



SRG

# Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 23

8<sup>th</sup> June 2022



Rhododendron 'Albert Schweitzer' and Embothrium coccineum





The cover image is a snapshot illustrating the type and range of plants in our garden where large and small, unusual to common, all mingle together to create a rather chaotic landscape. The pink **Rhododendron 'Albert Schweitzer'** growing alongside the orange red **Embothrium coccineum** may offend some people's colour senses but I love this kind of juxtaposition in both art and the garden and no colours clash in nature.



**Embothrium coccineum** is a relatively recent introduction to the garden, planted as a small plant about 20cms tall. When we get a new plant I like to learn how it grows so I can form it into a suitable shape I have been pruning this shrub/small tree every year and watching how it responded. I am delighted to see how readily it buds back into old wood giving me the confidence to cut it back quite hard should I need to with the insurance that I have several other plants in reserve from cuttings rooted from some of the prunings.





I get glimpses of another strong colour contrast through the foliage in the SE corner of the garden and have to climb into the compost heaps to get the picture of the flowers shown below.



Left, Rhododendron 'May Day' and right, Rhododendron 'Fabia'





Some of the plants we grow are a challenge and I am constantly observing, seeking to find a habitat in our garden that they can tolerate but alongside those we encourage others that self-seed around choosing their own habitats.



**Erinus alpinus** is a great small plant that will seed around growing in harmony with its more fussy neighbours.





To keep **Ramonda myconi** growing well in the long term it is best to be split when the rosettes get congested. Once the seed has been set I will split the largest clump, pulling it apart and planting the individual rosettes, which will have some roots, back into a suitable spot to further extend this expanding colony.

The smaller Daphne do not take to our conditions: through many years we have tried many without any long term success. Until a number of years ago we were given a tiny newly grafted plant of this small white Daphne, I can't remember the name, but it has been growing quite well alongside *Petrophytum hendersonii*.







Looking at the small white *Daphne* with its white flowers peeking out of the new foliage reminds me of another shrub that has a similar look only on a much larger scale.



Raised from seed collected in the Himalaya as *Rhododendron* sp. we think this may *Rhododendron* aff. *decorum*.



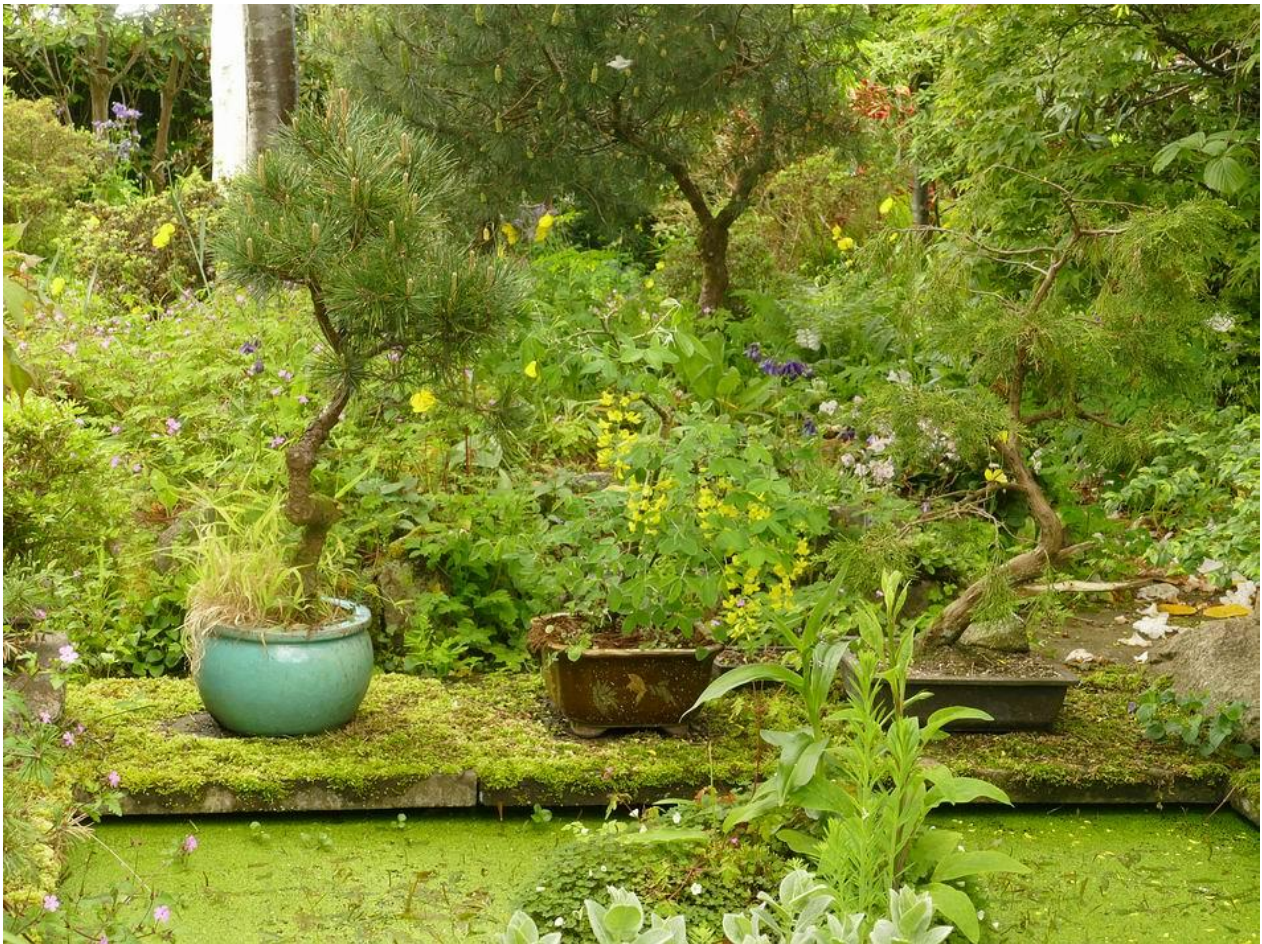


**Rhododendron aff. decorum**



Our Laburnum tree in full bloom is looking magnificent with its long hanging racemes of yellow scented flowers.





Miniaturisation is a strategy employed by plants that have evolved to withstand harsh exposed environments and if you search you will find that most full size plants will have a smaller rock garden equivalent however this Laburnum started as a normal seed - it is small because I have always grown it in a pot as a bonsai.



**Bonsai Laburnum**





While clearing some old foliage from the rock garden bed, before the *Roscoea* appear, I find the evidence of a previous wave of flowers from last autumn in the form of *Crocus* and *Cyclamen* seeds pods which have protected their precious contents through the winter. The *Crocus* capsule remains underground only pushing up when it is ready release their valuable contents while the *Cyclamen* sit on the surface all winter and will open in July/August just ahead of the new season's flowers.



Flowers need pollinating to get seed and here a steady stream of bees are ensuring that we will have some Strawberries through the summer.





Mimicry and disguise can allow some plants that we might prefer not to have growing in the garden get established. Here the growth of *Galium aparine*, Cleavers or Sticky Willy, is pretty obvious standing out against the different types of foliage so it is quickly removed by the gardener however it is a different matter in other areas.



It is much more difficult to spot *Galium aparine* growing among plants with similar foliage such as here where it is doing a very good job of mimicking the growth and foliage of some *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'.





**Meconopsis baileyi and Centaurea montana**

The Meconopsis suffered in the unusually dry summer last year and as a result they are less vigorous with fewer flowers stems however recent rain has meant that there is good growth of leaves from the non-flowering growths.



**Centaurea montana**





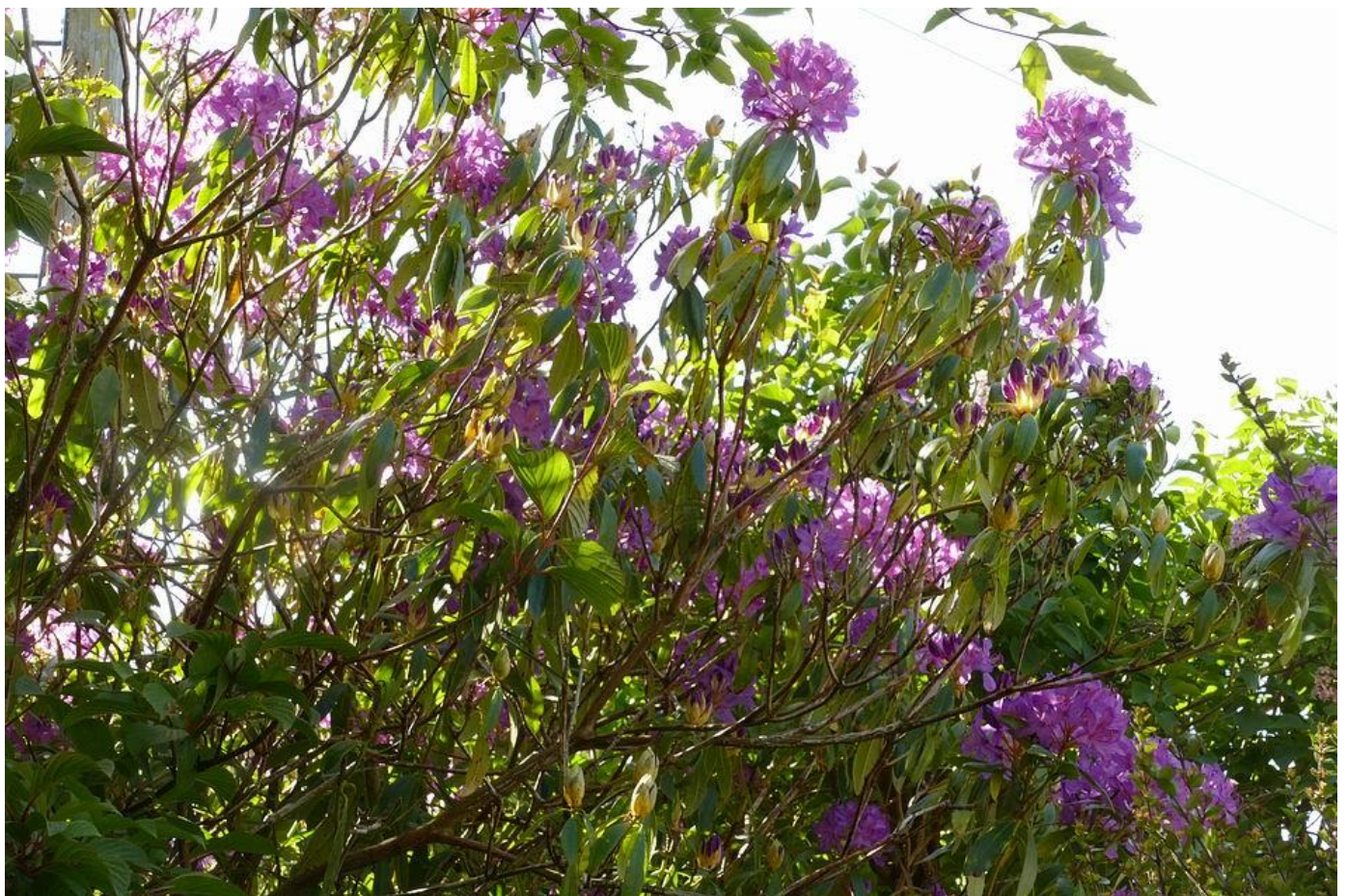
**Papaver cambricum** formally called *Meconopsis cambrica* is a delightful plant that seeds freely around however it is very easy to limit the spread by removing the flowering stem before they shed their seed.







**Rhododendron schweliense**



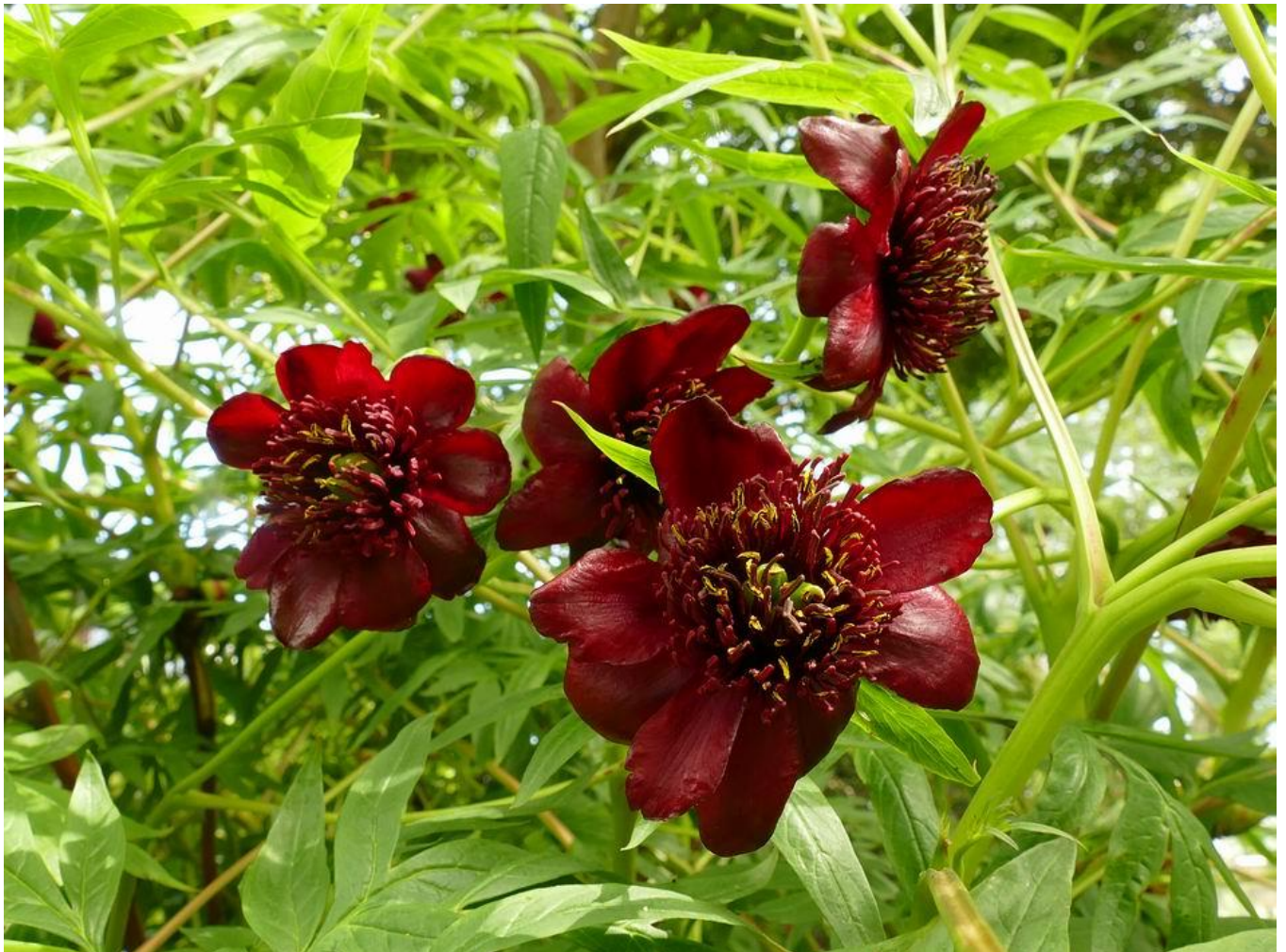
**Rhododendron ponticum** is much maligned because it grows so well and where badly managed it has escaped into nature where it feels so at home that it takes over. Evidence shows that this species was once a native of these islands - in post glacial periods it would have grown along the wetter West coastal regions before being wiped out during the last great ice age.





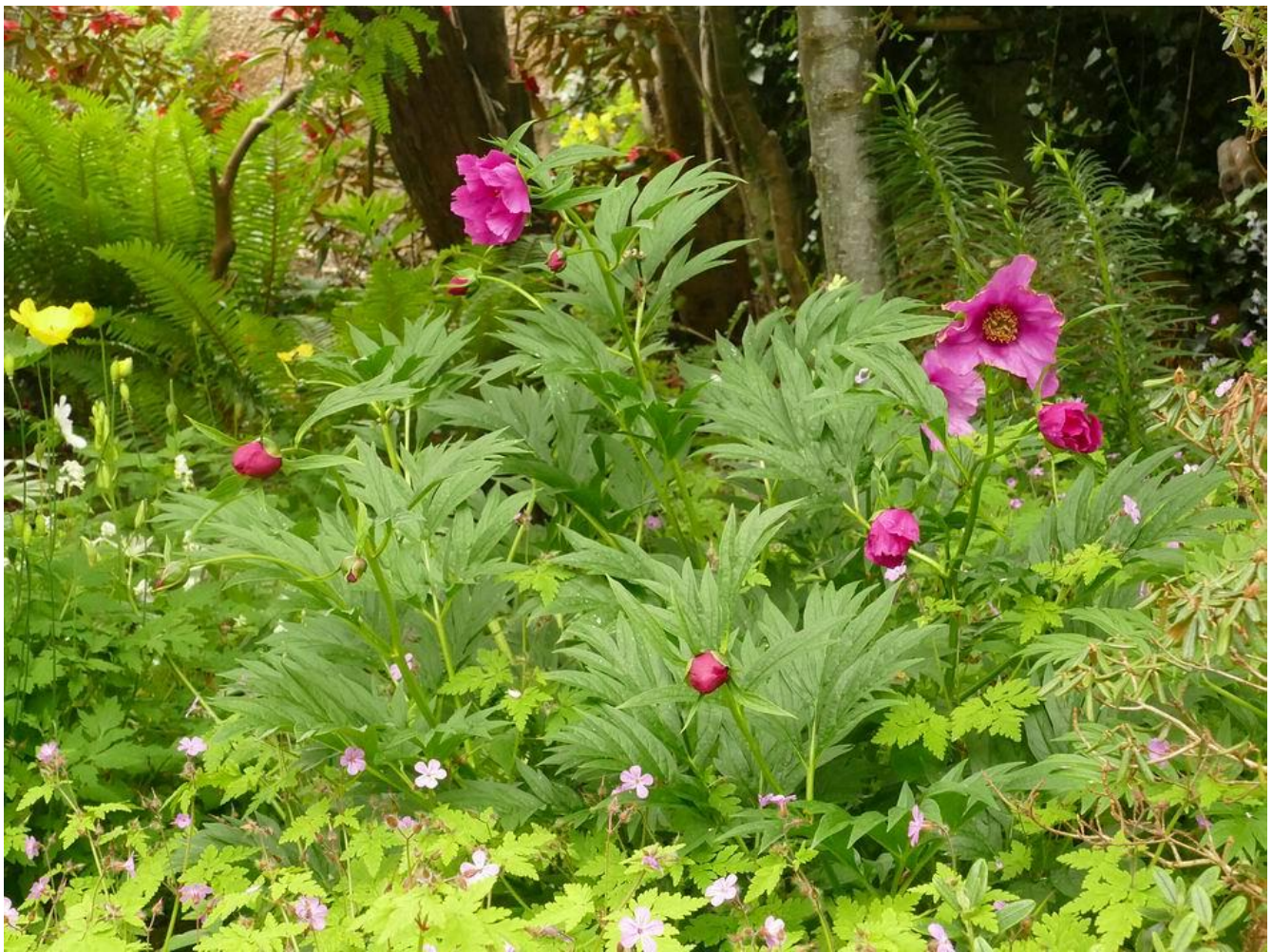
**Paeonia emodi**

A number of peony's are flowering across the garden; some produce seed but we have never had seed from this Paeonia emodi which we originally received as a small plant. I have increased it by lifting a few of the fat buds that sit on the ground in the winter - they usually come with a small root and I plant them directly in a new location.

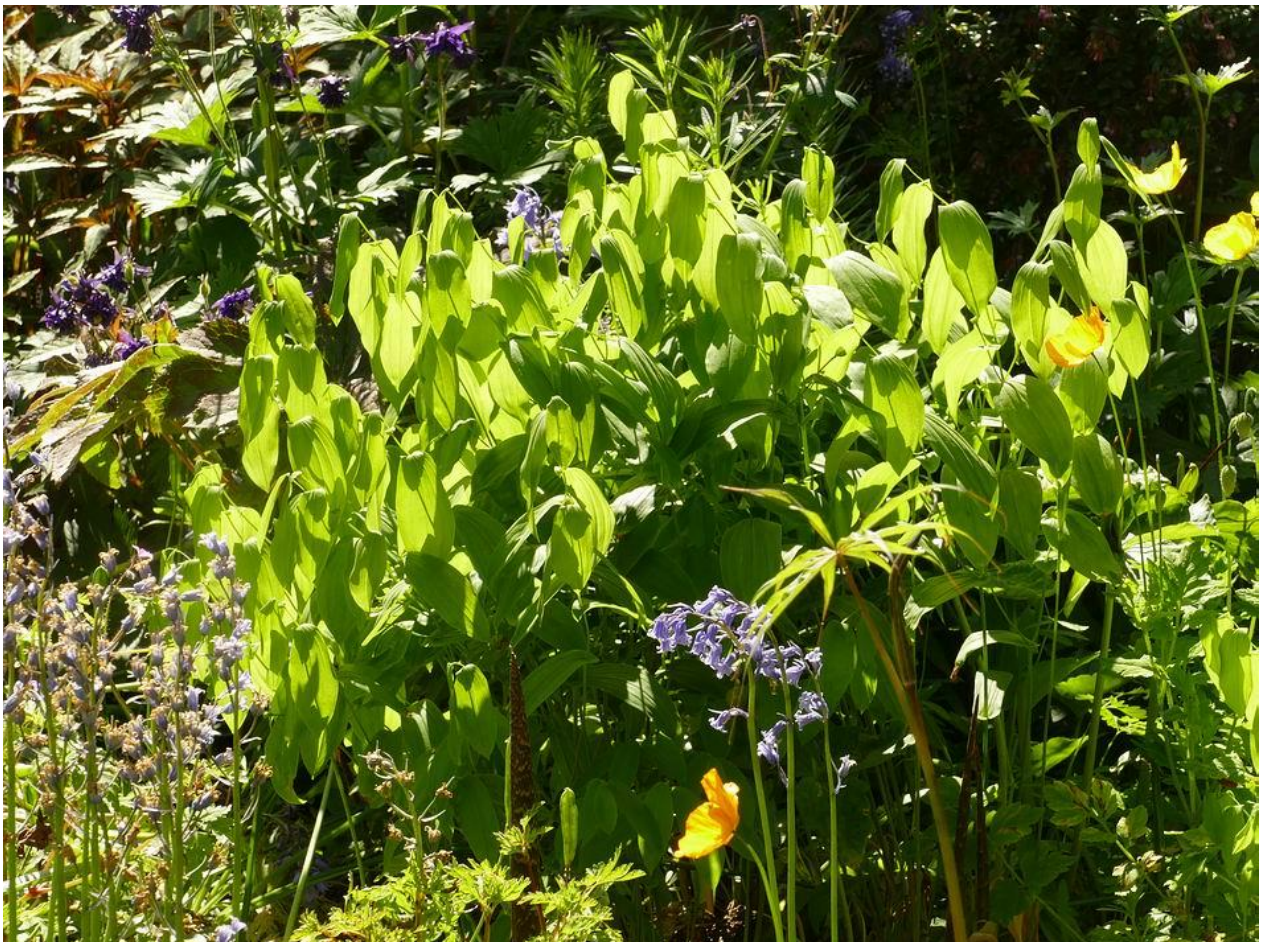


**Paeonia delavay**





We grew ***Paeonia veitchii* var. *woodwardii*** from seeds planting them out as a group to encourage further seeding which it does every year so we now have a growing colony.



We have had a number of bright sunny days and while the strong light and harsh contrast makes it difficult to take some pictures it is perfect for capturing the beauty of foliage such as ***Uvularia grandiflora***.



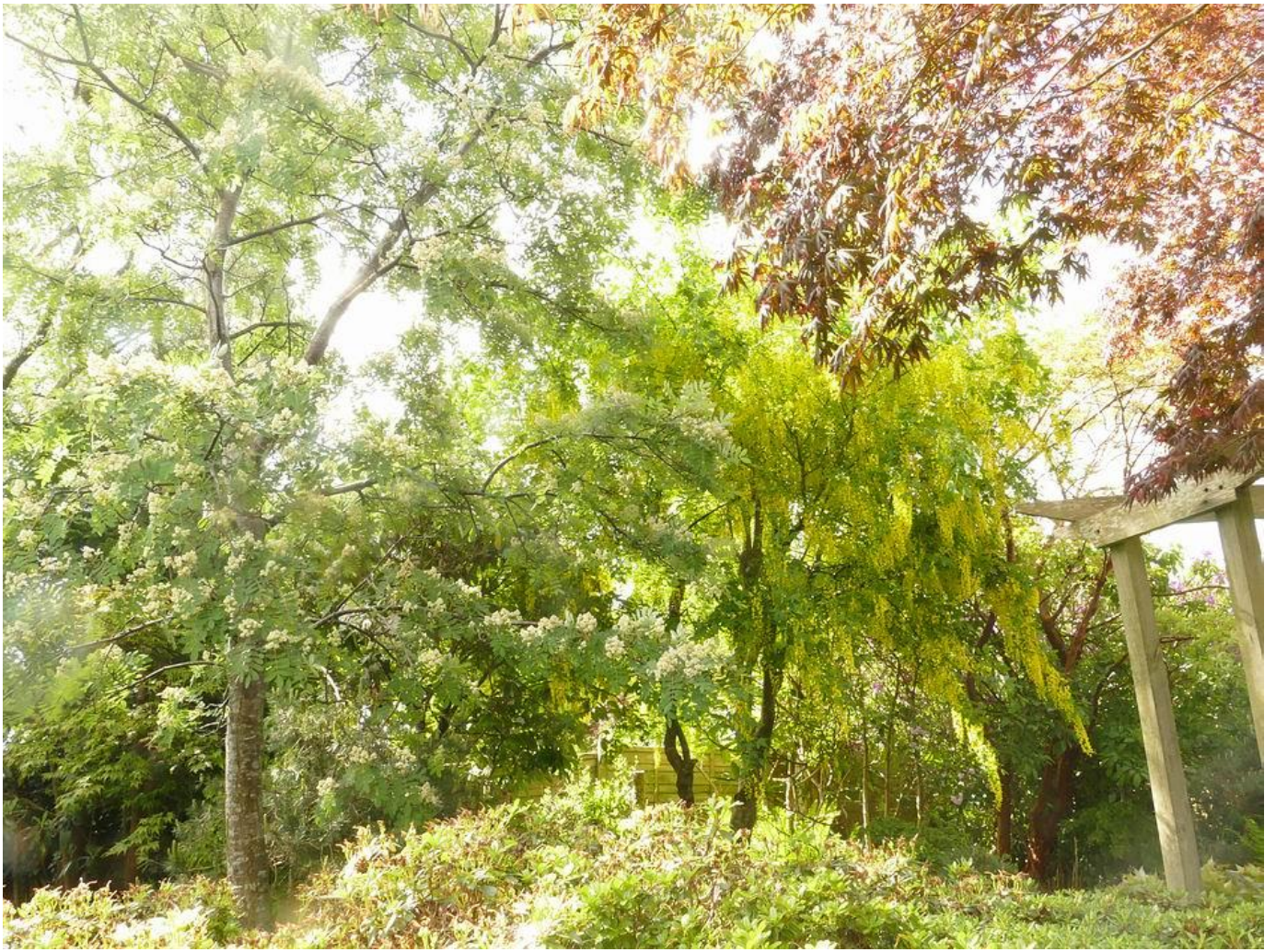


***Paeonia lutea ludlowii***

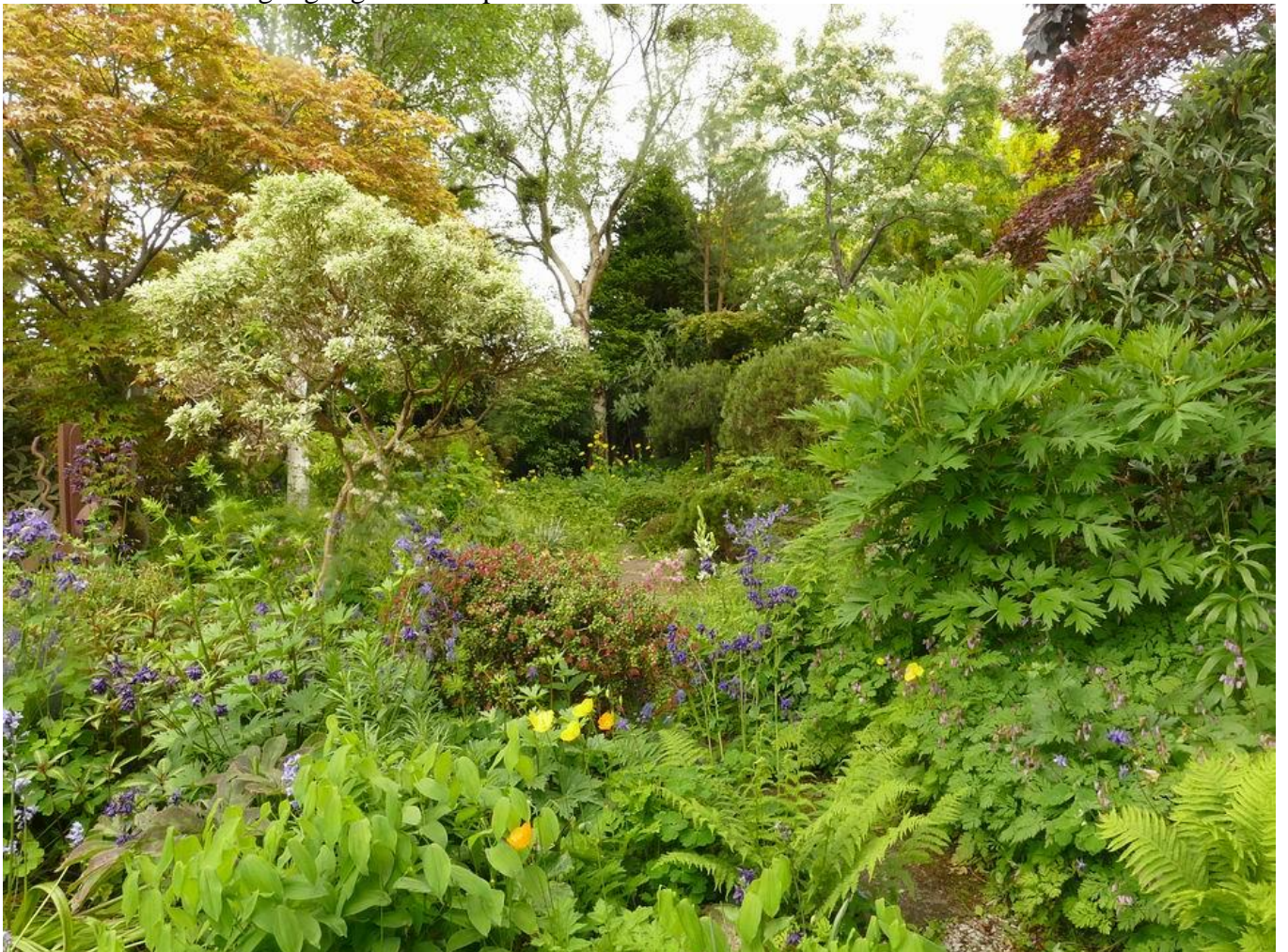


Even ferns normally associated with shade shine out when illuminated by the strong back light.

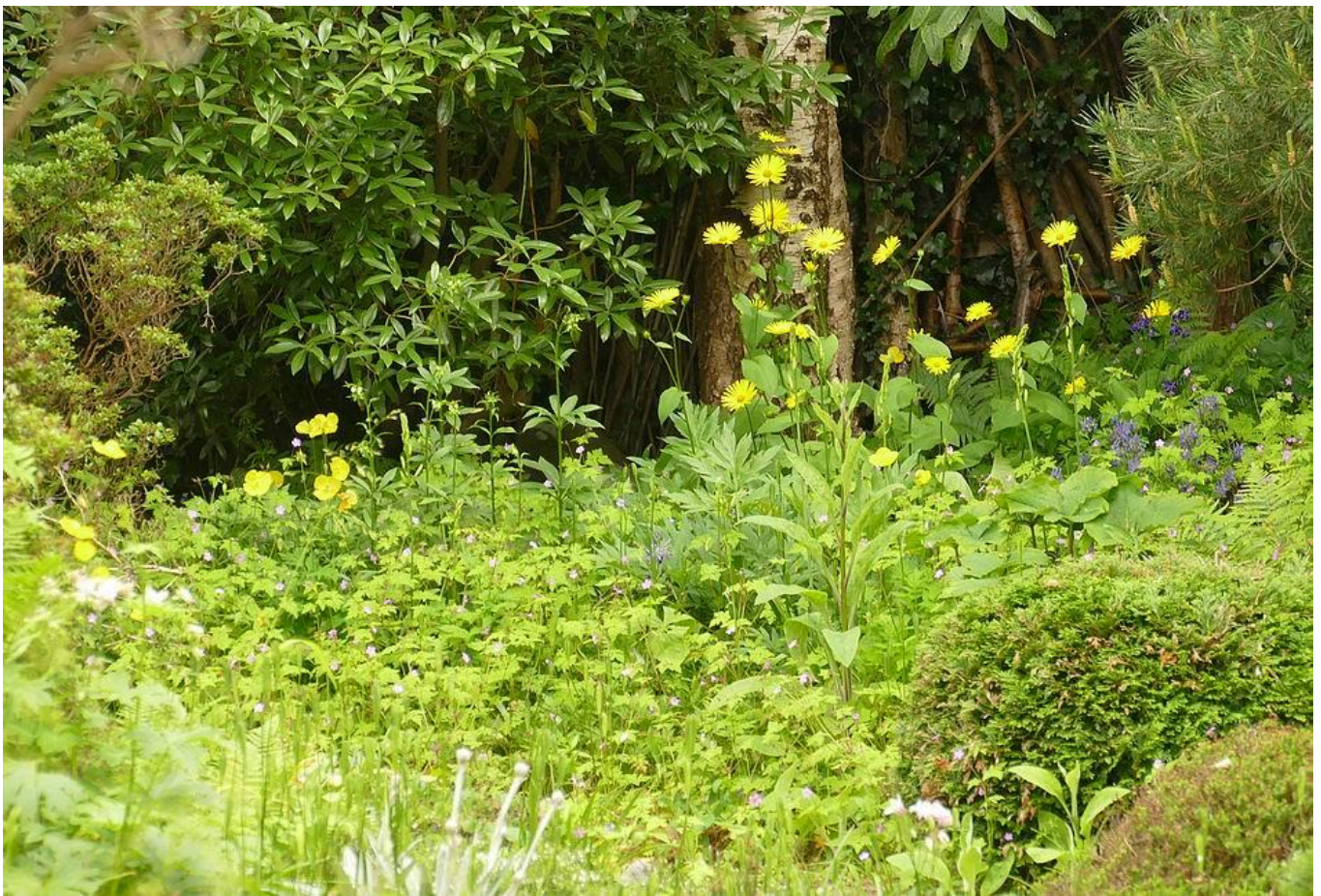




Contrast levels drop when a layer of high light cloud covers the sky allowing me to get pictures of the landscape we have created without strong highlights or deep shade.







The previous picture shows the view I see from my work table looking up the garden towards this area which I have been replanting in recent years after cutting back some old overgrown shrubs. Planting a bed like this takes time. I start with early flowering low growing bulbs and plants now these early plants are coming to the end of their season I want a sequence of taller plants whose growth and flowers will stand out against the dark background.



I think ***Doronicum orientale*** does that nicely.





**Doronicum orientale**

As in the rest of the garden I will continue adding compatible plants to this area always seeking to build plant communities that will grow at different times extending the interest through as many months as possible.....