



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 16.....15<sup>th</sup> April 2020



*Erythronium sibiricum*



*Erythronium sibiricum* with *Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss'* behind

There were no signs of these *Erythronium sibiricum* flowers a week ago, just some single leaves from the immature bulbs, which across the genus always appear a while before the flowering shoots emerge; now they are in full bloom. This explosion in growth has been fuelled by a combination of the warm sunny weather along with me watering them. It is a strange situation I find myself in because watering not just the frames but parts of the garden in Aberdeen in April is not something I am used to. We would normally be complaining about how much rain we are getting when the *Erythronium*s are flowering but this year we are in the middle of a long spell with

very little substantial rain and none is forecast for at least the next seven days. Across the garden I am noticing that the growth of the all plants including the *Erythronium* is that bit shorter than I have seen in previous years when there has been no shortage of water and when the rain does come I would expect to see the leaves and growth expand. One of the reasons that many of these plants grow well for us is down to our cool moist climate and even though it has been dry for some time the temperatures are relatively cool which means that the evaporation rate remains low. Our warmest day reached 16C but then the next day it was less than half that and as I write it is 5.9C at 11.43am so the plants are not put under stress as they would be if they are dry and under high temperatures.



***Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss'*** is a lovely *Erythronium hendersonii* hybrid – it is still quite new and so scarce in cultivation - there are other *hendersonii* hybrids around but this is the most exquisite one that I have seen.

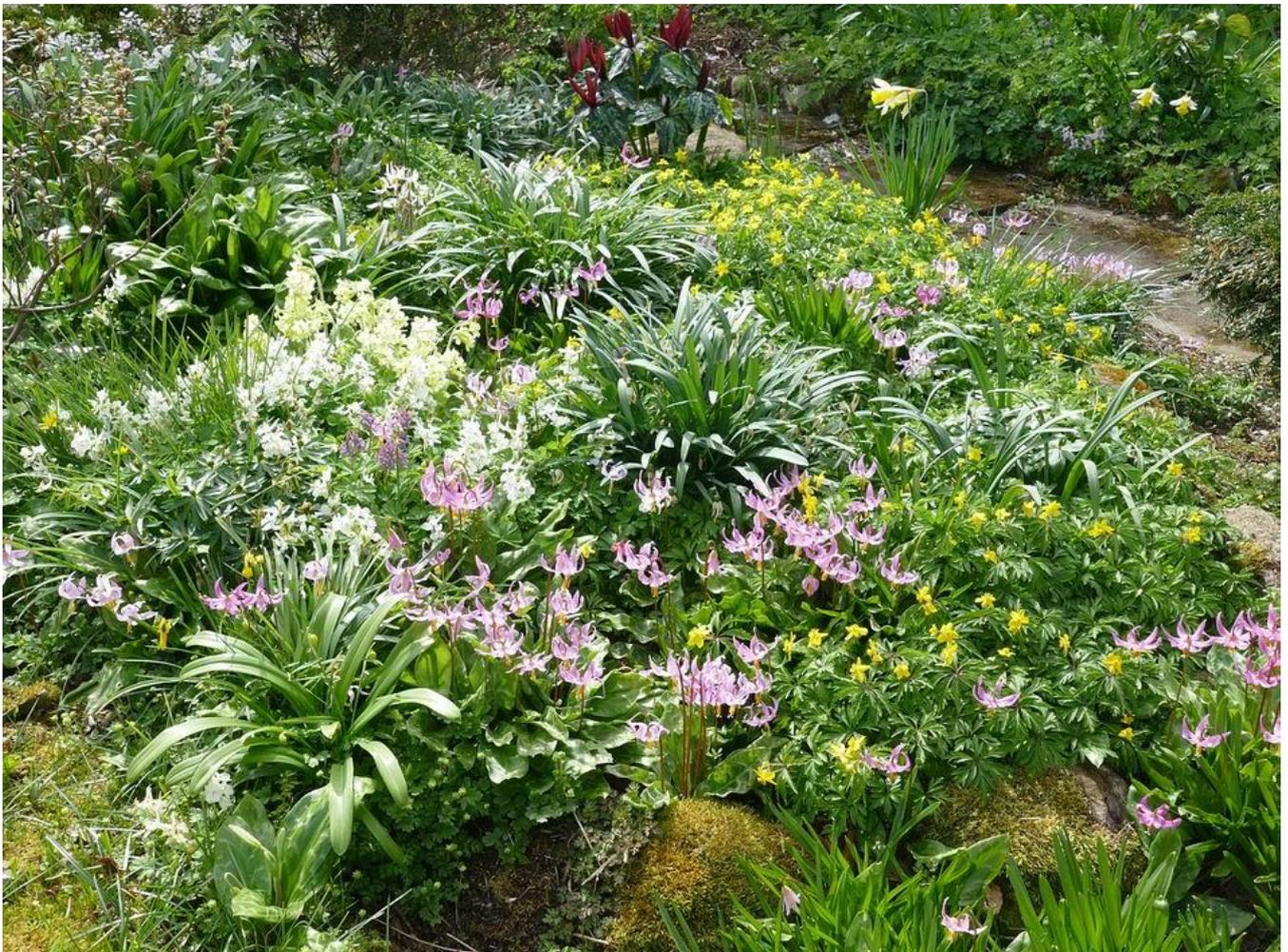
These are some of the many treasures growing in the new bed beside the pond which I am constantly visiting to see what is emerging and coming into flower.



Just as *Erythronium sibiricum* is coming into flower, the last of the related ***Erythronium dens-canis*** flowers are in full bloom and some of the earlier flowering forms of that species are now in seed.



**Erythronium revolutum flowers to the left and Erythronium dens-canis on the right.**



Dense multi layered plantings is our style in the garden - layered in both space and time so there is an ever - changing sequence of plants emerging in the same beds throughout the seasons.



**Corydalis malkensis and Primula veris x elatior**



A few weeks ago I mentioned that I was thinking of thinning out this **Anemone ranunculoides** and now I see the lack of flowers towards the centre I have decided it will benefit from being thinned out and replanted.



All the best flowered areas are towards the edges where it is escaping from the bed and heading towards the path further reinforcing the fact that in the wild many plants are constantly on the move seeking new ground. It is largely in gardens that we expect plants to become static and stay within our artificial boundaries.



**Anemone × lipsiensis** also called **Anemone x seemannii** is a hybrid between *Anemone nemorosa* and *ranunculoides*; it is also a great garden plant growing very well in both sun and full shade..



The pale flowers of *Anemone* × *lipsiensis* can be seen gradually spreading out towards the darker yellow flowers of one of its parents *Anemone ranunculoides*.



The flowers of the *Corydalis solida* and *C. malkensis* will soon be over but before they disappear back underground they will produce and shed some seed ensuring future generations.



Gardeners should be working with nature and encouraging this constant march of plants whether by underground rhizomes or seed - as you can see here the cluster of single seed leaves of the many newly germinating *Corydalis* advancing out into new ground from the front line of the dense growth.



Some plants are difficult to identify from the first seed leaves but there is no mistaking these ***Podophyllum hexandrum* seedlings** whose first leaves are a miniature version of the fully mature versions.



I do not want just a single mature version of a plant instead I want the whole sequence from newly germinating seed through all stages of the life cycle to mature and even on to senility. Here in this small area we have all ages of *Erythronium revolutum* from seed just germinating up to flowering sized plants.



***Erythronium revolutum*** is one of the best for seeding around in the garden and it loves to germinate in gravel paths – this self-seeded colony has taken possession of the narrow gravel strip between the paving slabs and the rock edges to the bed, which are completely hidden by the growth.



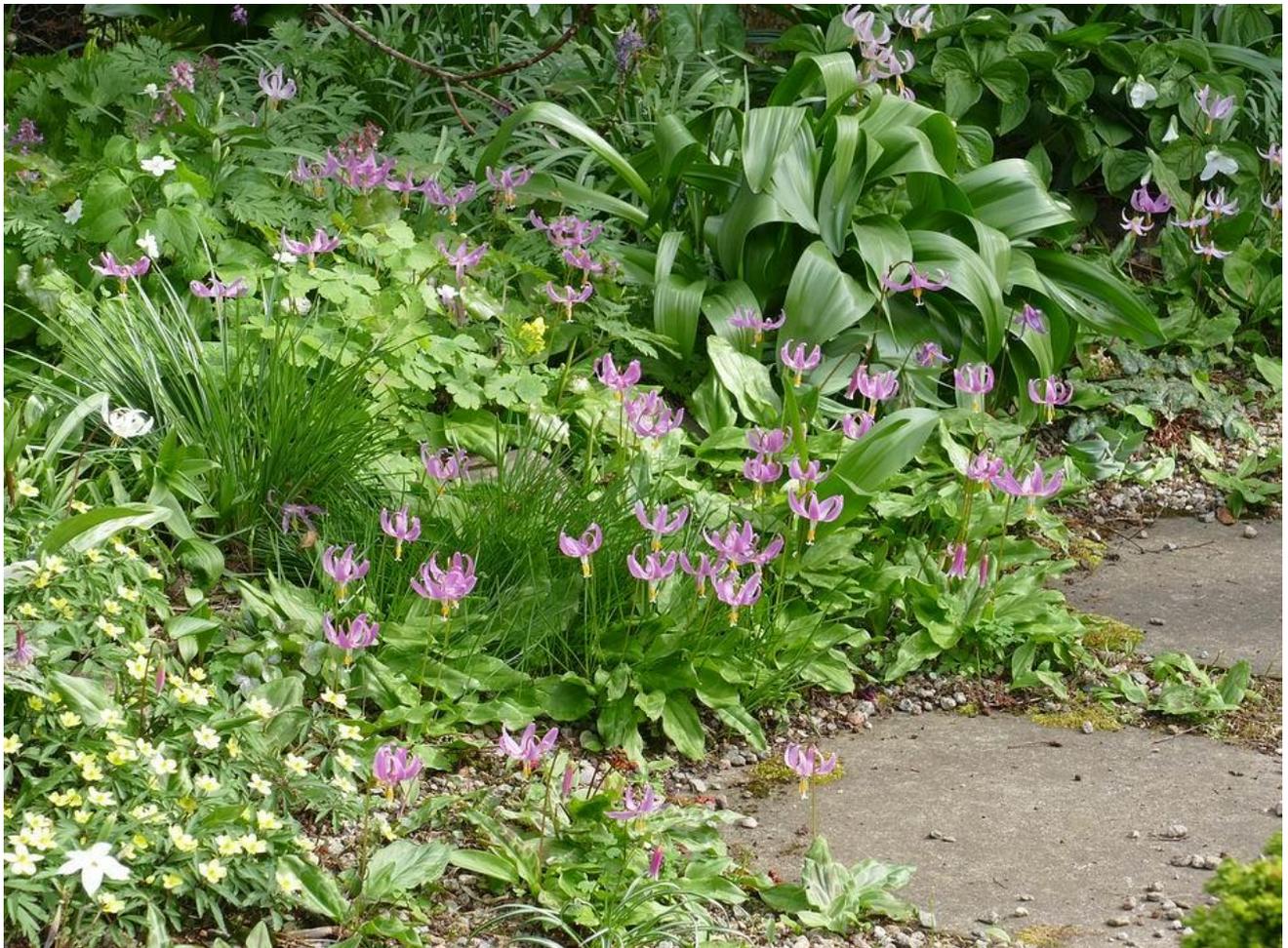
The pink flowers of *Erythronium revolutum* are also very happy rising up through the densely planted areas where just a few weeks ago *Galanthus* and *Leucojum* were among the early flowering bulbs putting on a display.



***Erythronium revolutum* seeded into the middle of *Celmisia walkeri*.**



The pink flowers of *Erythronium revolutum* currently dominate this naturalised area where the plants are left to seed around.



More *Erythronium revolutum* invading the gravel areas between the paving slabs.



**Erythronium revolutum**

Just as plant explorers would do when botanising in wild habitats I can spend many an hour going around exploring the variations within our seedling colonies of **Erythronium revolutum**. Even within our garden I can recognise local variations such as this group all of which have dark stems and flowers.





Sometimes something jumps out as different making a particular **Erythronium revolutum** plant standout such as this one which has attractive leaves but it was the full overlapping petals of the flower that attracted my attention.



**Erythronium revolutum**

Notice how on this form there is a substantial overlapping at the base of the petals.



**Erythronium revolutum**

Here are the flowers of the same plant viewed from the back.



**Erythronium revolutum**

Now compare that to a more typical shape of flower which has narrower petals with less of an overlap. It is these small variations that fascinate me as I walk around.



**Erythronium revolutum**

Compare again the variation between these two groups – note above the width, degree of overlapping and the colour shading of the petals. Superficially they look similar to those below but as you look in detail you will find a wide range of variation.



**Erythronium revolutum**



**Erythronium  
revolutum**

Here two seedlings have formed side by side clumps – the one on the left has pale coloured leaves, stems and flowers while on the right we see darker leaf markings, red stems and deeper pink flowers.



**Erythronium revolutum hybrid**

In many cases you have to look carefully to see the variation but then something jumps out from the crowd like this one with very dramatic markings on the leaves and dark stems holding multiple bicoloured flowers with pale markings on the deep pink petals.



***Erythronium revolutum* hybrid**



How I identify this as hybrid rather than just another variation of *Erythronium revolutum* is by a combination of features namely the dark red zonal markings and more significantly by the shape of the filaments that connect the pollen bearing anthers to the petals. In the species, below, the filaments broaden out dramatically towards the base while in the hybrid above they are in between that shape and the narrow shaped filaments found in *Erythronium californicum* which also has the dark red zonal marks and is most likely to be the pollen parent of this hybrid.



***Erythronium revolutum***



Another common feature of **Erythronium hybrids**, including those of involving *Erythronium revolutum*, is that they generally clump up more readily than the pure species. The large clumps of leaves seen here represent a group of *Erythronium revolutum* hybrids.



I have some **Erythronium revolutum hybrids** that I am trialling by growing them in plunge baskets where I can check how well they grow and how readily they increase – they will need to stand out to be given a name.



The leaves on the trees are just emerging and in a few weeks when the canopy is complete the garden will take on a different atmosphere.



***Erythronium revolutum* and *Erythronium americanum***



**Erythronium revolutum**

I will round off this week with one more picture of *Erythronium revolutum* and encourage you to invite nature into your garden and unleash its power.....

During the week I uploaded a [Bulb Log Video Diary](#) about the bulbs growing in sandbeds in the bulb houses and Connor Smith has launched the [Scottish Rock Podcast](#) the first podacst, 'It's all a little bit Greek', went on a few weeks ago - it is a great listen and by the time you read this the second one, Connor in conversation with myself discussing Erythroniums should be available just click on the link to listen or download it to your device.