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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 27.....6th July 2022



Vicia cracca, *Hypericum androsaemum* and *Geranium sanguineum*



**Vicia cracca,
Hypericum
androsaemum and
Geranium
sanguineum**

My eyes were firstly attracted to this scene by the wonderful mix of colours then I focused in on the equally magnificent variation of shapes that the plants have adopted. No single plant can deliver such a variation, reinforcing my belief that gardens work and look better when you mix plants in groups such as this example: only I did not plan any of these they

are all the work of nature.



I am delighted that **Vicia cracca** has chosen to grow in our driveway where it twists and twines through neighbouring plants pushing its clusters of purplish flowers up into view.



Hypericum androsaemum is a prolific and very successful seeder, I see it growing in many gardens as I walk around and I very much doubt if anyone chose to plant it, more likely they accepted this gift from nature. The flowers are favoured by bees and other insects and in autumn, as the leaves colour up, the fruits are also very attractive but to prevent excessive spread I cut them back to the ground before they get chance to shed their seed.



Digitalis grandiflora flowering among the seed heads of *Phyteuma* and *Erythronium* in the drive.



Water droplets, natural gems, sparkle like diamonds nestling on the new leaves of **Rhododendron lepidostylum**.



However the true gems of nature are the seeds which ensure healthy new generations of plants and while we do allow many to shed and seed around the garden naturally there are some such as **Primula auricula**, that I am collecting to sow in pots as we try to build up the number of these spring beauties we have in the garden. These seeds were sown and are now under mist in the glasshouse to try and initiate germination and growth this year.



These Crocus seed pods are shedding their contents directly into the garden. If I notice the seed I will poke it down into the ground or scatter them into other areas where we want them to establish. Many plants produce masses of seed – these are often the ones that often end up being downgraded as ‘weedy’. I counted one hundred flowers on a Digitalis stem; each of these will form hundreds of seeds so thousands will be shed from a single flowering stem. If only ten percent of the seed germinates then grows to maturity the population will increase.

***Fritillaria imperialis* seed pods.**

When successfully fertilised each *Fritillaria imperialis* flowering stem will deliver a number of seedpods each packed with seeds. Very few of these seeds will be successful if they are left to shed naturally so if you want to increase the number of plants you are best to collect and sow them in containers where they can be nurtured until the bulbs are big enough to be planted out.





Trillium hibbersonii is one of those plants we have to watch carefully if we want to collect the seed because the seed pods give few obvious signs before the pod just disintegrates from the base dumping the valuable contents. When we first grew this plant we collected and sowed every seed in pots to build up numbers. If I sow ten seeds in a pot I would be disappointed if I don't get eight or more to germinate however after many years we have a number of colonies so we are happy to leave some plants to shed naturally.



Here the small first narrow seed leaves of *Trillium hibbersonii* are growing where they were shed close to the parent plant. These seeds usually take two years to germinate and while I expect a high success rate from seeds sown in pots here in the garden we expect fewer seeds will grow to maturity.



I find many seed pods in themselves quite fascinating as they adopt a wide range of shapes to protect and ultimately to shed the seed. I will keep a close eye on the seedpods on **Jeffersonii diphylla** to hinge open revealing a pot full of seed, some of which I will scatter around the bed, the rest I will sow into a container to maximise the increase.



Rather than working to maximise the seed increase there are some plants such as **Papaver cambricum** that are super successful so we remove most of the stems as the flowers fade to control the rate of increase.



Many of the South American shrubs we grow, such as **Embothrium coccineum**, have bright red/orange flowers.



Crinodendron hookerianum



Philesia magellanica is a smaller shrub than the previous two and it spreads by runners which can appear some distance from the original planting site. This plant of *Philesia magellanica* has chosen to grow intertwined through a *Rhododendron dendrocharis* with its low arching stems pushing the pale crimson flowers out into view.



Philesia magellanica



From bright red flowers that jump out at you to the more subtle flowers of *Arisaema ciliatum* var *liubaense* seedlings rising above a green tapestry of foliage, on the left, a typical brown form, with a pale green form to the right. When the stems collapse in the winter I collect the bright red clusters of berries containing the seeds from the ground throwing them them into other beds resulting in groups of *Arisaema* flowering all around the garden.





The original site in the garden for this *Arisaema* has a forest of growth fitting in well with all the early bulbs.

Impatiens omeiana also coming into growth after the early flowering bulbs and plants have had their season. In our garden the foliage of *Impatiens omeiana* is its most decorative feature. The small orange/yellow flowers do not appear until later in the year when our weather is not always the most amenable for their floral display to develop fully.

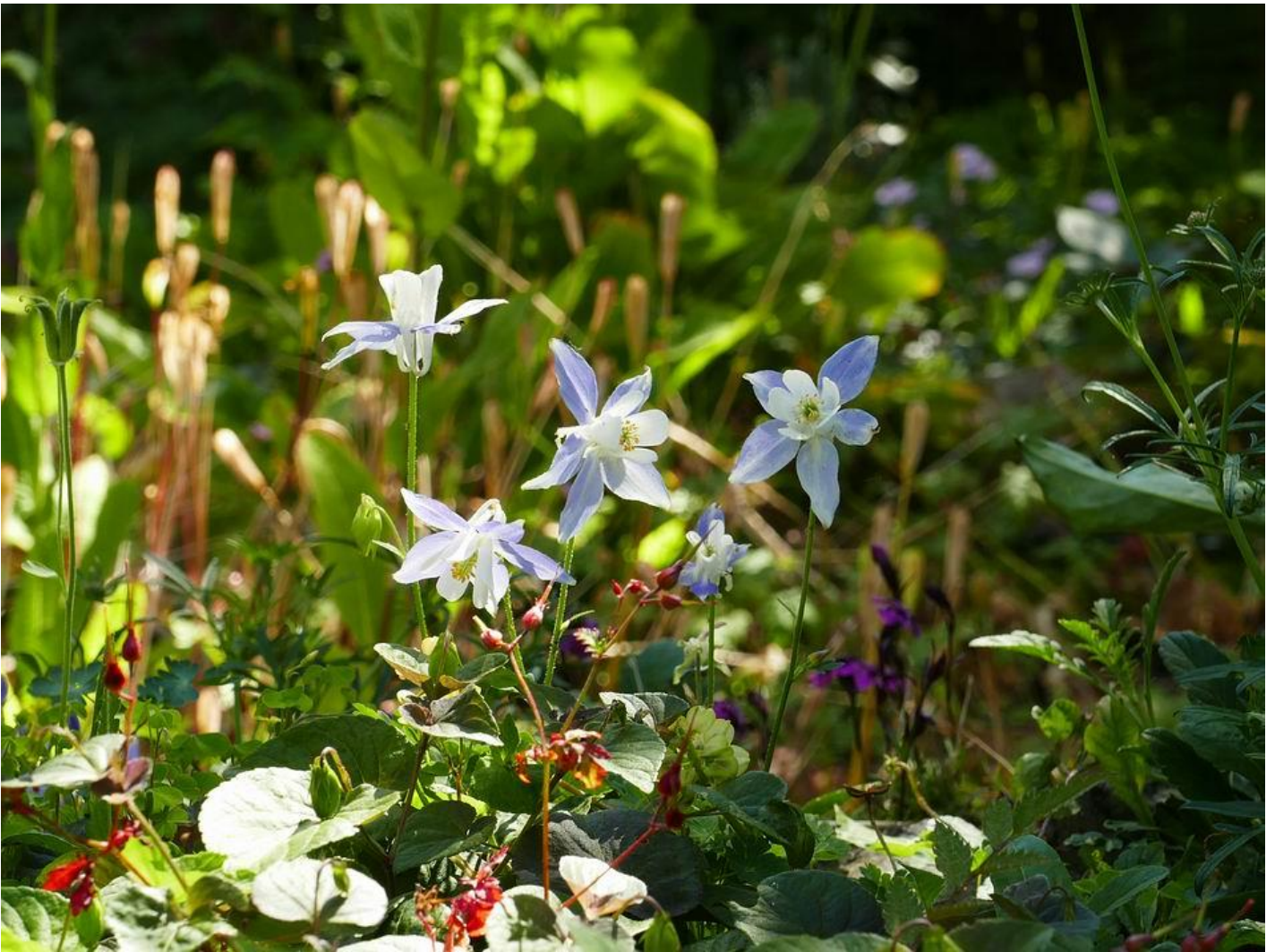




We have grown **Campanula persicifolia nitida 'Alba'**, along with its blue form, for well over thirty years since we got them at Jack Drakes Inshriach Nursery. We have kept it going by cuttings which come true and seed which we have to select because the majority of seedlings revert to the larger type of Campanula persicifolia plants.



Campanula garganica growing in one of the raised slab beds surrounded by the small creeping yellow Oxalis that few of us planted but so many of us have.



Aquilegia saximontana seeds around in the same raised bed.



The smallest troughs I planted as a demonstration at a workshop in 2008 grow and impress me every year.



Roscoea alpina is one of the species that seeds around forming colonies on the rock garden.



The summer lilies are starting to flower now with the flowers of **Lilium martagon album** lighting up dark areas.



Lilium martagon album



Lilium martagon



Lilium martagon





If allowed **Aconitium lycoctonum** can be a prolific seeder but we grow selectively by enjoying its flowers in the summer then removing the stems before they shed their seeds.



Prunella vulgaris

Starting to grow plants from seed is one of the biggest steps that a gardener ever takes - the second giant step they take is when they accept plants that simply arrive, often called weeds but I call them wild flowers, these are often the plants that are most valuable to bees and other insects with the birds also feeding on the seeds.....