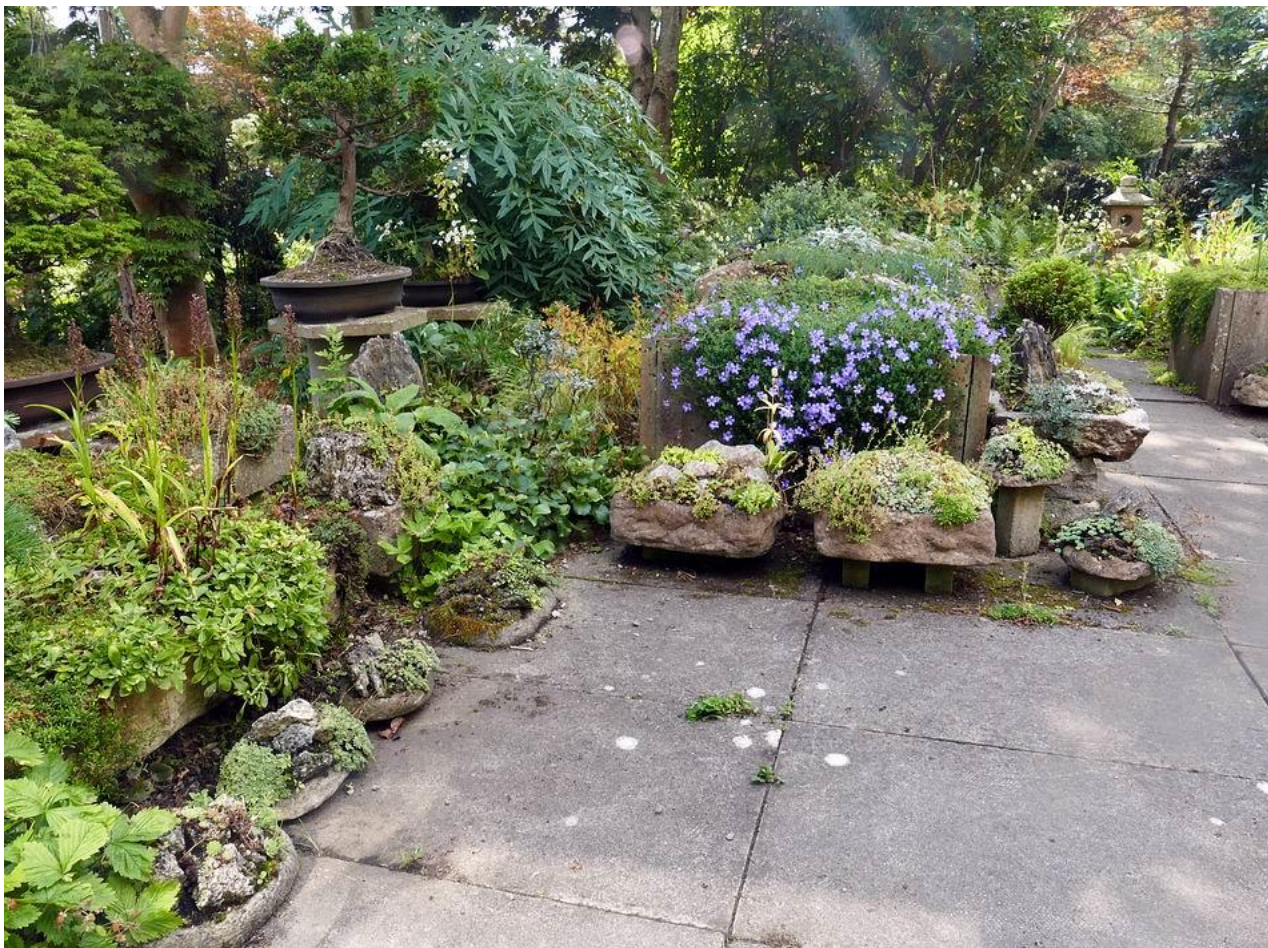




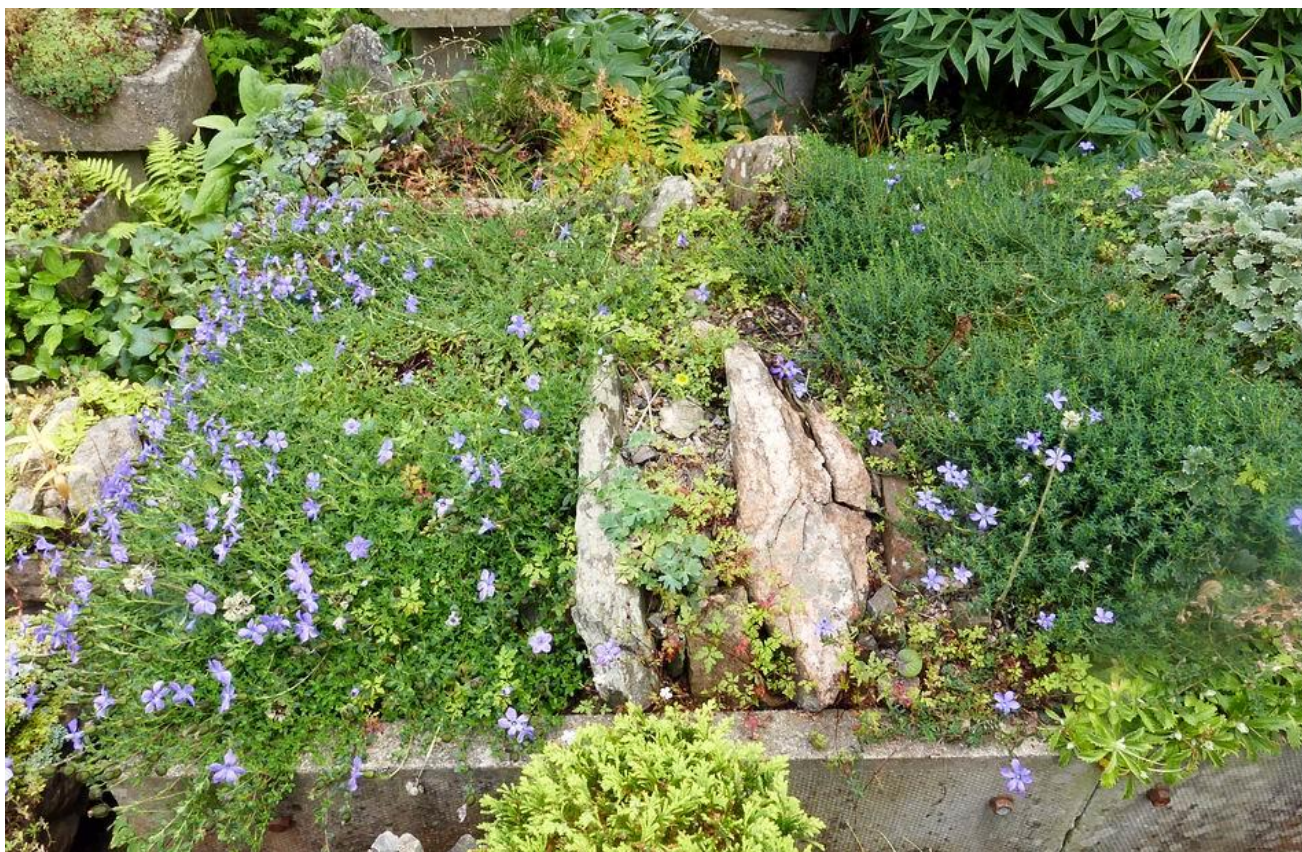
BULB LOG 32.....10th August 2022



Cyananthus lobatus hybrid and *Fritillaria camschatensis*



The **Cyananthus lobatus hybrid** spreads out, cascading over the end of this raised bed and the *Fritillaria camschatensis* grows in one of the troughs as a result of a stray bulbil that must have been in the potting compost that I reused when I planted the trough. The *Cyananthus* starts to flower in late summer and the flowers just keep coming until November or December when the temperatures drop below freezing. The *Fritillaria camschatensis* in seed acts as a reminder that it is approaching the best time to sow seeds of bulbs so together they represent the season to me.



The **Cyananthus lobatus hybrid** spreads out on the left and the **Cyananthus microphyllus** on the right, which starts flowering later, is smaller leaved.



Cyananthus microphyllus



Ferns spread through the garden by spores and we are quite relaxed about letting them grow where they appear. We have enjoyed this fern growing among some of the troughs for a number of years but now it has got too big and is partially obscuring the troughs so it is time for it to be moved.



I have found I get more success establishing ferns moved when they are actively growing with green fronds than I do moving them in the winter when the fronds have died back. They tend to be shallow rooting and some of the roots have formed over the slab so I can slide a spade under the root mat prising it up from under the larger trough.



Although some of the fronds got damaged the roots are relatively intact and ready for its new home in the shade of the trees at the south end of the garden.



Now the fern is gone we can see some of the wee demonstration troughs I planted many years ago in workshops.



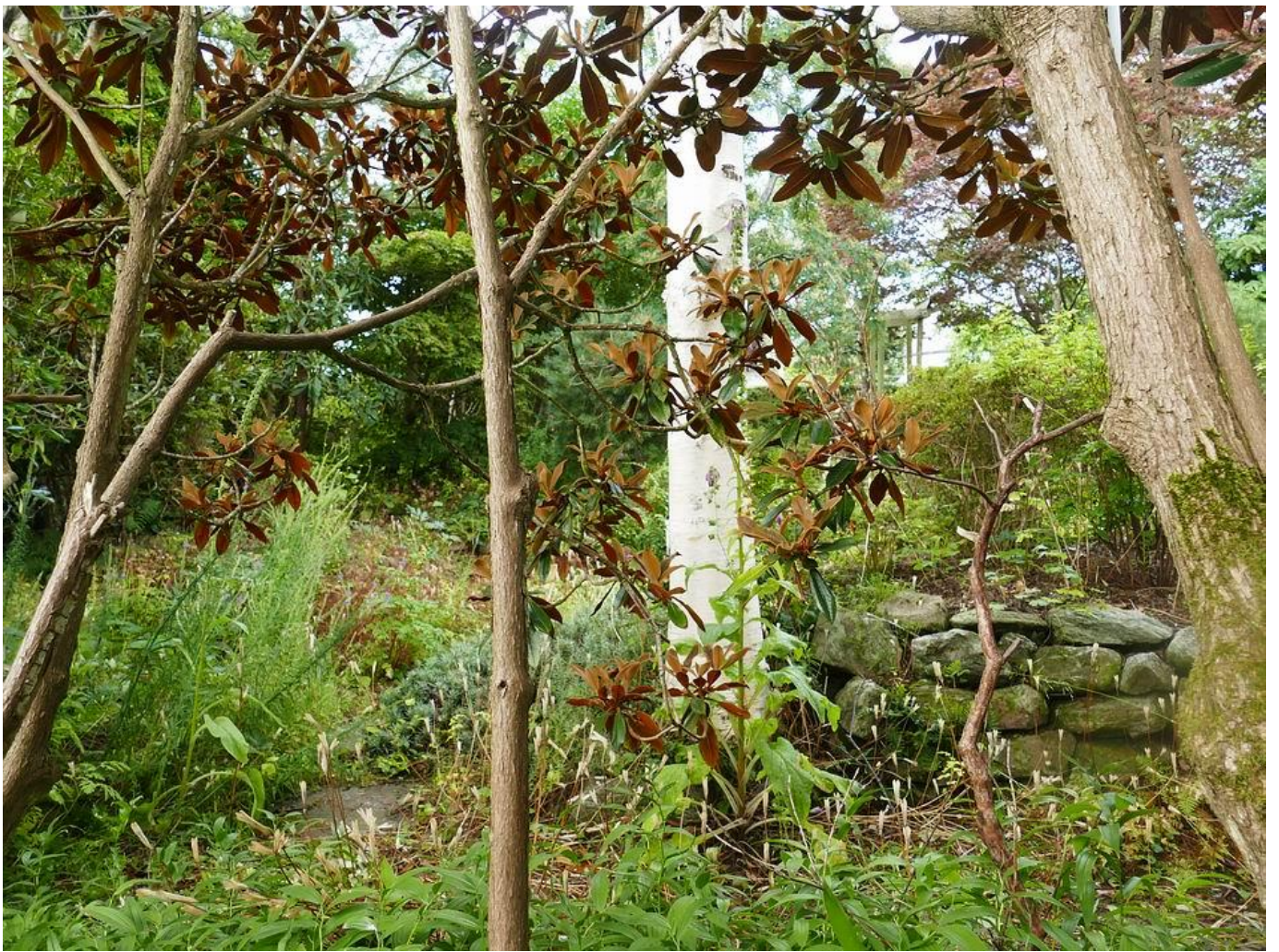
The two small troughs in the centre were landscaped and planted in 2008 but are relative youngsters compared to the granite trough on the right which was made and planted around 1987.



We have had some rain over the last few weeks - enough to water the troughs but the dryness is baked into the ground which is very dry to quite a depth, with only the top layers benefiting from the recent rain. Shredding continues and you may spot my trusty shredder peeking out from below the bushes.



The shredder with our eastern boundary hedge on the left and the compost heaps against the southern wall.



Working in here gives me different rarely seen views of the garden that have only become open since the Rhododendrons grew to resemble small trees rather than shrubs.



I used to compost all the shredded material in the heaps against the wall but in recent years I make small piles around the garden close to where it will get spread in the winter.



The piles of raw shreadings start off quite green but will start to decompose turning brown as the volume reduces.



Phyllodoce caerulea

Phyllodoce caerulea is one of a number of shrubs that, having flowered in the spring, produce a second flowering in late summer or autumn.



While I can see the purple *Phyllodoce* flowers from a distance as I approach it is only when I look carefully that I see the ***Fuchsia procumbens*** growing on the wall above is also in flower.



Fuchsia procumbens growing on the wall.



As well as the larger Rhododendrons we also grow a number of the dwarf shrubs from the Ericaceae, there are three growing through each other in this picture.



The small leaved ***Empetrum nigrum***, the larger glossy reticulate leaves are ***Gaultheria pyroloides*** and the swollen white calyx surround the seed pods of ***Gaultheria depressa* var. *novae-zelandiae***.



I often describe myself as a habitat manipulator or manager rather than a gardener because my desire goes beyond having a collection of plants from around the world, towards planting them in such a way to give the impression of a landscape that will be attractive to the wild life as well as ourselves. The overall effect is best described as a mini woodland and indeed it attracts a wide range of birds. We get so many birds that I am still having top up these feeders, because they eat the sunflower hearts down below the top port, on a daily basis.



One unlikely wild life habitat is the sand beds which are very popular among the large population of house sparrows which as well as hunting spiders etc love to have dust baths in the dry sand. This facility will soon stop as September approaches and it is time for me to water the sand as the bulbs awake from their summer rest.



In preparation for the September storm I also have to turn my attention to getting all the bulbs in pots replanted into fresh compost.



Narcissus romieuxii 'Craigton Clumper' with the dried remains of last season's growth which I pull away before tipping out the bulbs



Once the pot is tipped out I separate the bulbs out from the old potting mix.



***Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Clumper'**

The bulbs of *Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Clumper' are now cleaned up and ready to be re-planted.



***Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Clumper'**

This is the ideal shape of flowering sized bulbs that you will achieve if you are watering and feeding your bulbs sufficiently through the winter months when the plants are actively growing.



The best bulbs are back in the pot ready to be topped up with the potting mix.



The potting mix that I use is loam based and in recent years I have bought in a standard John Innes type mixing it with 6mm grit at the ratio of 2 parts JI with 2 parts grit. I have run the old dried mix through a sieve which separates the grit out so you can see how much grit there is and how the JI has broken down

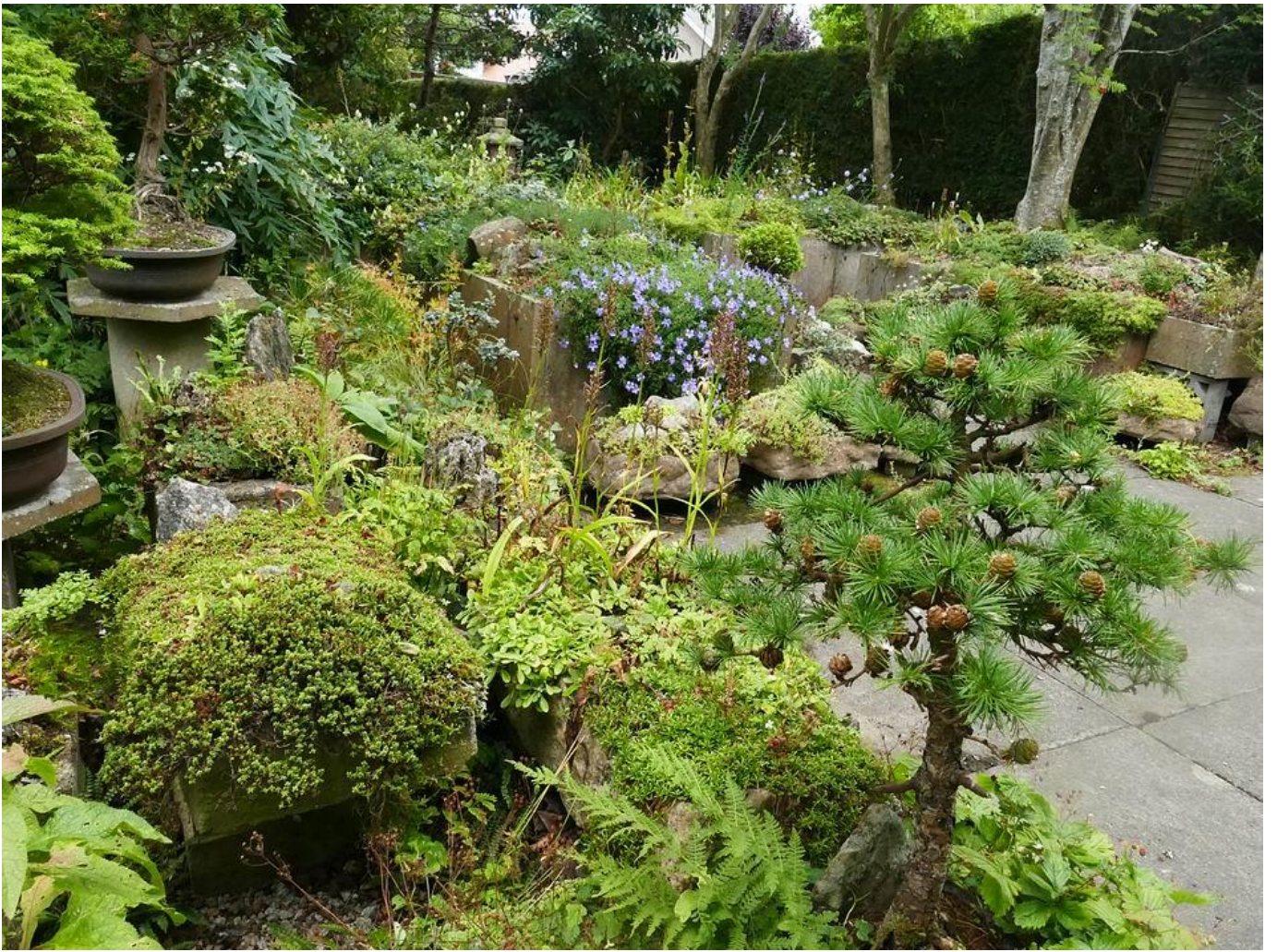


The sieved grit more than half fills the pot illustrating the volume of grit there is in the mix – it also shows how there is plenty of room in the gaps between the irregular grit to hold air as well as the JI compost.



I tip 2 parts John Innes to 2 parts grit into our old, rather rusty cement mixer, which blends them beautifully after around four revolutions.

It really doesn't matter whether you use John Innes one two or three - which just refers to the amount of nutrients that have been added with JI-1 being like a one course meal, JI-2 a two courser and JI-3 is equivalent to the full three courses. Once you start the watering the nutrients will leach out and be gone in at best six weeks so I also add bone meal to my mix which slowly releases Nitrogen and Phosphorous to benefit the bubs.



I am returning to the trough area which looks a lot happier after a few nights of rain. As I have said previously, natural rainfall always seems to do a better job at watering than using a hose and spray head.





Troughs and slab beds.



The tiny *Allium cyaneum* looks good growing and flowering though the mat of *Cyananthus*.



Finally, to complete the mountain landscape effect, for an anniversary present Maggi bought me a starter flock of Valais Blacknose sheep which are irresistibly cute and originating from the mountains of Switzerland look very at home among the rocks and alpines on the raised beds and troughs.



I will now Baaa out until next week.....