



SRGC -----

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 36.....8th September 2021



Crocus scharojanii flavus



The appearance of *Crocus scharojanii flavus* flowers indicate to me that we are heading into autumn and as if we need more reminders then how about the mass appearance of thistledown across this field of ***Cirsium arvense*** that I showed just a few weeks ago in full flower – thistle seed is a favourite of Goldfinches but I did not see any birds as I walked by.



The thistledown of ***Cirsium vulgare*** remains trapped waiting for some wind to launch it off on its travels.



I know that most people see these plants as weeds - pests to be eliminated - but when growing in the right place they serve as a valuable resource and part of our biodiversity: these are growing at the entrance to the site where a hotel was demolished and the developers surrounded the area with white boarding which sets the plants off beautifully.



Grasses seeding.



I have fallen behind my normal repotting schedule and still have a number of pots to do, so I have delayed the first watering for a short while until I get them all done.

I use a broken bit of terracotta pot to mark which pots have been done, as shown in the picture below, but take note of the pile of labels in the foreground – these should be in the pots and if you look carefully you will see which pots are without labels.



The sparrows have been sand-bathing in the dry compost of the repotted bulbs and in doing so have pulled some of the labels out of the pots of Narcissus - now when they come into flower I will have the test of identifying and reuniting the labels with the correct pot.

For a number of years house sparrows were in decline but we always had a small population nesting in the boxes on the side of the house but this has obviously been a good year for them as the population has swelled to around twenty residents which fly around as a group leading us to refer to them as the 'Red Sparrows' after the famous aero-display team.



They mostly take dust baths in the dry sand beds where their fluttering action often brings bulbs to the surface.



Just a week ago the 'U' shaped sand bed looked like this then I followed my own advice as given in last week's Bulb Log and now as shown below it is tidied and watered having received the first storm.





Having watered it is now a case of waiting and watching but, while I was watering, I noticed the first tentative leaf growth poking through the completely dry sand, which has responded rapidly, growing in the presence of the water.



The other sand beds have also gone through the same process of tidying and watering.



Now these sand beds have been watered they must not be allowed to dry out until the end of the growth cycle in late spring/early summer.



While sitting in the sunshine I was entertained by this mouse eating peanuts from one of the bird feeders.



Chlorophyllum rhacodes, Shaggy Parasol.



I am not sure if it is also the mice that are eating chunks out of these Shaggy parasol mushrooms or if all this damage is caused by snails.



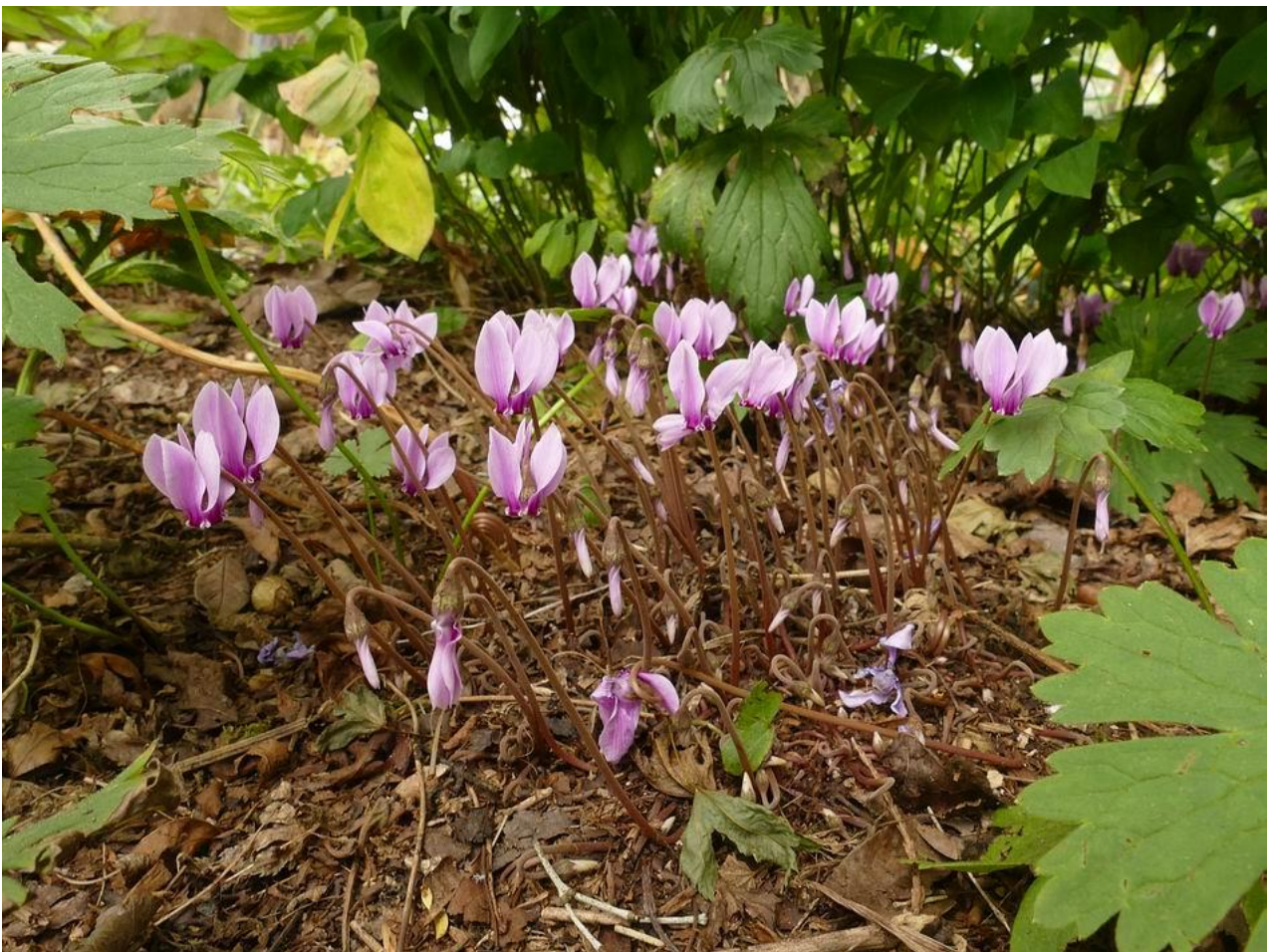
One of the plants of the season has to be **Cyclamen hederifolium** and we find clusters and groups of their pink or white flowers in many habitats as we walk around the garden.



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen hederifolium



Because of the below average rainfall over the last few months, the ground is unusually dry, causing all the *Cyclamen hederifolium* flowers to appear before the leaves this year: in previous wetter years the leaves and flowers of some forms appear together.

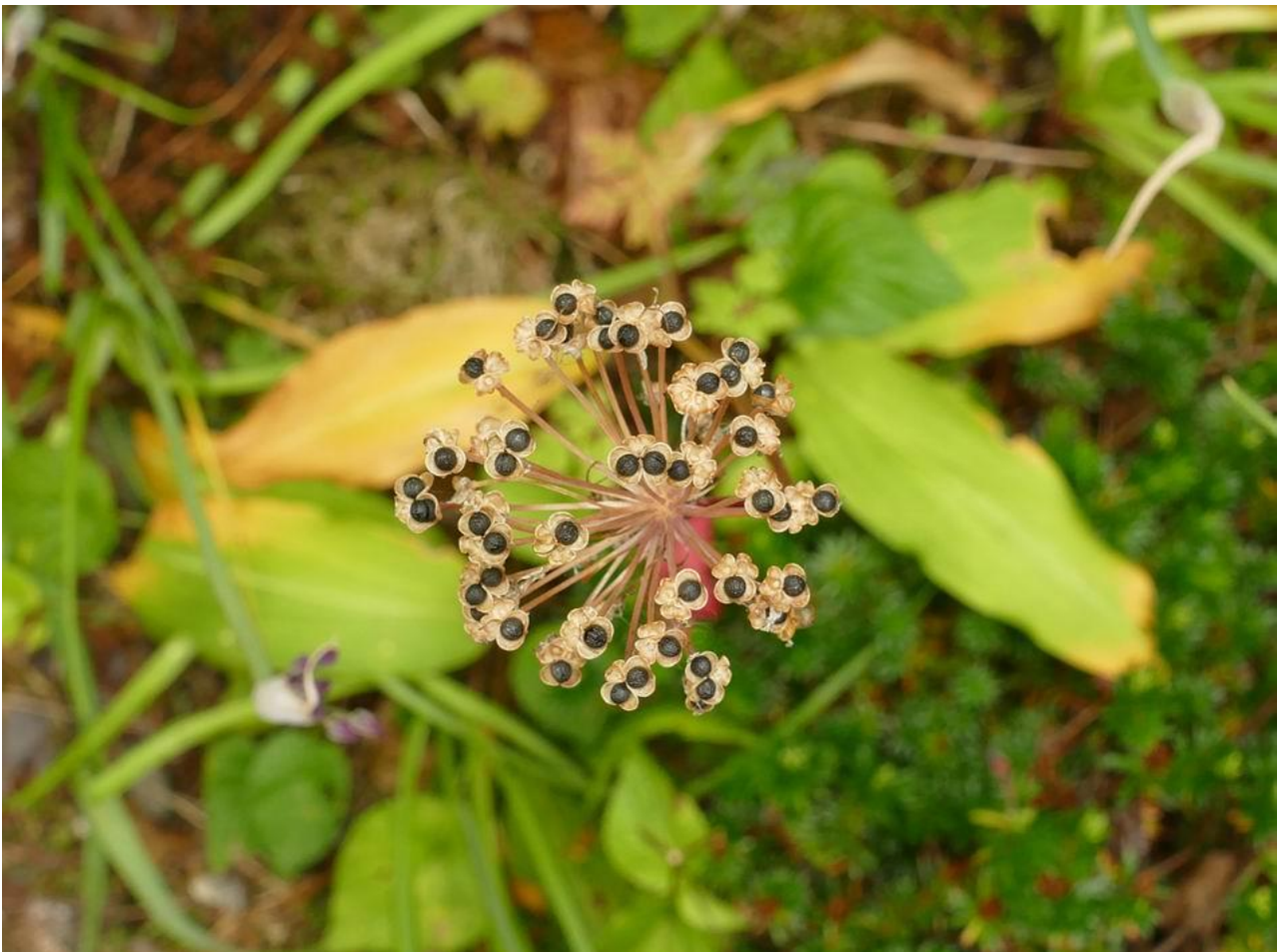
This cluster of *Cyclamen hederifolium* plants are growing below a group of *Uvularia grandiflora* whose leaves are holding up remarkably well in the dry conditions.



Another bulb that we look forward to which flowers in early autumn is *Allium wallichii*— it hides underground for most of the year with the first signs of growth appearing until late in July or August.



Allium wallichii



Scattered among the flowering stems of *Allium wallichii* are the seed heads of *Allium prattii* which comes into growth that bit earlier.



Some plants such as this **Dianthus alpinus** that flower in the spring will sometimes flower again in the autumn.



Cyananthus lobatus hybrid: the dry conditions have resulted in the Cyananthus being less floriferous this year.



Slab bed and troughs



Within the raised wall bed there are a wealth of micro-habitats for plants and gardener to take advantage of.



Crocus nudiflorus sits above the twisted trunk of the pine that can be seen growing on the raised wall in the previous picture along with a number of self-sown *Digitalis* seedlings, most of which are in the wrong place, so I will remove them - but take note of the one towards the centre of the picture which is not growing in the ground at all but in the moss covering the bottom of the trunk.



The remarkable habitats that plants can grow in have always fascinated me. Take this young fern growing from a spore that happened to land on a micro habitat created by the growth of some moss that itself piggy-backed on the habitat formed by the lichen on the rock.



A group of **Crocus speciosus** herald the arrival of the autumn flowering bulbs which we will enjoy over the coming weeks and months.



Colchicum



To round off this week I am returning to a cluster of **Cyclamen hederifolium** that are seeding around the edge of the path just outside our front door with the next two pictures giving a gradually widening representation of the view from our doorstep.



Cyclamen hederifolium



And finally the full view with the *Cyclamen hederifolium* dwarfed by the cloud pruned tree.....