



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 06.....11th June 2025



Arisaema wilsonii



Like much of the UK, our spring was unusually warm and sunny, with Aberdeen experiencing its warmest and sunniest spring on record. A mean temperature of 8.23°C, beating the previous record of 7.97°C in 2024. It also had the sunniest spring on record, with 593.7 hours of sunshine. This was the driest spring in Scotland since 2001, with an average of 204.1mm of rain. We are seeing the effects the changing weather is having on the plants we grow, many of which we selected because they enjoyed our previously cool moist conditions.

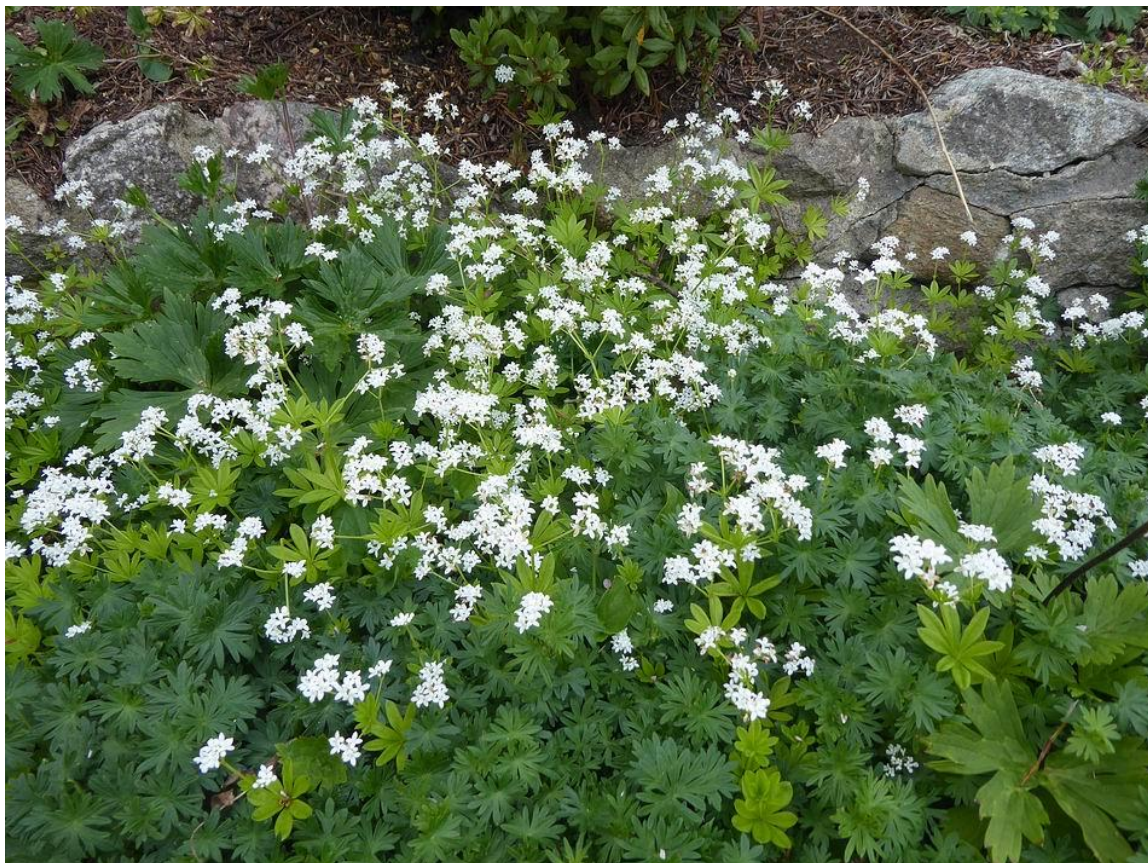
We haven't often seen **Arisaema wilsoni** flowers so clearly because when the ground is moist the leaf growth is usually simultaneous with the flowers but as the ground is so dry the leaves are waiting for the moisture.



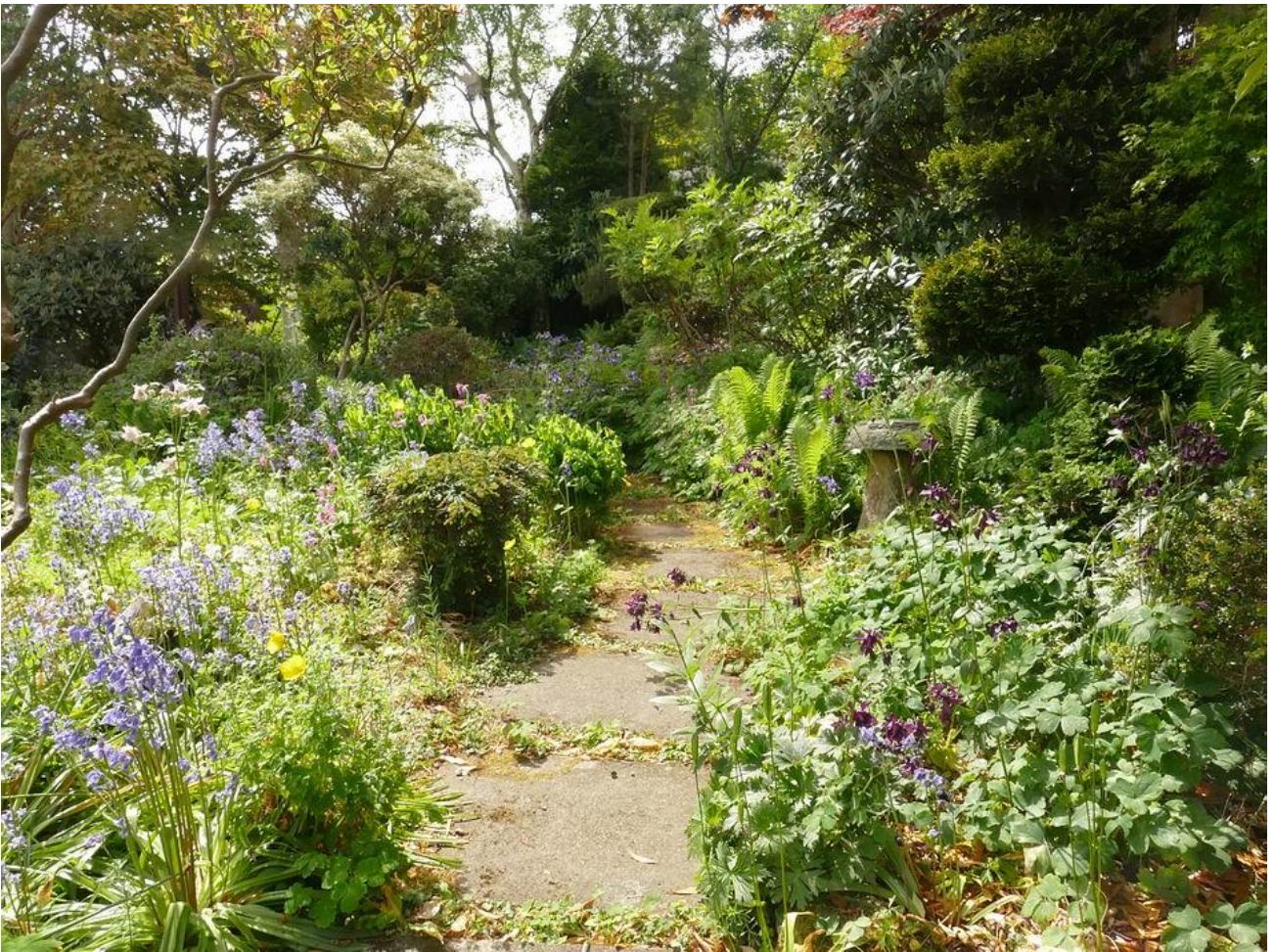
I love this area in a nearby wood where there is this beautiful carpet planting of **Allium ursinum** and **Claytonia sibirica** growing in a damp hollow. Both of these plants favour moist ground, the Claytonia is believed to have been introduced from the Pacific North West of America in 1838. I have not managed to establish it in our garden and perhaps with the recent changes in our weather we will no longer be able to however I do try and recreate this scene, albeit with different plants, in our garden.



Plants will move around not just by seed but by runners and stolons. This seems to be an adaptation adopted by many plants that have evolved in woodland conditions allowing them to run around in the constantly enriched leaf layers of the soil as they try and escape the deep shade by seeking better light and more moisture. I have been aware of this for many years as I watch plants move around our garden. One that has moved and spread out from an original small planting is *Galium oderatum*. It now covers much of our front garden forming a lovely green carpet that does not inhibit any of the other plants that it grows with. It has even started to grow up and over the front wall taking advantage of the pioneering growth of moss to get a root hold. I have observed this very process of plants colonising rocky areas in many parts of the world where the plants follow the moss onto the rocks.



In its move to seek freedom the ***Galium oderatum*** has also breached the low wall at the edge of the drive to colonise the area of gravel beside the driveway along with *Geranium sanguineum* which has arrived there by seed.



Due to the heat many of the bulbs went back earlier than most years, so the transitions between groups of plants were different. In previous years some of the Erythronium flowers were hanging on when the Bluebells appeared. This year the Bluebells also came and went more quickly than we are used to. It is not just a visual effect that the quicker retreat underground of the bulbs but the shorter growing period must also limit the growth of the bulbs.



With the images from the woods and natural plantings in my head we use the 'carpet and sequential' style.



Our plantings are increasingly becoming a mixture of plants with the species we have raised from around the world mixing with the species often considered ‘weeds’. Along with many others **Allium ursinum** mixes with **Bluebells**, **Silene dioica** and **Uvularia grandiflora**.



Silene dioica, Red campion, a common roadside plant brings joyous pink highlights to the bed at this time of year. The big advantage of this type of wild native plant is that they grow well with little input from us and do not drown out the other plants sharing the same bit of ground. Should you wish it is very easy to limit the amount that these plants seed around by cutting them back when the flowers are over.



The vibrant scarlet flowers of ***Tulipa sprengeri*** are a sharp contrast with the pink of the ***Silene dioica***. Why is it called Red campion and not Pink campion?



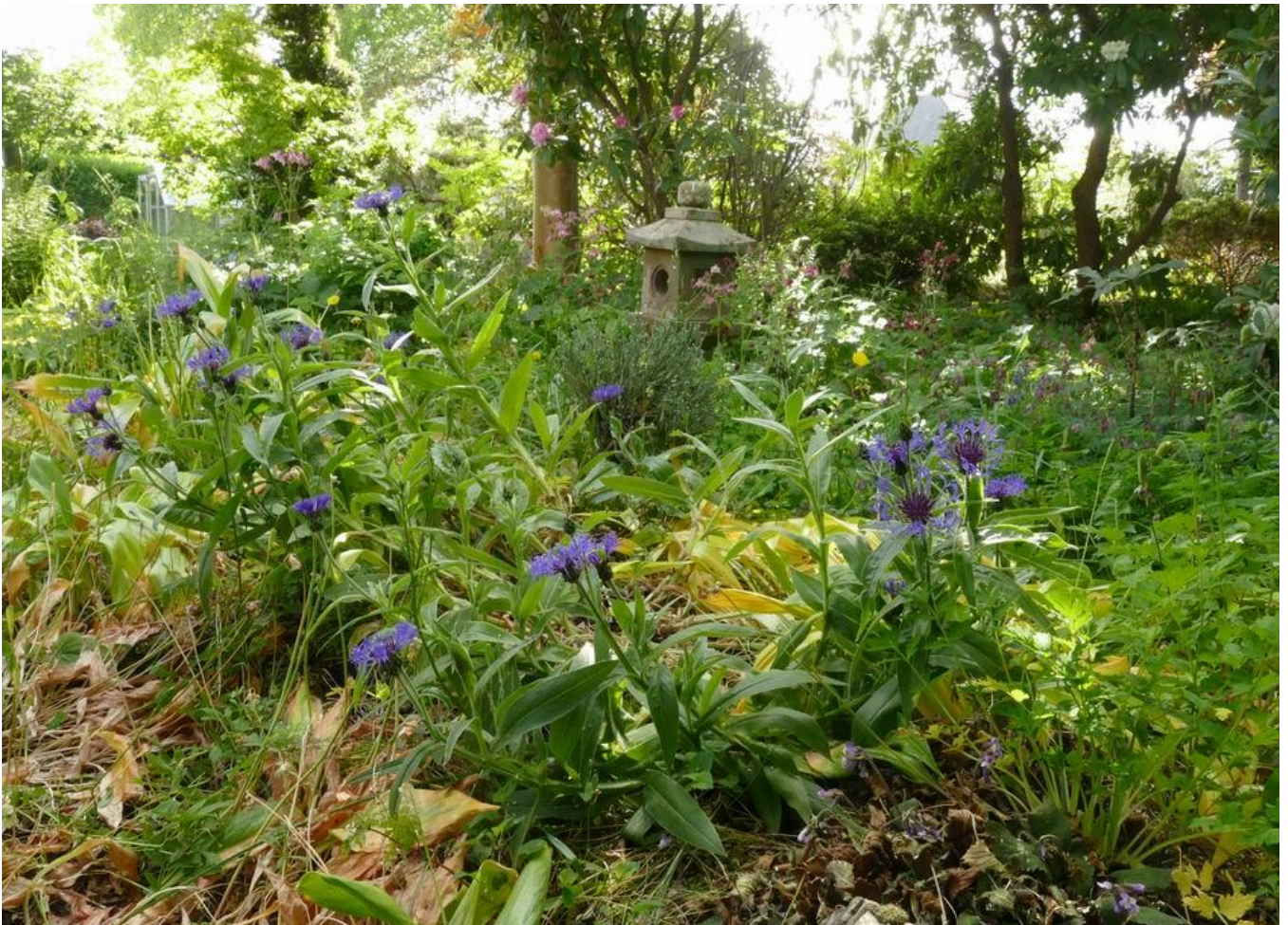
Clumps of **Uvularia grandiflora** are spreading across this bed as it seeds around including, like this one, out into the gravel edges of the path.



In the bed across the path **Uvularia perfoliata** also seeds around.



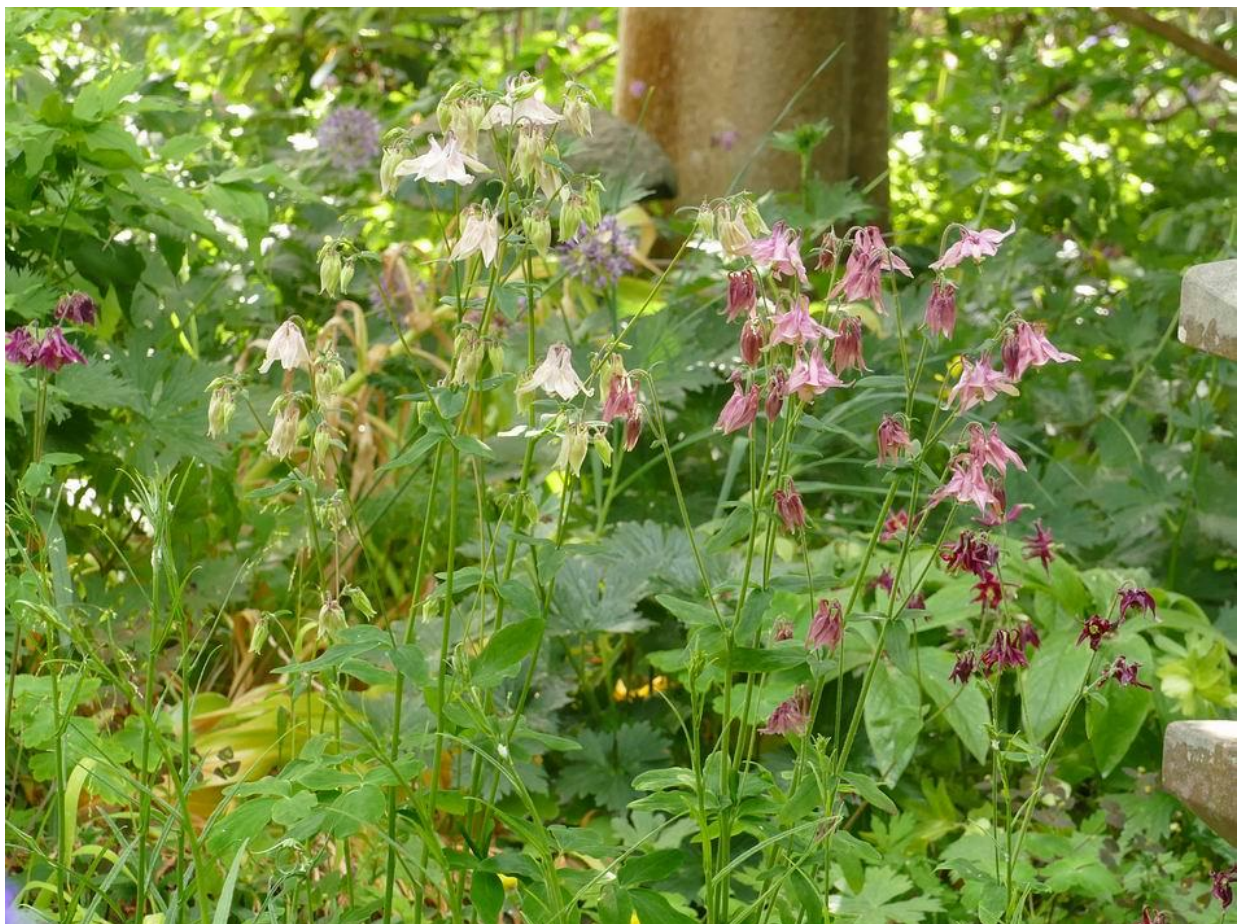
Centaurea montana growing in the very same spot on the rock garden bed where clumps of crocus flower in both the spring and autumn.

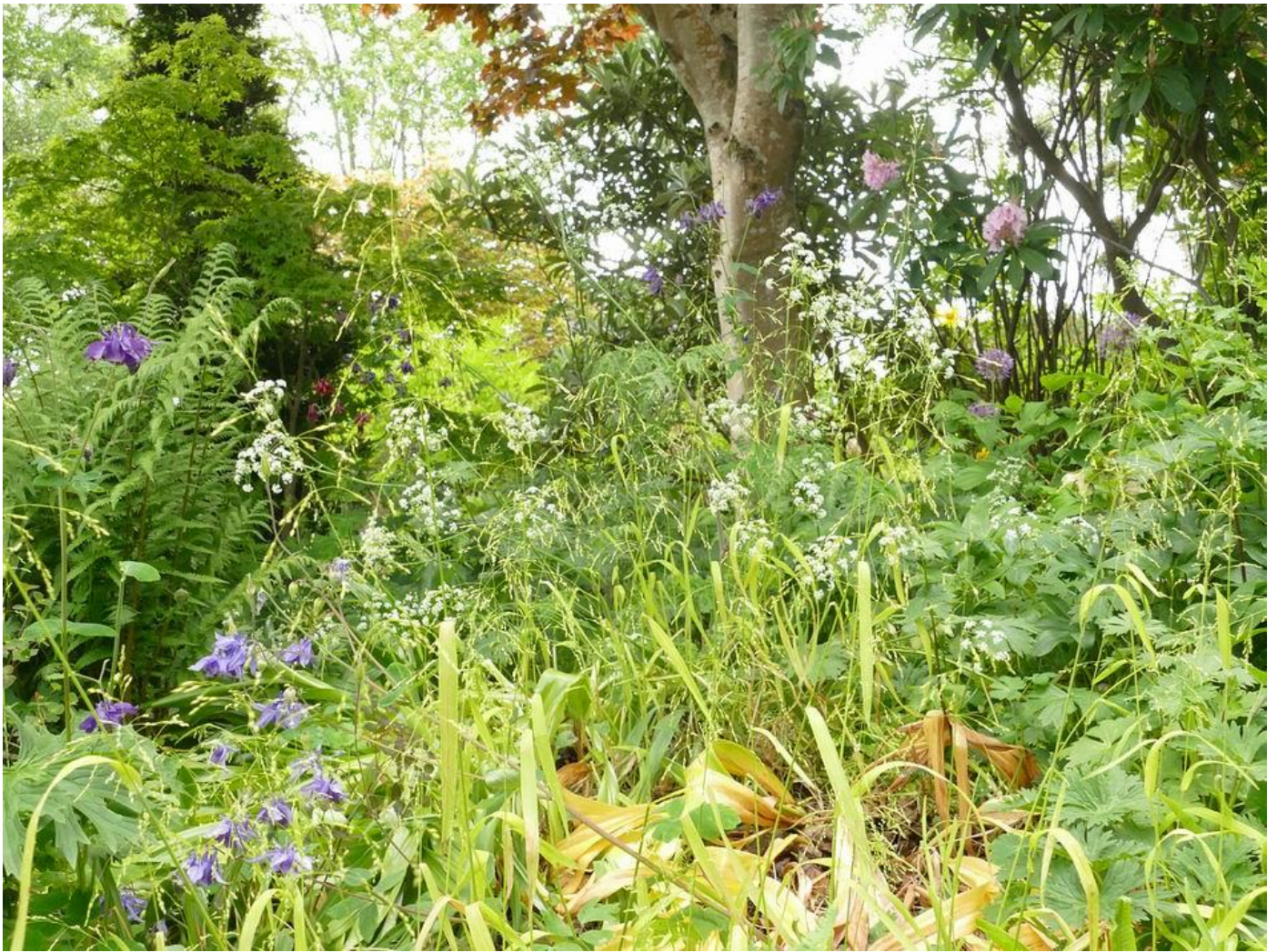


Centaurea montana

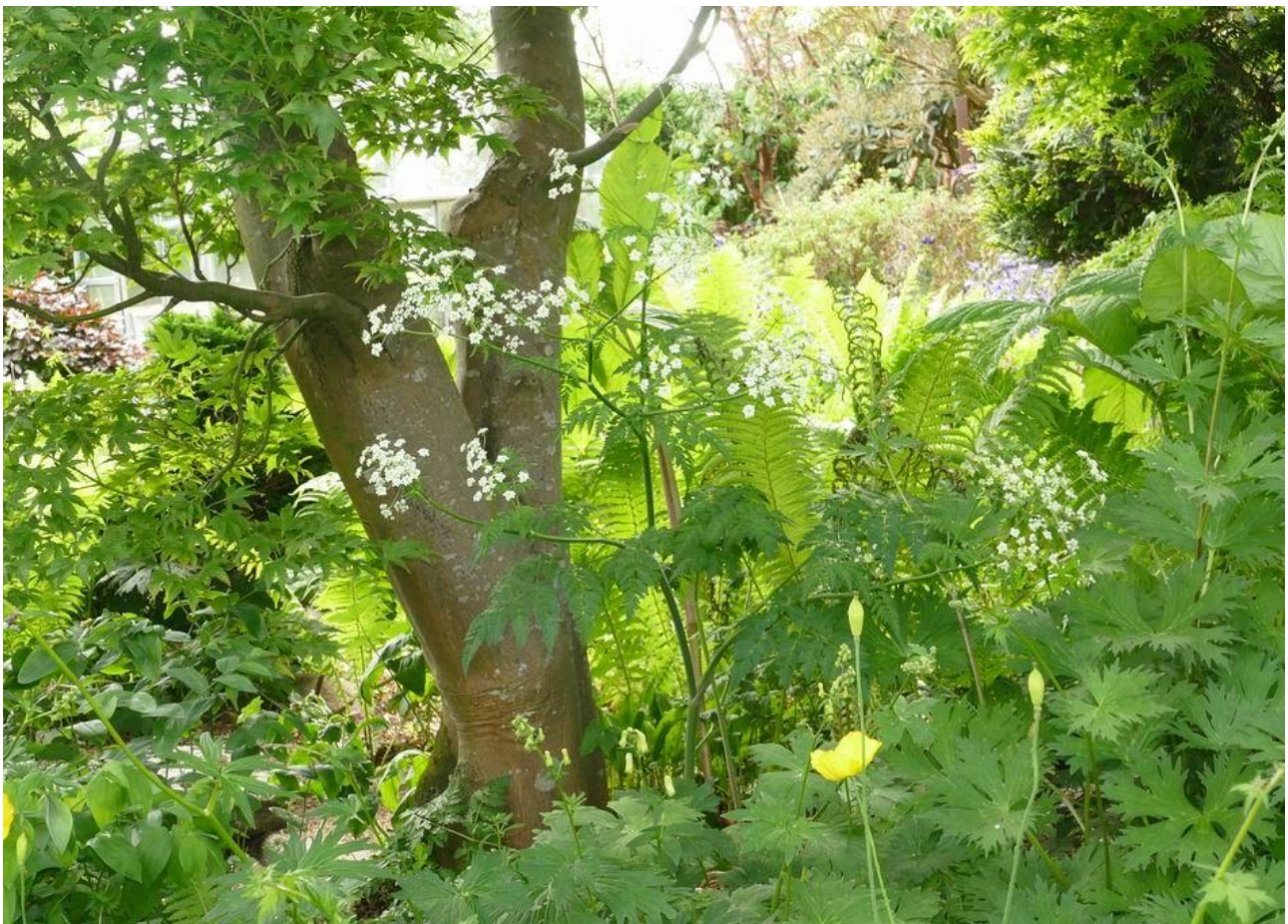


Aquilegia garden hybrids seed around everywhere. I do try and limit their march around the garden by cutting the stems back after flowering while at the same time spreading the seeds of the paler flowered forms into the darker shady areas of the garden where their white and pink flowers would add interest at this time of year.

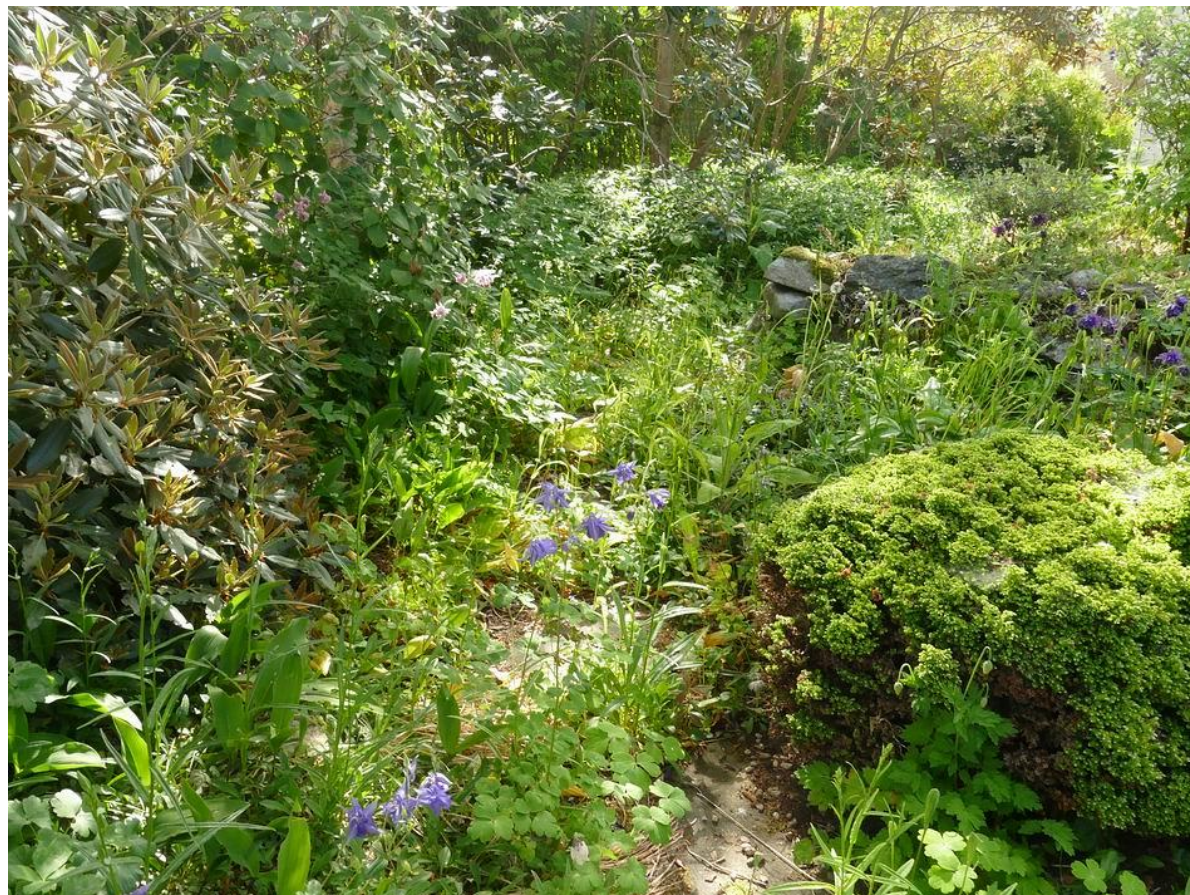




Another so called 'weed' I have introduced is **Anthriscus sylvestris**, (Cow parsley) a plant I have long admired in the wild but only brought into the garden around five years ago. It is a great plant that will take deep dry shade or full exposure to the sun.



Anthriscus sylvestris



I am slowly coming to the realisation that I should work even more with nature, as seen on the path which has been taken over by *Erythronium*. I normally spend hours removing the plants that appear after the *Erythroniums* but this year I am watching what happens if there is less intervention from me.



Maianthemum stellatum has taken over the ground below the large *Rhododendrons* in the bed next to the hedge. I don't remember introducing this plant it just appeared and for years was the only plant that would grow in the deep dry shade under the trees and shrubs. It spreads by stolons and I am now restricting its spread to this bed which in our humus rich topsoil is relatively easy, as pulling the stem lifts the stolons that are venturing too far.



Maianthemum stellatum is a stylish plant with alternate leaves spaced up the stem topped by a raceme of small starlike white flowers. As the Rhododendrons grew ever taller and the canopy rose up to reveal the ground and allow more light in, I have been planting Erythronium, Anemone, Cardamine and similar early flowering plants which grow before the Maianthemum emerges. Even after it grows the Maianthemum does not smother the other plants but forms a low canopy below which the bulbs leaves can die back naturally.



Erythronium leaves growing under shade of the Maianthemum have grown longer than those in more exposed parts of the garden.



I grew this plant from seed but lost the label and did not know what it was, so, in a recent video, I asked the question and quickly got an answer: thank you Ulrich from Austria who correctly named it as **Valeriana pyrenaica**.



It is a lovely plant much enjoyed by us and the many insects that regularly visit.



It is also the season of the peony flowers and here are a few from around the garden starting with **Paeonia emodi**.



Paeonia lutea var ludlowii is a great plant that seeds around the garden.



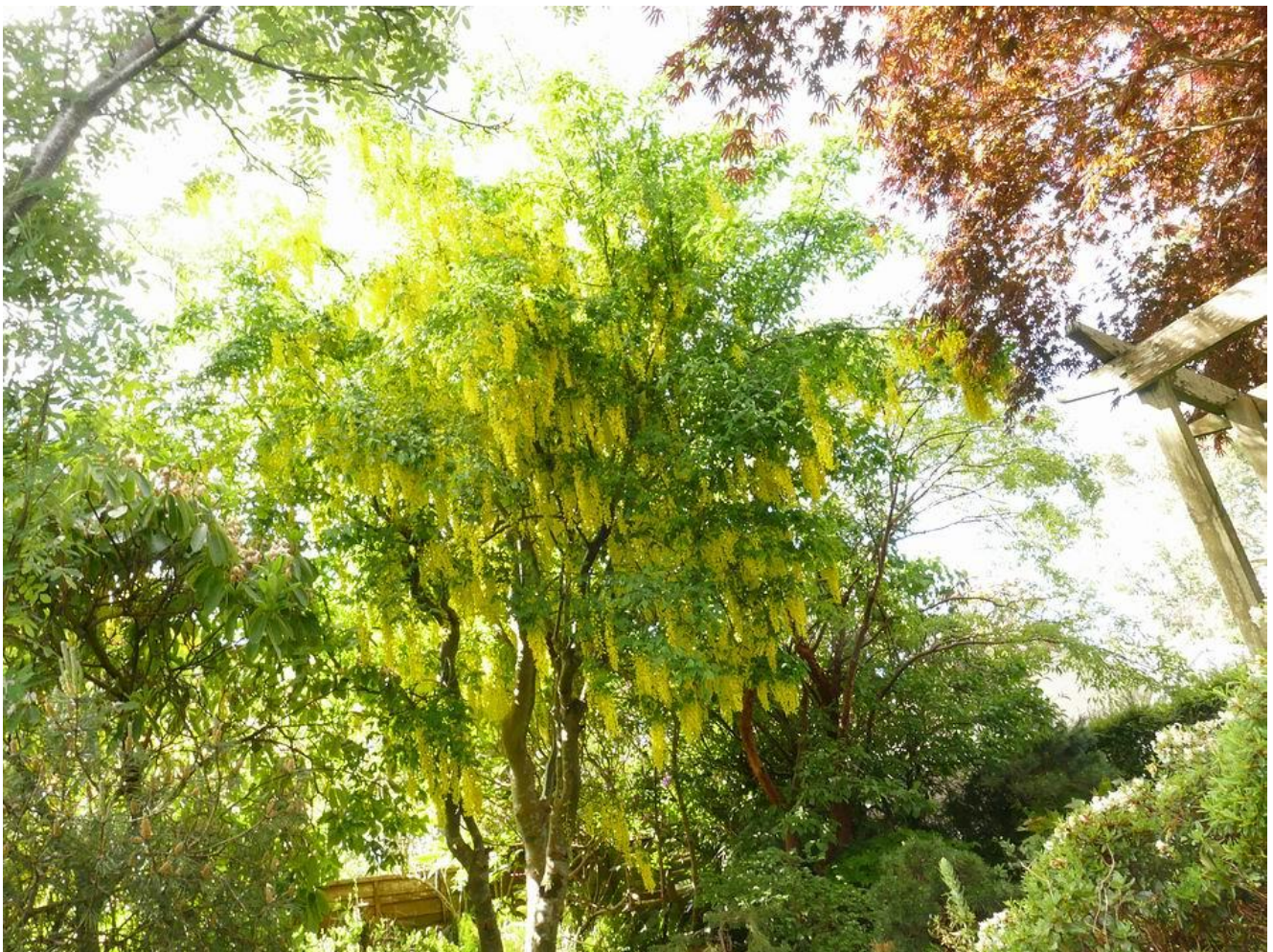
Large flowered hybrid Tree peony.



Although I focus mainly on the many lower growing plants, it is the trees and large shrubs that make the garden a special place for us. They create the feeling of a landscape and a space that appears a lot larger than it actually is.



The feeling of space and the atmosphere change completely when the tree canopy has grown.



For around a month the spectacular yellow flowers on the Laburnum have an audible presence from the number of bees that visit all the hours of daylight in addition to the beautiful scent and pure visual spectacle this tree delivers.



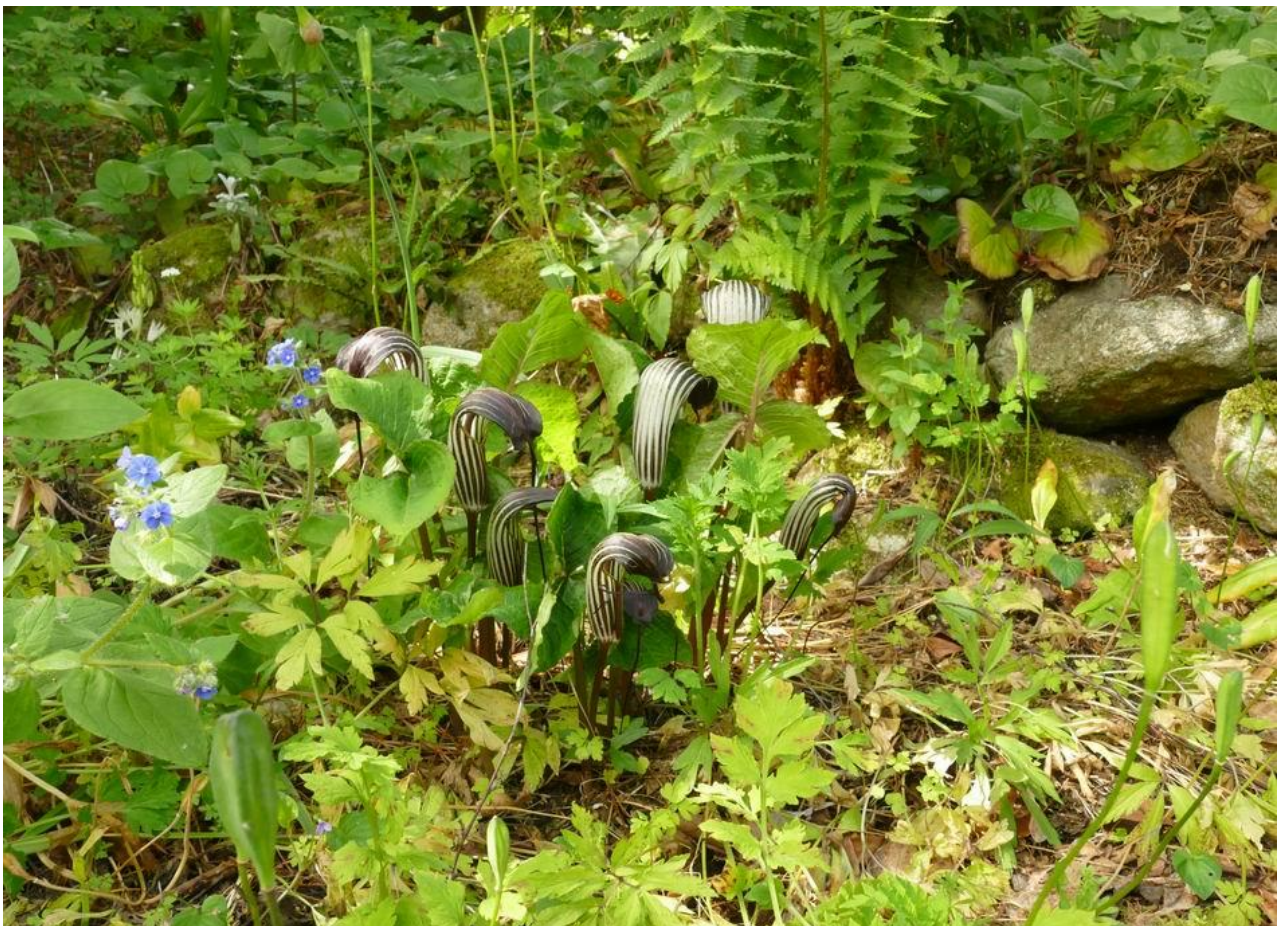
The trees even have a presence around the trough area which at this time of year is spotted by the confetti-like petals falling from the Sorbus tree.



These Crocus seeds are a good reminder that the work goes on as I collect some of these seeds and scatter them on other suitable parts of the garden where we would like this plant to grow.



Allowing plants to seed not only gives you more plants but you will also get a variety of forms such as a **Fragaria vesca** (Strawberry) I found growing in the gravel path which, being deep pink, stands out from the crowd.



I opened with a discussion on how dry it had been since then we have had enough rain to penetrate the ground and stimulate a whole new wave of growth, including the leaves of **Arisaema wilsonii**.....