



BULB LOG 24.....15th June 2016



Bulb Log 700



On the 2nd January 2003 I wrote and uploaded the first [Bulb Log Diary](#) – my intention was to do this for one year however that year has turned into fourteen and this week I reach a milestone with this being **Bulb Log 700**. It was never my intention for the Bulb Log to last this long and that is where you, dear readers, contribute because it is your encouragement and responses that have given me the incentive to carry on for this long. Through the years I have shared my pleasures, frustrations, successes and failures in these pages – some weeks I wonder what I can photograph and write about then I apply my simple formula of recording exactly what in the garden is inviting my interest or

giving me pleasure – sometimes my attention drifts outside the garden. The picture from one of the bulbhouses shows that I have started the repotting early - this is because I have so much to replant between the pots in the three bulbhouses plus all the Erythronium baskets in sand plunges - all of which should be done this year. While on the subject of Erythronium – I am working on the final edit of the chapters of Erythroniums in Cultivation when I have time but for now this has to take a back seat to the more pressing seasonal tasks that face me over the next few months. Regular readers will know that I am an artist as well as a gardener and that I treat the garden just like any other medium I work in so the garden to me is one of my art works - in fact it is a bit like an exhibition full of lots of artworks that can be viewed in isolation but also combine to form an attractive and cohesive whole. Recording the garden photographically allows us to focus in on details as well as pulling back and capturing the ‘landscape’ of the garden – I think there is a tendency to concentrate on the close up recording the detail of a flower or a plant ignoring the context of how it combines with its neighbours in the garden and I try hard to record both.

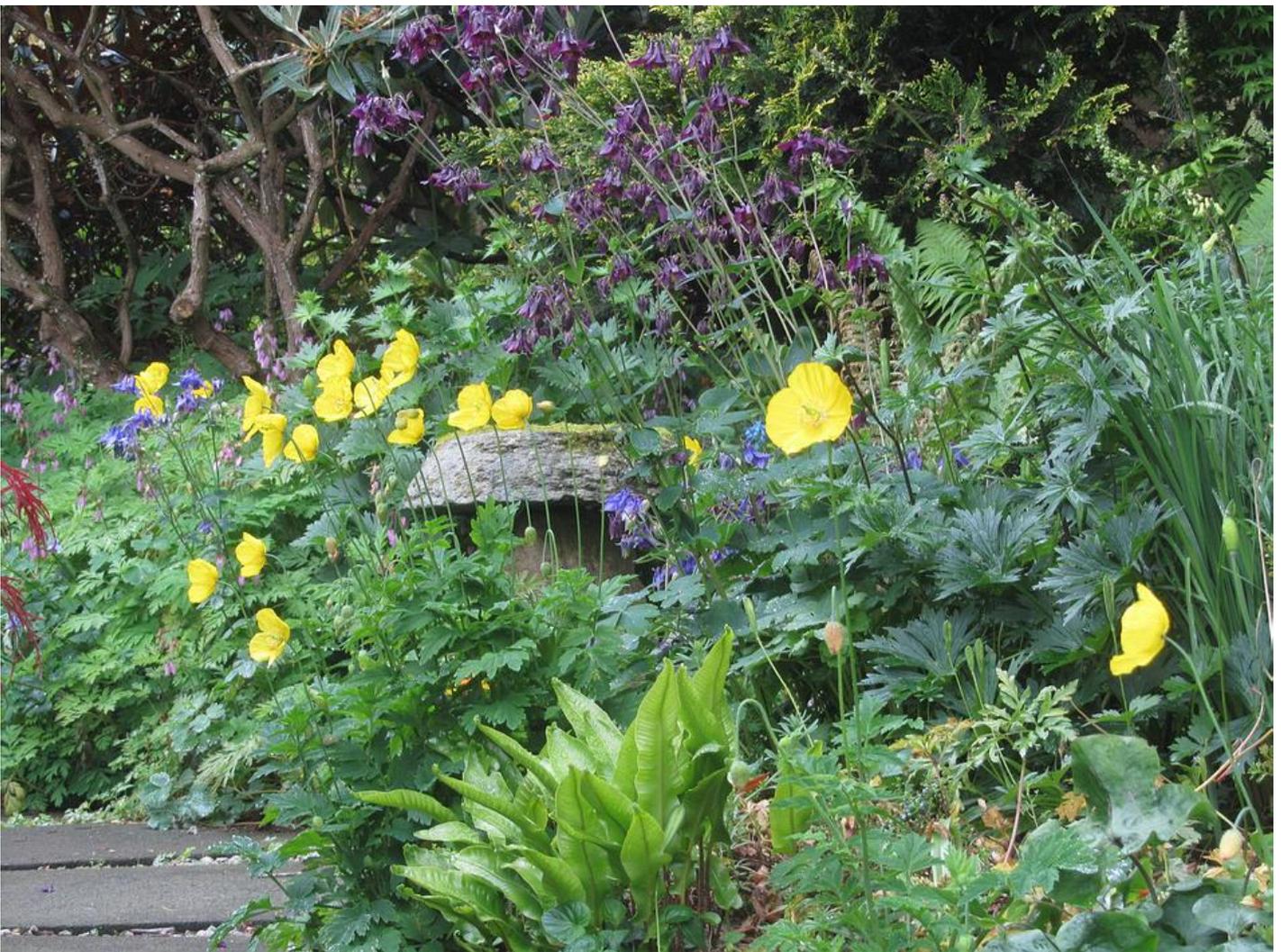


Meconopsis cambrica (some now call it *Papaver cambricum* but I am sticking with the name I am familiar with) and **Tulipa sprengerii**. These two images show the flowers but do not show how they work in the wider garden.

Meconopsis cambrica is among the many plants that seed freely around our garden, whether they are allowed to grow where they seed is our decision. Many are left to grow where they seed because they bring colour after the main growth of the spring bulbs most of which are now retreating underground for the summer. Here I use the trunks of a shrub to frame the image - a common way to allude to depth in a two dimensional image.



Zooming in on a subject from a distance using a long focal setting often gives a more pleasing, foreshortened picture than taking a similar view close-in, using a wide angle setting. Here you can also see some *Aquilegia* in flower another of the plants we allow to self seed.



Zooming out from the same position this picture adds more context as we see better how this group of plants fits in with its surroundings. It is always worth taking a number of pictures using different focal lengths and settings to show both the detail and the context also remembering to also use both landscape and portrait formats.

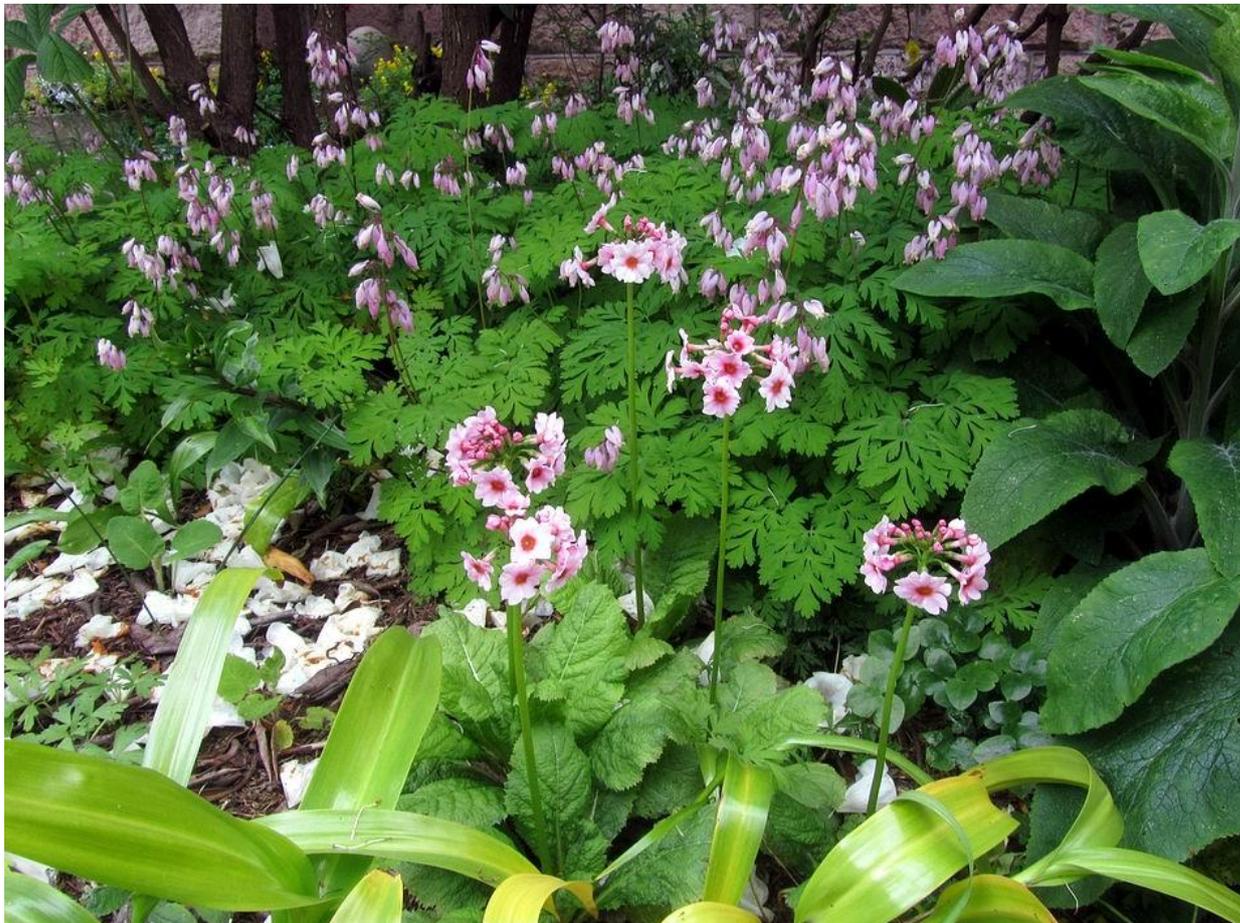


Previously when using slide film I took great care in deciding which picture to take because each one cost me money – now with digital photography it is the opposite, the more pictures you take the cheaper each image becomes because once you have bought the camera and memory card there are no further costs. Despite having two digital SLRs I still use my compact Canon PowerShot SX210IS for all the images you see – it is always in my pocket. Moving to the front

garden I use a low branch of a Sorbus as a framing device to add foreground and help the illusion of depth.



Both this and the previous picture give impressions of the front garden where our intention is to create the feel of a natural planting with carpets of plants.



It is important to record wide images to set a scene, such as those above, as well as moving in to record some details such as this colour harmony between **Primula japonica** and **Dicentra formosa**.



Galium odoratum and **Trillium kurabayashii** with its now well-chewed leaves. As gardeners we should learn to tolerate chewed leaves, to a degree, after all that is exactly what happens in nature and by this time in the season the leaves of the trilliums are starting to turn as they slowly retreat underground for summer. This, to remind you, is exactly the stage of growth when I would lift and split any trilliums see [Bulb Log 2213](#) for my explanation.

I also believe in allowing the leaves of bulbs to die back naturally, like these yellowing *Colchicum* leaves, this allows the bulbs to store maximum nutrients and for flower buds to form.

I see this as a natural part of the season to be enjoyed as much as the flowers which will appear in late August – September.





Gardens are always a work in progress, and here is a spot where spring bulbs such as Corydalis, Anemone, Crocus and Galanthus flowered - now I need to work out plants that will grow in harmony adding some interest at this time and this picture will act as a reminder.



As the leaves of the early bulbs yellow and die away in one of the main spring beds Arisaema, Dactylorhiza and Uvularia are taking their turn in the limelight.



Arisaema ciliatum and lily shoots emerge while the *Erythronium* seed pods ripen.



My pleasure from the garden is greatly extended by taking photographs a process that sees me continually looking for different angles, views and combinations of the same group of plants. Above is a view up the path towards a large planting of *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'. I just moved slightly to my right to take the next shot (left) using a branch of

Rhododendron elegantulum to frame this view.



The self-seeded Aquilegias come in a wide range colours from almost black through purple, blue, pink and white.





Celmisia semicordata in front of a planting of **Corydalis flexuosa**: to the right you will notice that the blue changes with **Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** making an appearance.



This closer image shows **Corydalis flexuosa** towards the front with the brighter sky blue flowers of **Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** behind.



This is the original area where I discovered the hybrid *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue' – the large patch in full colour was replanted last summer - you will find this plant grows best if lifted and split every few years.



***Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'**



Changing to a wider view puts these plantings into context showing how they sit within the garden.



View towards the pond.



Changing light can also be recorded by the camera and can have a huge effect on the final image – these two images were taken about 30mins apart from slightly different angles. Notice, below, how I have used a few brightly lit leaves as a frame to bring the foreground into play



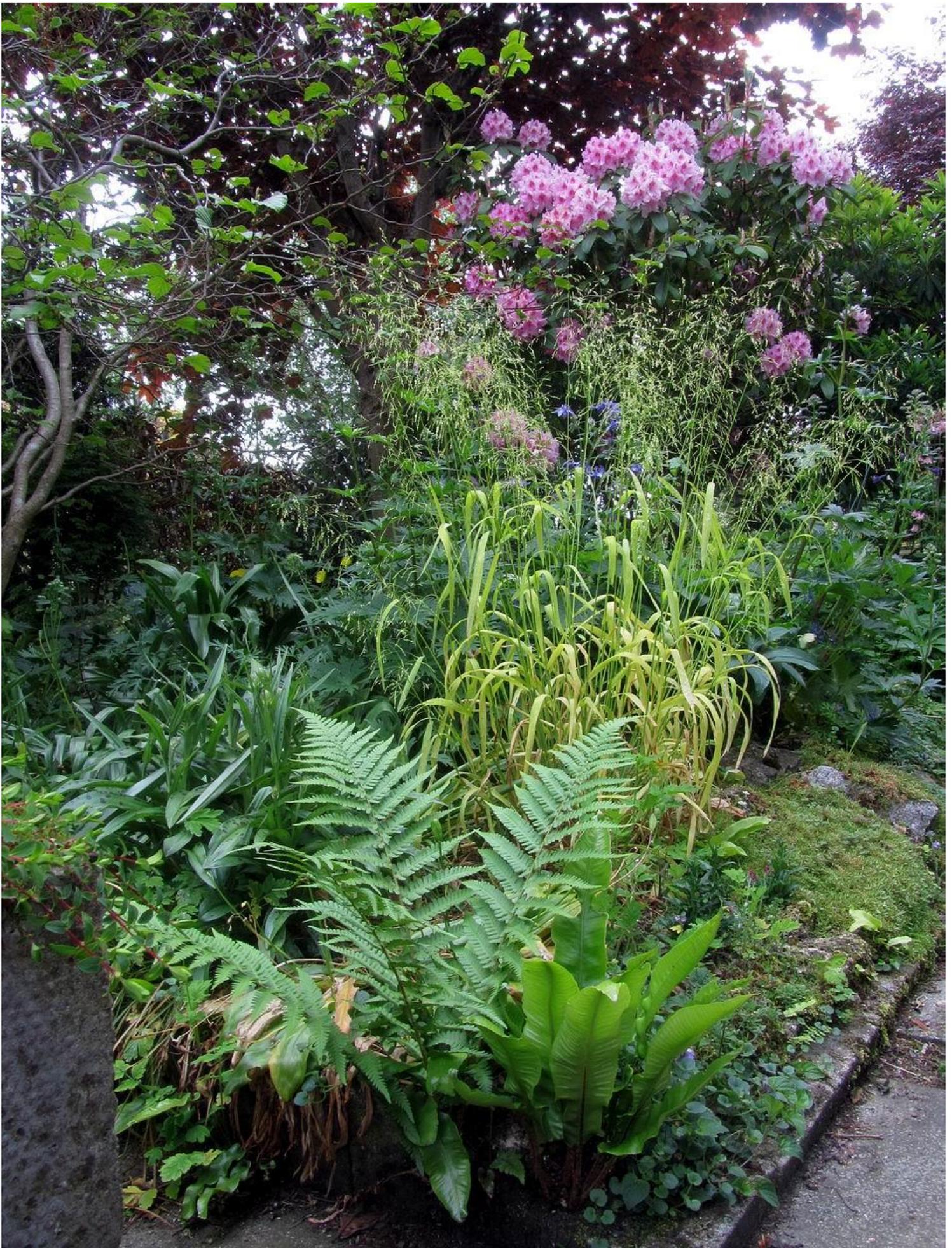


**Podophyllum
pleianthum**

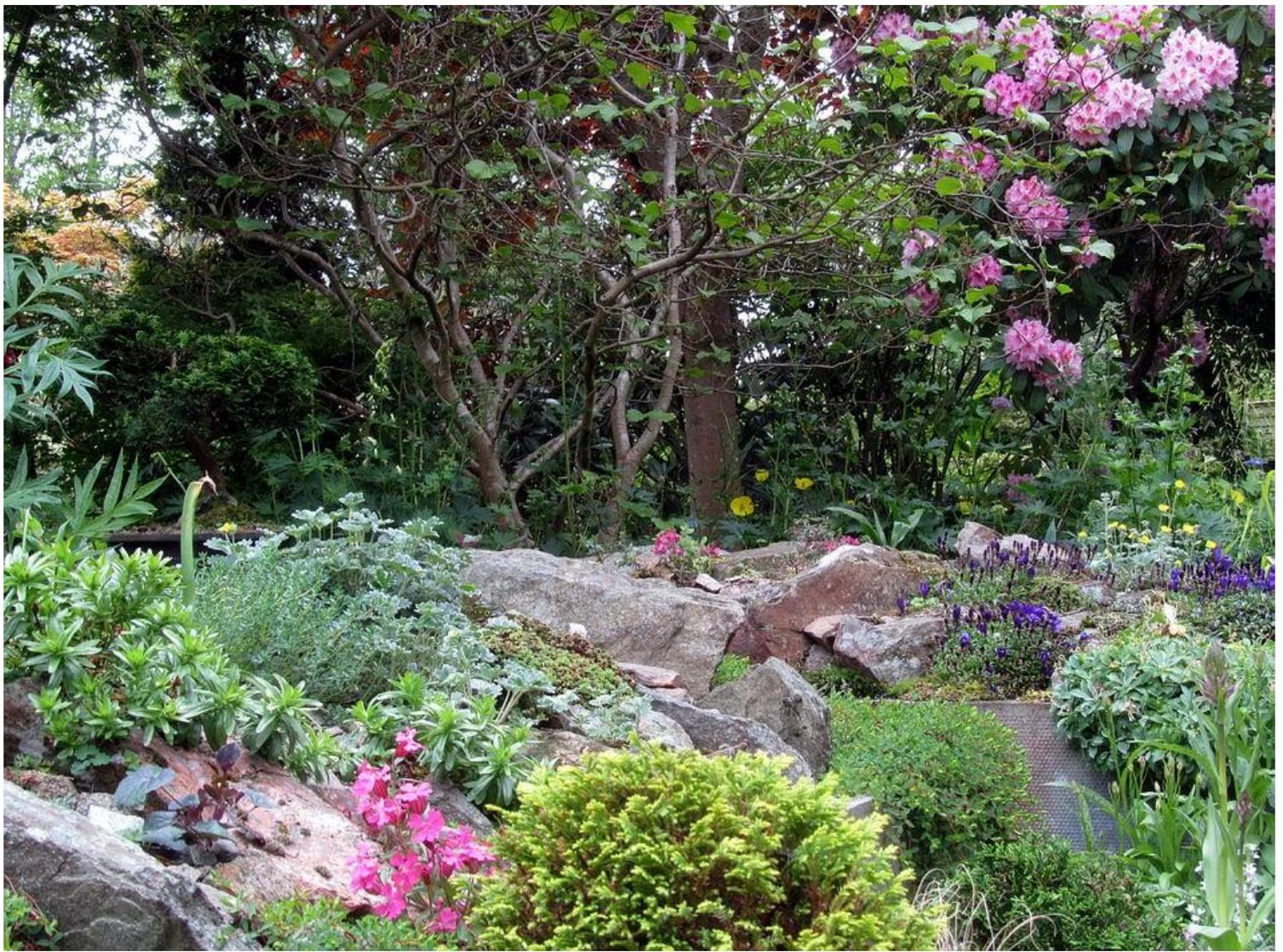
I have to get very low down to photograph the large, very dark purple flowers of Podophyllum pleianthum which hide themselves under its very large (53cms wide) leaves.



From this angle I can include the rock garden element of a raised slab bed as a foreground with Bowles' Golden Grass and the Rhododendron beyond.

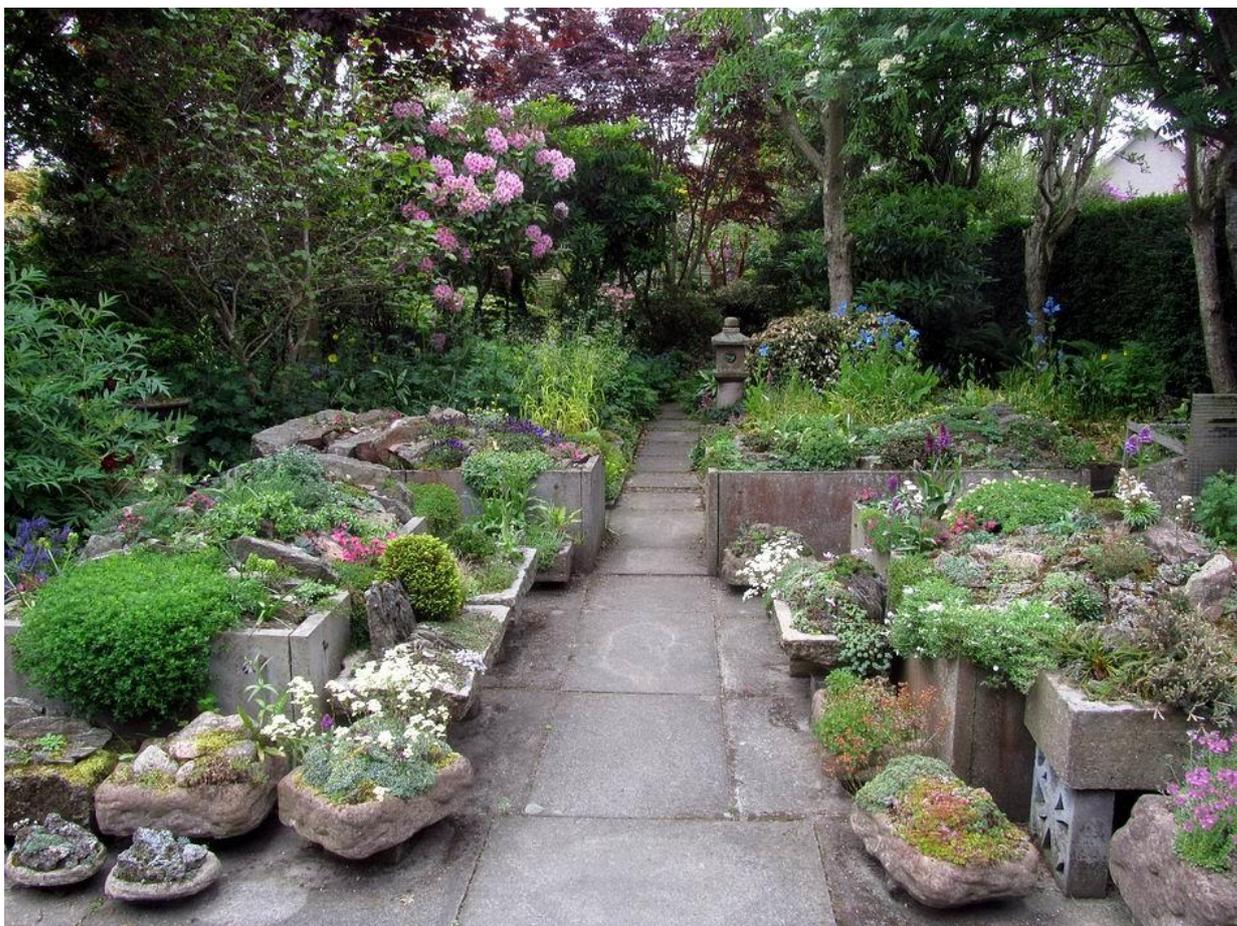


Changing angle and switching to a portrait format means I include all the elements of the ferns, grasses, Rhododendrons and trees that combine to make this scene attractive to me.



The layout of the various elements of our garden means that you can view them in isolation (as “rooms” as a garden designer might say!) but more importantly to me is that from certain positions and angles various elements can be

combined into a single landscape as shown above where we are looking over a number of troughs and slab beds towards the garden beyond.



Another wider angle gives a very different impression.



Edrianthus serpyllifolius with Potentilla pulvinaris and Silene caroliniana 'Red Wherry' which I featured last week in the bottom right corner. It has been pointed out to me that this beautiful pink Silene bears little resemblance to the wild Silene caroliniana and may be a form of a European species – I will refer to it as Silene 'Red Wherry'.



Most of the seedlings of **Edrianthus serpyllifolius** we have are rather spreading however one is very compact with a cushion-like growth.



Two more views to round off this week's Bulb Log both including the same planting of Edrianthus the first looking towards a self-sown group of Meconopsis, which also features on the front page.



And the last image for this week looking downwards across the slab bed : click the link to join me in a [Bulb Log video Diary Supplement version of the 700th Bulb Log](#).....

As a post script if you enjoy reading the Bulb Log perhaps you would like to make a donation to help fund the SRGC mission to encourage a worldwide interest in Plants and Rock Gardens..... [DONATE](#)