



SRGC

----- Bulb Log Diary -----

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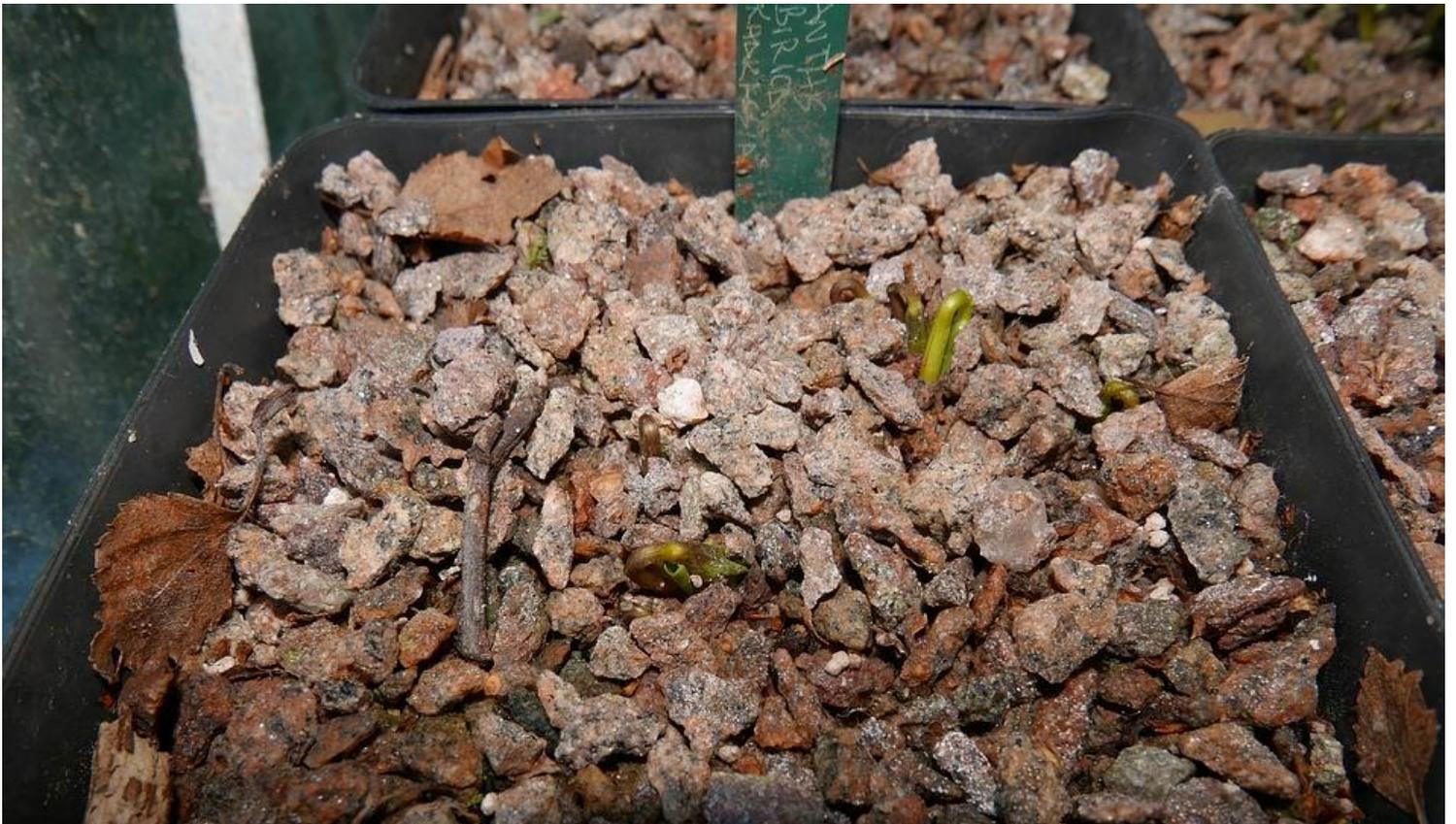
BULB LOG 03.....18th January 2017





Eranthis pinnatifida

I am often asked what my favourite plant is – my answer will depend on what time of the year you ask me - just now it is *Eranthis pinnatifida*. I just love the structures and colour combination of the flower when you look closely. The problem I have growing it is our weather, it is tempted into growth far too early during mild spells when the light is very low then the weather turns too cold for the flowers to develop fully - the cold conditions are also not conducive to a reliable seed set.



Eranthis sibirica

Eranthis sibirica is growing slower, hardly moved in the last two weeks. I hope the weather will be favourable for it to flower.



Eranthis stellata, above, shows how the Eranthis shoots come through the ground bent over with the top of the curve doing the pushing - this can cause damage as you can see the flower stem on the right has withered at the point of the curve.

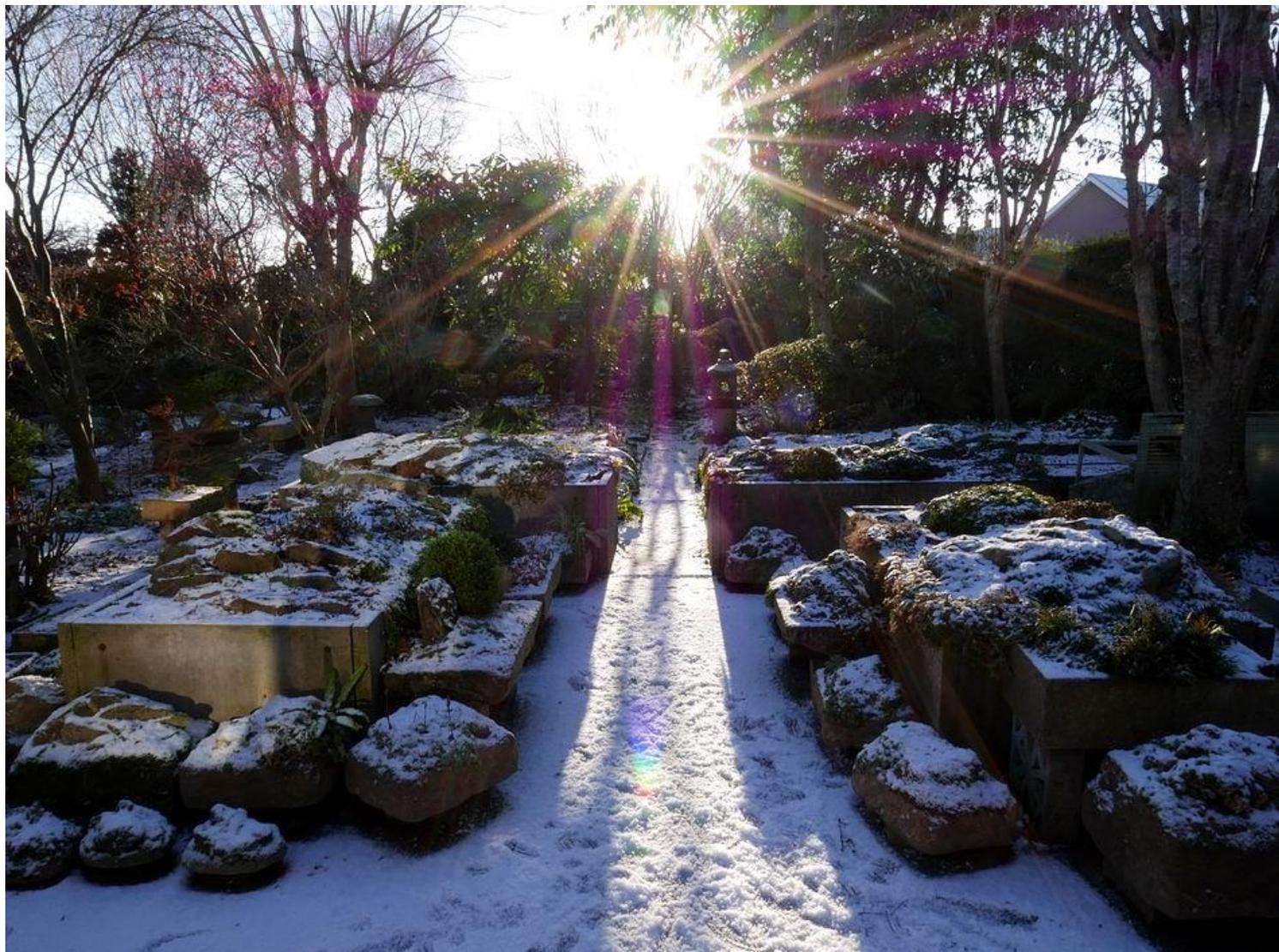
The majority of early bulbs push upwards using the point of the leaves which in many cases has a thickened reinforced tip to enable it to push through hard and often frozen ground – the Eranthis do not.

This form of **Eranthis pinnatifida** has managed to open its flower better but still has suffered some damage from slugs which are also a problem in mild winters.

Our weather this winter has been even more erratic than normal: one day we have double figure temperatures, up to 15C, then the next it is back to freezing with snow plus a severe wind chill making it especially confusing for the plants. Plant growth is often triggered by swinging temperatures and as we are going through many swings from freezing to mild many plants, not just the bulbs, are showing signs of early growth.

This is worrying as the statistics show the February/March are often the coldest of our winter.





I had thought that I might do a survey of the troughs in winter for this week but the snow has changed that.

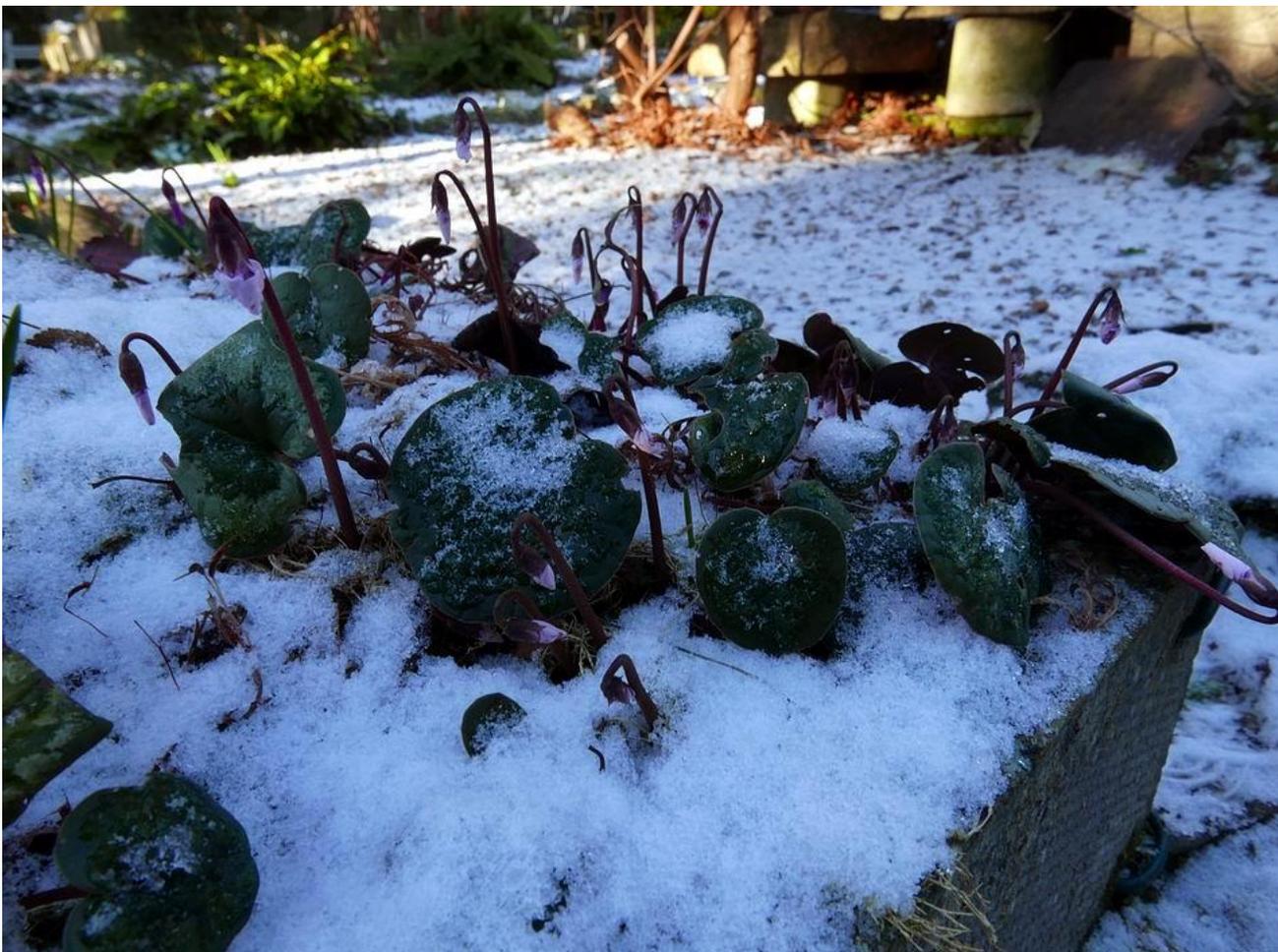


When the snow comes in from the Atlantic (west) we are protected by the Cairngorm Mountains which are to our west so we have only had a light covering of snow this time. It is when the weather comes from the north and the east that we experience heavy snow fall.



These snow covered beds will soon be full of colour starting with the Eranthis and Galanthus.





Molly likes to be out in the garden with me while her sister Megan prefers her warm bed on a day like this.

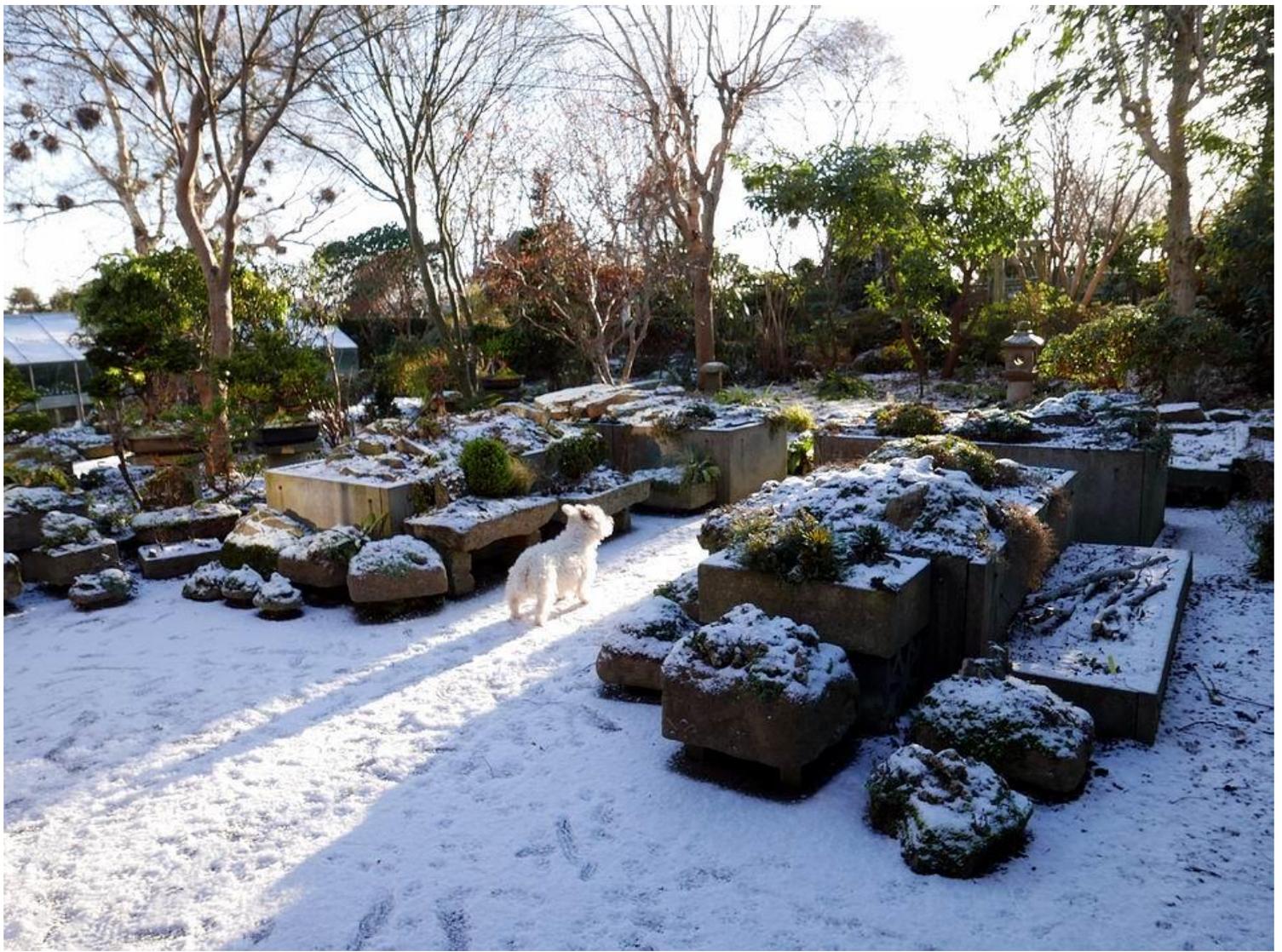
Cyclamen coum flowers continue to develop despite the cold. This picture shows the difference between light and shade in the winter garden.



This yellow flowered hellebore is always among the first of the genus to flower in our garden.



The buds of **Rhododendron ciliatum**, an early flowering species, are slowly expanding.



Molly views the garden from the trough area.



I would be very happy if the frames could be covered in snow from December until February however that is not going to happen in Aberdeen. The gaps you can see were left when I moved some pots of *Eranthis* under glass.



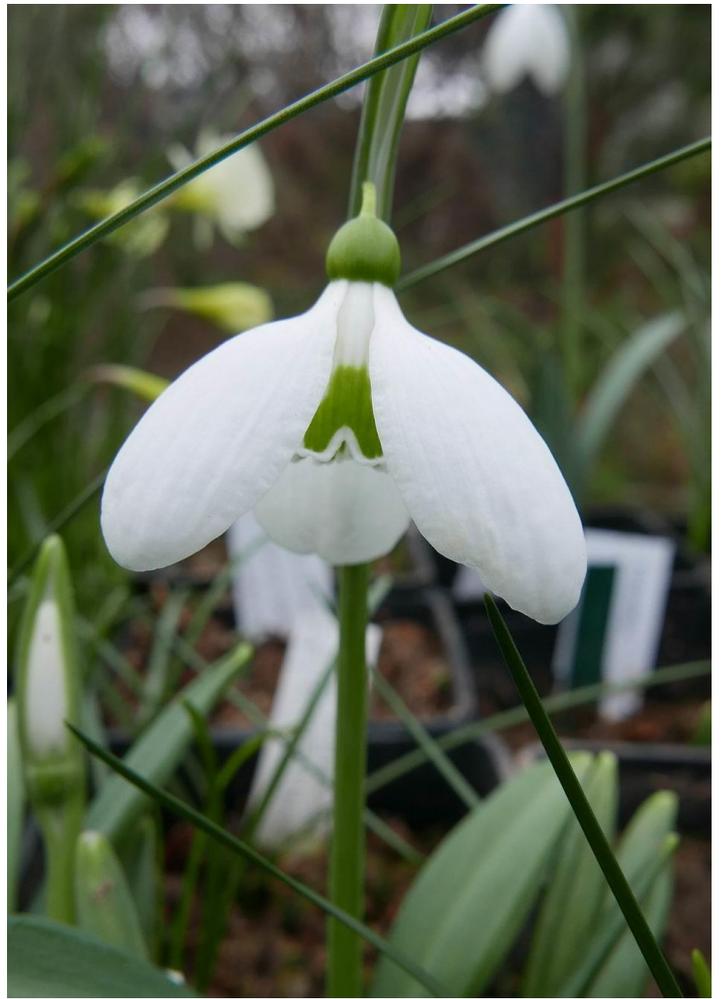
Snow drops living up to their name – some we grow in pots until I build up the number of bulbs then they will be planted out into the garden beds.



Looking towards the bulb houses where I can spend hours looking at hundreds of flowers at this time of year.



Galanthus 'Mrs McNamara'



Galanthus 'Glenorma'



Crocus laevigatus



Narcissus 'Camoro'



Narcissus romieuxii 'Mesatlanticus' I have used the quotes because I have long thought that this a horticultural form and not of wild origin, this opinion has been further reinforced after recently seeing a picture of *Narcissus romieuxii* var. *mesatlanticus* growing in the wild which was quite different to the cultivated ones.



Narcissus seedling – this is a single clone showing how the colour changes as the flowers develop.



Narcissus 'Craigton Chorister'



Narcissus seedlings



This **Narcissus bulbocodium** seedling displays a bicolor effect where the petals are significantly paler than the corona.



Above two flowers of the same clone, one of which has a split corona – this manifestation does occur occasionally, more often in some clones than others - I do not find it desirable.

It is fascinating to watch the way these narcissus flowers unfurl from the bud – the flowers continue to grow and expand for several days, or weeks depending on the temperature, after they break out from the bud.



Above and below are two more unnamed seedlings in the sand plunge which show the range in colour from pure white, above, to a good lemon yellow, below.



If you have not found it already check out the [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) that I posted last week looking at the hoop petticoat Narcissus in flower in the bulb house.



When the weather is suitable I continue to work in the garden. **Rhododendron pachysanthum** has beautiful foliage and makes a spreading shrub. We do not have enough space to allow it to form a beautiful mound all the way to the ground so, as with most shrubs in our garden, we have removed the lower branches to allow planting below. When we removed the lower branches a few years ago I left the lowest one in the foreground that extends out beyond the edge of the bed.



I wounded the underneath of the stem by slicing the bark then covered the stem in soil to encourage it to form roots. Now it has rooted sufficiently for it to be removed from the parent.



I would normally plant such layers in a different location in the garden but on reflection decided that it would be nice to replant this one further back in the space left below the shrub.



The new look is a subtle difference but takes the growth back from the path, gives more space at the front with the opportunity to cut back some of the upper spreading branches allowing the layer develop.



Once again light makes an image – the first picture I took of this view was dull until I found that slightly moving my position I could get the sun to shine through the Pieris creating a star burst then by using the flash I could put some colour into the foliage.....