geranium sylvaticum



Trifolium pratense



Cirsium vulgare





Hypericum pulchrum

Hypericum pulchrum would be a good addition to our garden where its summer flowers can bring colour to some of the beds.





Over the years we have introduced a number of small alpine species of *Hypericum* to the garden but ***Hypericum androsaemum*** was, along with *Hypericum calycinum*, below, a free gift from nature. Both these plants seed around freely and as a result I see it in many gardens and wild areas on my walks.



Hypericum calycinum



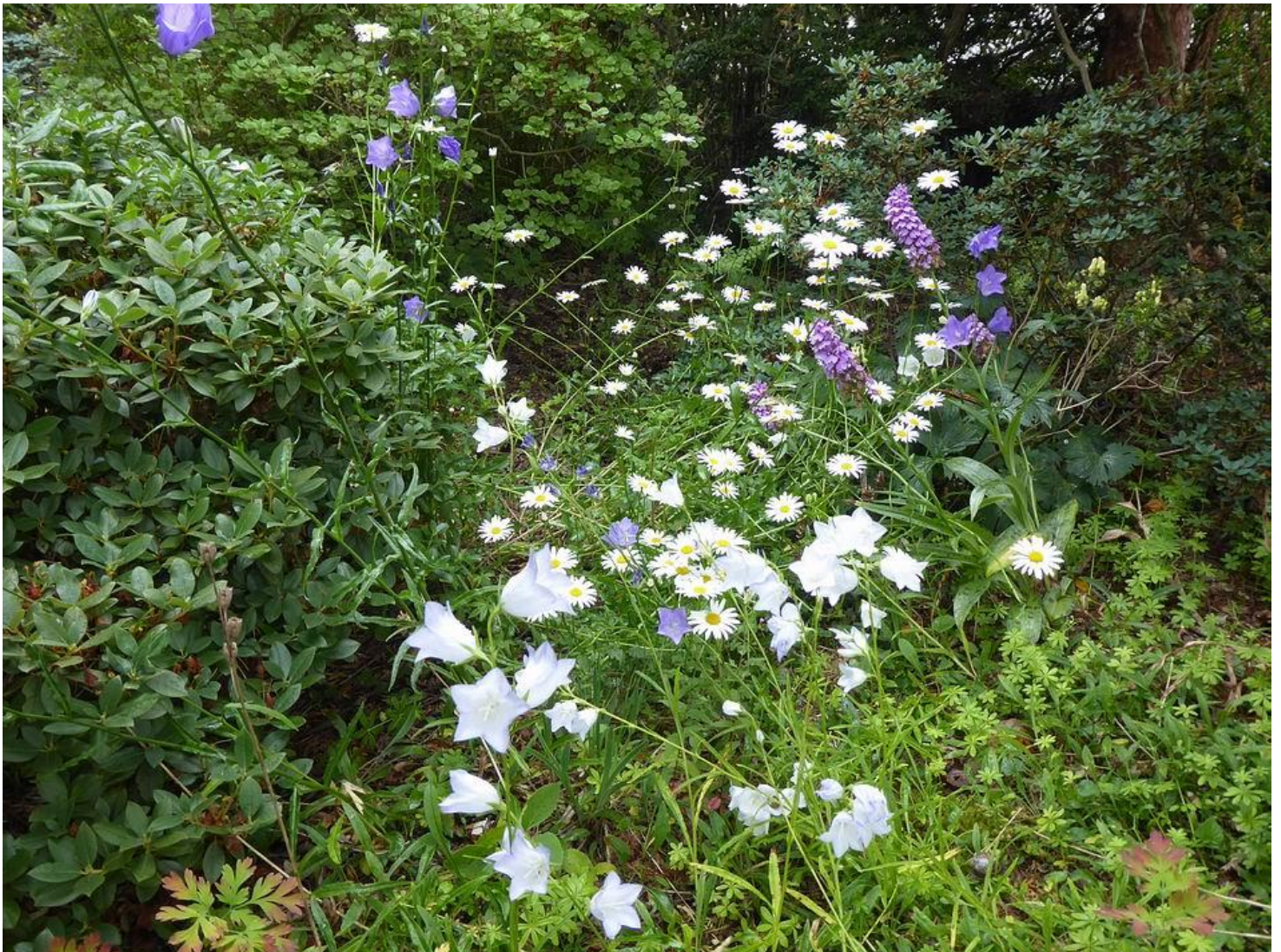
Hypericums in front garden.



Pseudofumaria lutea



Campanula persicifolia is another plants that we allow to seed around; here it is in the front garden



Leucanthemum vulgare* and *Campanula persicifolia



This rambling rose is beautifully scented and is among the shrubs that grow over the side gate hiding our wheelie bins from view.





I leave you with two more images of the wild flowers taken from a low viewpoint so that the blue sky became the background – I also like the double image caused by the wind blowing the grasses seen in the last one.....