



SRGC



Bulb Log Diary

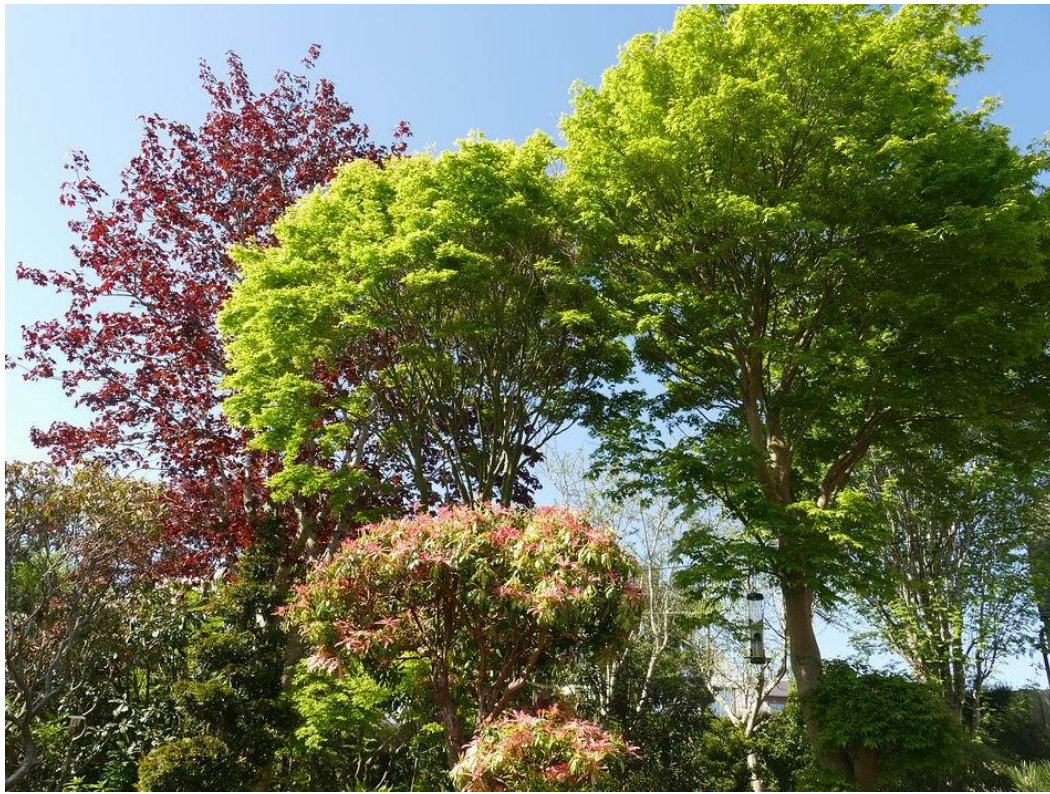


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BULB LOG 2321.....9th June 2021





The changing of the seasons continues as the leaves on the trees emerge, expand and provide us with a wonderfully colourful canopy. This wave of colour above our heads looks especially beautiful when seen in sunshine against a clear blue sky and its emergence coincides with the changing of the flora at ground level. The early flowering plants that took advantage of the open skies to grow and flower before the leaf canopy emerged have completed their growth cycle and have already gone underground or are in retreat to be replaced with some of the woodland species whose flowering time coincides with the leaf growth on the trees.



Here I am jumping back to March to both remind you of the scene when the earliest of the bulbs were in flower and to show the ugly stump of one of the very first plants we grew, an *Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum Atropurpureum' which at approaching fifty years old was one of the original plants in the garden. Sadly in recent years it has been suffering from die back and Coral Spot fungus to the extent that we decided it was time to take drastic action and cut it right back, removing all the dead wood until all we were left with was a rather ugly stump. You may not notice at this time of year but low down on the right hand side of the stump there is growth in the form of a new network of branches that grew during last year – they are more obvious in some of the next pictures where they are coming into leaf. When it was in good health this tree formed a beautiful cascading canopy under which a population of Bluebells established – their leaves can be seen just pushing through the ground.



This new Acer growth with the red leaves is more obvious in the current view above and we hope that we can regrow a healthy attractive structure from this ancient rather ugly stump which is surrounded by Bluebells.



The stump was too ugly sticking up so I removed the top cutting it just above the new growth and placed it on the slabs to throw away but as soon as it lay on its side it reminded me of a Henry Moore reclining figure.

This view from the other side was taken after I sawed off the top of the stump. This area was completely shaded by the Acer and the Bluebells were about the only thing we grew along with some Erythroniums that were escaping from the adjacent bed however now it is more open I have been adding other plants including Hepatica and Meconopsis showing how when something dies the space it leaves opens up new opportunities.



These are all hybrids between *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and *H. non scripta* which have been given the name *Hyacinthoides* × *massartiana*, syn. *H.* × *variabilis* and are the most commonly seen form of Bluebells in gardens.



Hyacinthoides non-scripta



Hyacinthoides non-scripta and Hyacinthoides hispanica

Studies suggest that the two species diverged from a single ancestor around 8000 years ago and when grown together they readily hybridise to produce the variable and vigorous forms we see in gardens. Many people dismiss *H. hispanica* and the hybrids even suggesting that they should be eradicated but I wonder why they are so quick to dismiss such attractive garden plants. I do however agree that everything should be done to preserve the wild populations of *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* from invasion or dilution by the more vigorous hybrids but let's not become plant snobs in the garden. The picture above shows some of the diagnostics that separate the two species in *H. non-scripta* the flowers are smaller darker with more recurved petals, white pollen and are all on one side of the stem giving it the characteristic curve, in comparison the flowers of *H. hispanica* are larger, paler, have blue pollen and grow symmetrically all around the stem – the hybrids are variable.



When you come across the hybrids it becomes more difficult to clearly distinguish them, with some, like the one in the main clump above, getting very close to *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.



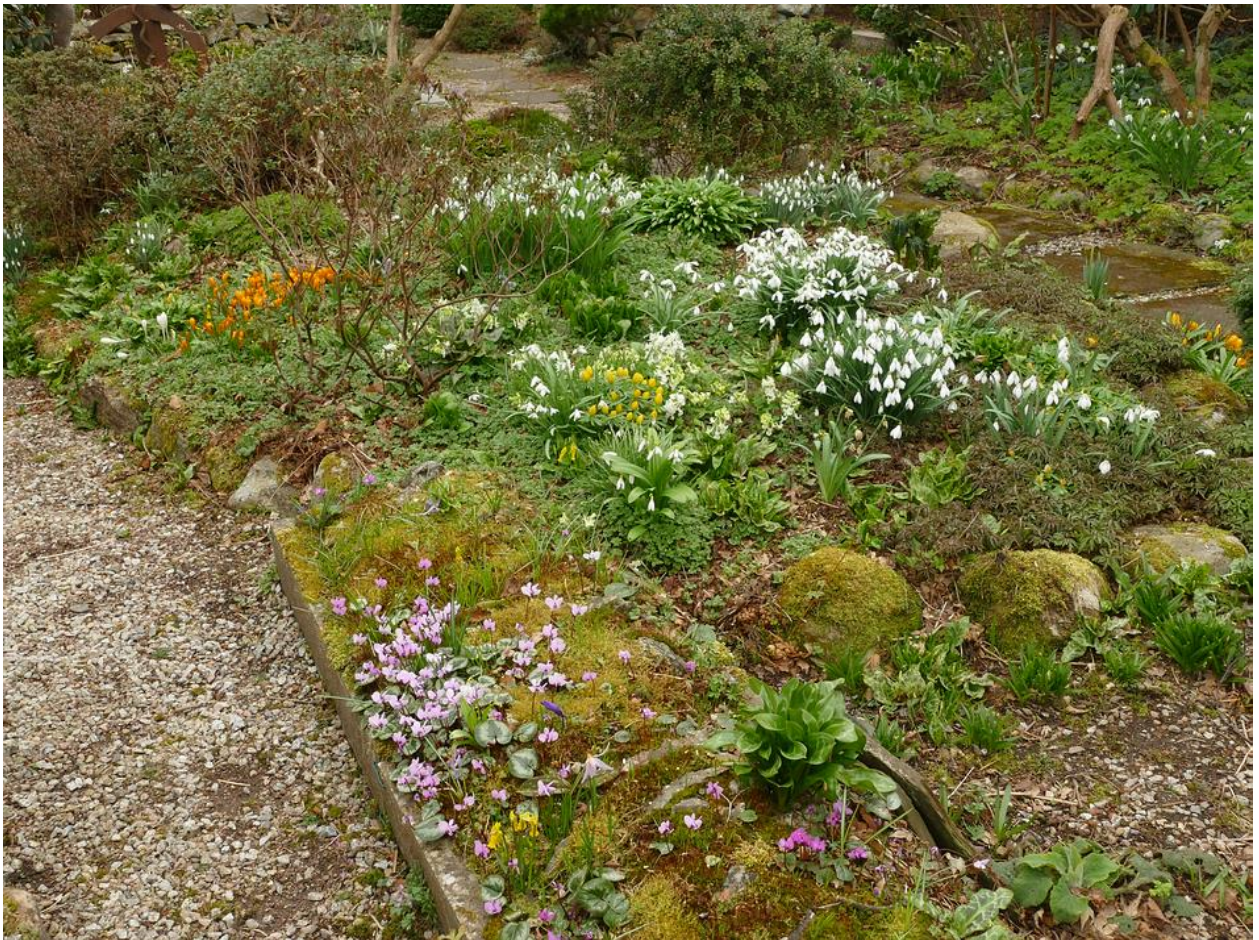
Different colour forms of the hybrid *Hyacinthoides* × *massartiana*.



Hyacinthoides × massartiana



Hyacinthoides × massartiana



Referring back to March when an early sequence of flowering washed over this bed which progressed through a number of changes as one group of flowers passed over to be replaced by the next; and now it is the turn of the Bluebells to display their blooms, see below.



The dark pointed shoots of Arisaema, which are poking through the ground, are currently hidden in amongst the Bluebells but will rise up to take over as the main feature of this bed in the coming weeks.



Asarum europaeum

Not all flowers announce themselves with bright colours or standing high; some, like those of *Asarum europaeum*, need to be searched for. The new leaves of this plant provide soft green ground cover and grow happily in deep dry shade and unless you get down and look below their low lying covering you will never get the pleasure of seeing their fascinating flowers growing at ground level.



**Asarum
europaeum**

The subtle colours of some flowers make them easy to walk past - such a plant is scrambling through the small Rhododendron on the right in this picture.



Several years ago I planted out one of the many hybrids between *Clematis marmorata* and *Clematis paniculata* we raised, placing it between the rocks of this raised bed where until now it has survived rather than thrived. I suspect that the roots have eventually searched into the humus rich soils that we used to build the bed and I am delighted to see that after so many years it is now growing and flowering well.



Primula geraniifolia is another survivor that has hung around since the early days of the garden it was one of the original plants we grew in this bed. In the early days it formed a nice clump but as the bed matured it had to compete with many other plants including dwarf shrubs which forced it to move around which it does by underground stems and it keeps popping up where it finds a suitable space so we have to search it out.



Despite the size it will reach later in the season I am often surprised to come across the flowers of **Arisaema wilsonii** which have sneaked up without me noticing and this year was no exception as I only found them as I searched through the early growth of plants that are now starting to retreat for the summer.



Exploring your own garden can sometimes be as fascinating as exploring in the wild: here, while I was checking for any signs of seed setting in this group of (Pseudo)Trillium rivale, I was surprised to find a giant.



In my hand and to the left are the typical leaves of normal size but one single plant has grown to at least twice as large. I will have to remember to check next year to see if this is an aberration or if this is indeed a giant form.



Trillium sulcatum



Trillium sulcatum hybrid or form?



Glaucidium palmatum



Glaucidium palmatum album



This path, that due to all the self-seeding we are now referring to as the 'Erythronium walk', has another feature as the Rhododendron flowers start to drop forming a white carpet between the seeding Erythronium .





For a short period the fallen flowers become a thing of beauty especially in the changing light.





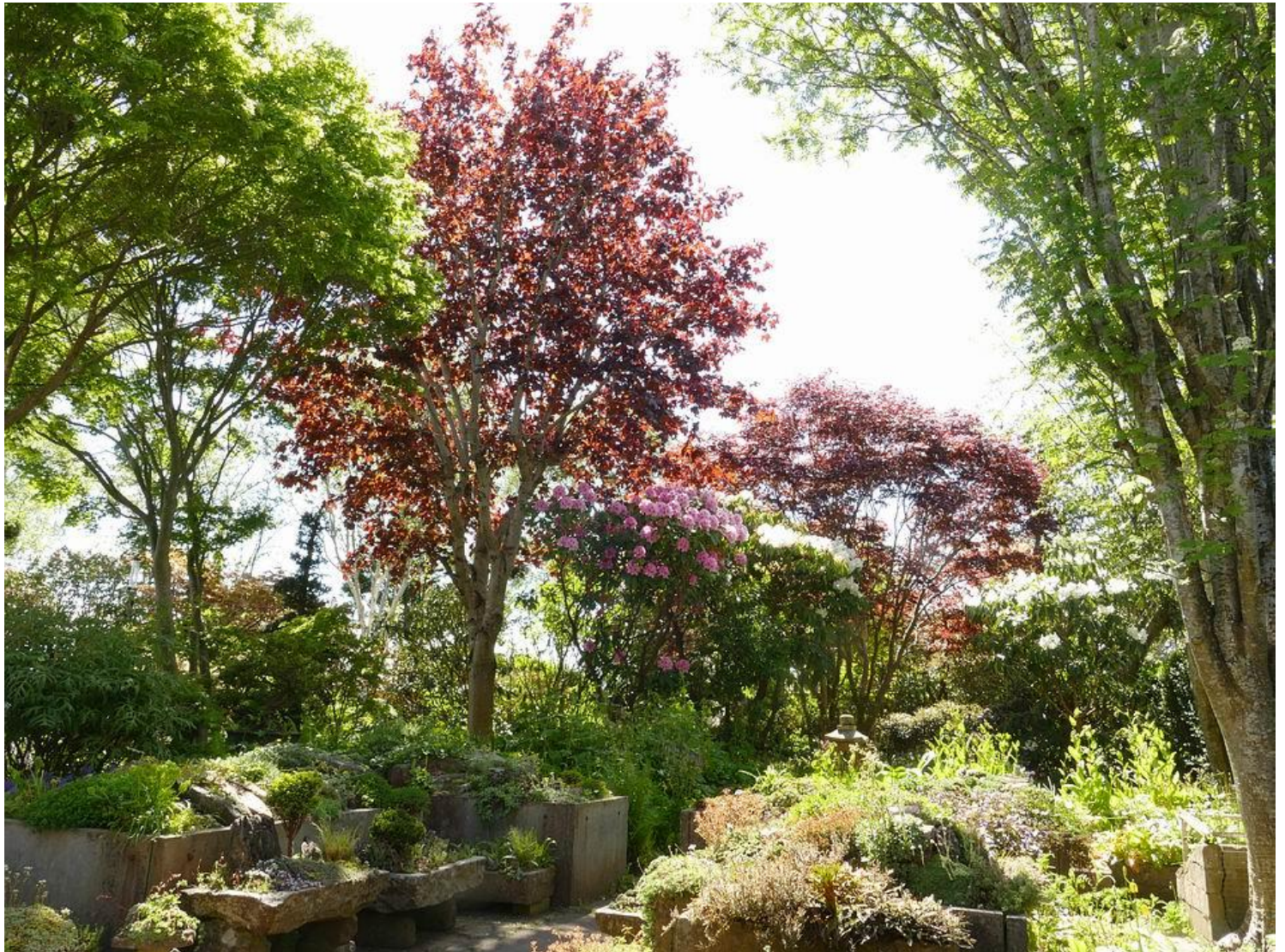
A similar effect is created in the front garden but here it is a living carpet of white flowers.



Galium odoratum



Sometimes we have to search above our head for the flowers and beauty - it would be easy to walk under these beautiful trusses of pink Sorbus flowers without noticing them or enjoying the fresh emerging foliage of the trees.





I cannot emphasise enough the value of growing trees both for aesthetic and environmental reasons they will enrich your garden and there are trees suitable for even the smallest of gardens such as *Acer griseum*, seen here with *Rhododendron smirnowii*.