



SRGC

# Bulb Log Diary

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Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 07.....12<sup>th</sup> July 2023





Beware there is an artist loose in the garden. Everything in nature is a perfect mixture of order and chaos which I try to imitate in both my art and the garden. I treat the garden, where I practise and explore my creativity, as another medium alongside drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and photography. I love the seasonal visual effect of this **Lilium pyrenaicum** growing up through a **Thalictrum** with a background of varying foliage shapes.



The garden is layered up with a mixture of plants that grow and flower at different times of the year so they can share the same space bringing very different seasonal effects to a garden bed. Nature adds to the plants we have raised as seeds arrive on the wind or with the wild life that shares our garden. It is then our choice if they are accepted and allowed to grow or not. We are all subjected to a learned experience where tidy is good, 'weeds' are bad, so should not be allowed. This small group of paintings are similarly layered up with heavy

texture with the intention of expressing the effect of time starting from the ground building up to a crescendo of colourful plants expressing all of nature's chaos and beauty.



***Leucanthemum vulgare* (Ox-eye Daisy)**

I look to the local nature for my inspiration such as this lovely grassland, surrounding a local underground reservoir, made up of mostly fine grasses and wild flowers.



***Pilosella officinarum* (Hawkweed)**



Every day as I walked past I admired the changing colours of the wild flowers and the forms and textures of the grasses which combined to attract many birds, butterflies and insects.



And then the next day I was angry, upset and disappointed to find this. Compare the previous pictures of the same area with this and decide which you think is best. I know my opinion and cannot think of any operational reason for the area to have been cut in this way at this time of year. I will be writing to Scottish Water who I would have thought would be more environmentally aware than this.



No one could describe our garden as 'tidy'. There are some who think our front drives are scruffy and all the plant life should be eradicated from them however nature gives us permission to be bold in our choices. Passersby also see and enjoy the beauty in the changing array of plants that grow and flower in the drives through the season.



We may have originally introduced the plants shown here but we did not physically plant any of them where they are now growing. This is the result of the natural process of seeding and running by stolons in the case of the white flowered *Galium oderatum*.

It is especially at this time of year, when the early flowering bulbs and plants have retreated underground for the summer, that the garden relies on those self-seeding plants to provide the colour and attract the insects and wild life. We have a lot of the small wild strawberry growing in the cracks between the slabs but this is a colony of the larger berried plants that must have self-seeded from some of the cultivated forms.



The orange and yellow flowers of **Papaver cambricum** spread out across the garden bringing a harmony that also draws your eye across the garden.



Aquilegia hybrids in a range of colours have evolved from the original species we introduced - these also seed around forming another important part of the summer display in the garden.



Self-seeded Aquilegia, Papaver and grasses combine and create interesting vignettes above the resting bulbs.

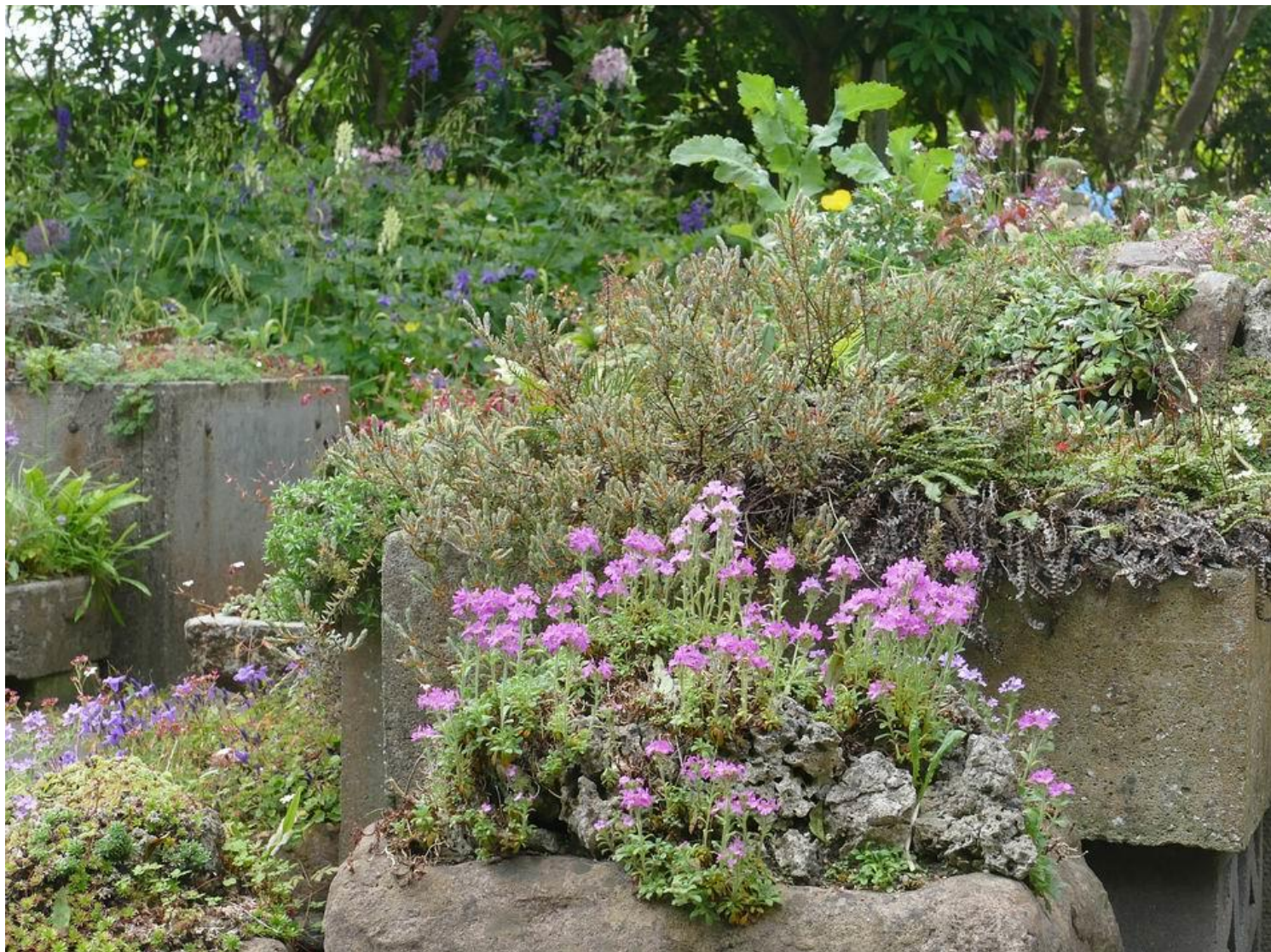


Another of the volunteer plants that seeds around well is **Linaria purpurea**. It comes in a range of colours from pink to deep purple and the bees love it as much as we do. We do exercise some degree of control over these mass seeding plants by cutting the stems back after the flowers fade and before the seed matures. This reduces an excess of seedlings and encourages extra growth at the leaf axils lower down the stems often resulting in further flowers.



Sometime these plants seed into the slab beds, where as long as they will not harm the smaller more alpine type plants, we let them flower.

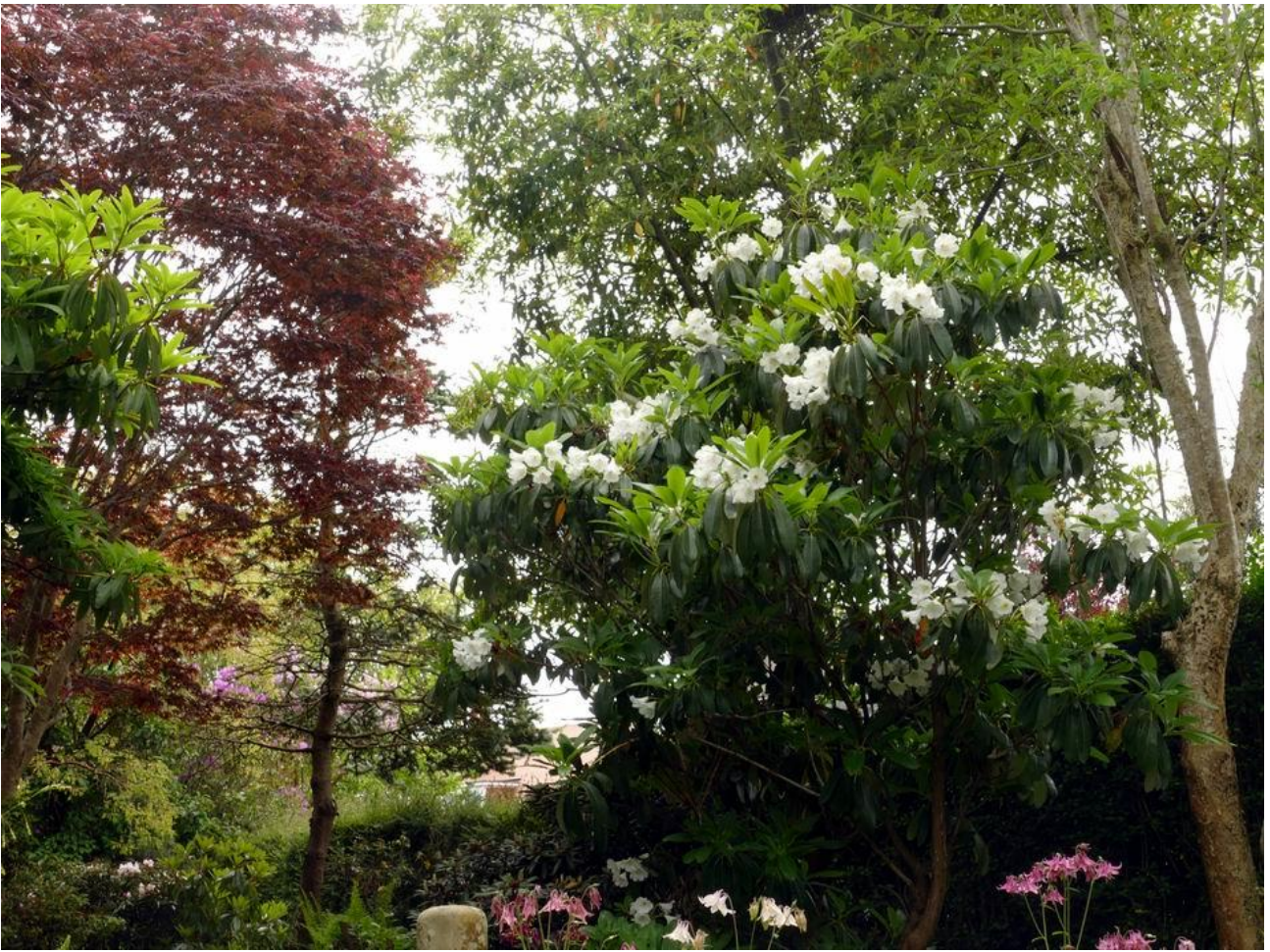




***Eranthis alpinus*** is a good self-seeder and is a perfect scale for growing among the troughs and raised beds.

The small Daphnes have not survived long term growing unprotected in our garden but this small white form we were given as a tiny grafted plant has grown for several years now. On the subject of scale you may note a similar white flowered plant beyond the focus in the background.





Although much larger I find the proportion of white flowers to leaves of this *Rhododendron* sp. similar to that of the wee daphne shown above, both are also beautifully scented.



Talking of scent leads me nicely on to ***Paeonia emodi***. This is one of a number of peonies that have also flowered during the past month including two of my favourite species shown here.



***Paeonia veitchii* var. *woodwardii***



Both of these species appear in this picture and while *Paeonia veitchii* var. *woodwardii* is obvious, seeding around in the foreground, you will have to look more carefully to spot the white flowers of *Paeonia emodi*.



**Doronicum orientale** has been a star for much of the past four weeks. Its succession of yellow flowers shines out like small sunflowers bringing colour to the shaded area under a large birch tree.



Like many of the genus we grow **Arisaema wilsonii** seems to pop up suddenly starting with the flowers which are soon overtopped by the expanding foliage.



***Arisaema wilsonii***



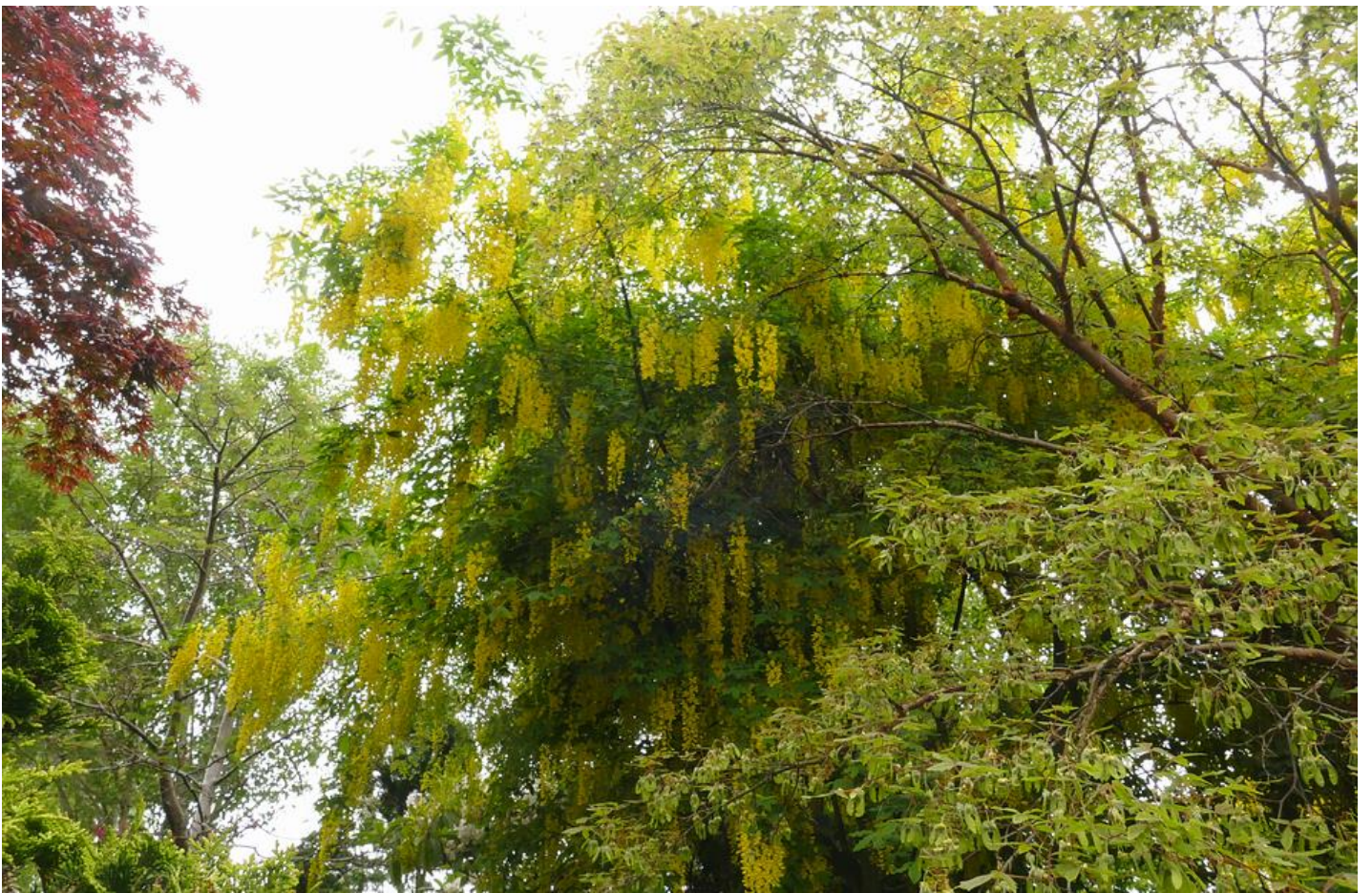
***Arisaema ciliatum* var. *liubaense***



While it is often the self-seeding plants that grab your initial attention, especially at this time of year, you are rewarded by closer inspection as you may spot other less common plants growing in harmony in the jungle.



**Cypripedium cultivar**



My eyes are drawn upwards by the hum of bees coming from the trees which bring their own seasonal spectacle. The spectacular yellow flowers of the Laburnum flowering among the varying leaves of the Acers and Birches.





The success of a garden is not about the plants you grow but the way you grow them and what I love are the changing combinations that develop though the seasons and years.



The yellowing leaves lying on the ground are evidence of the many bulbs that flowered earlier in the year.





A number of lilies have been flowering including different colour forms of **Lilium mackliniae**.



**Lilium mackliniae**



**Lilium martagon**





**Meconopsis baileyi** leads me to mention the changing weather we are all experiencing in our gardens and the challenges that brings to the plants. The unfamiliar hot dry conditions we had this time last year resulted in the Meconopsis producing smaller plants with fewer flowers this year. These plants require cool moist conditions to grow strongly as they have for decades. Fortunately although we had a hot dry spell in June it did not last too long before the more familiar wet conditions returned so I am hopeful that these plants will grow better this year.

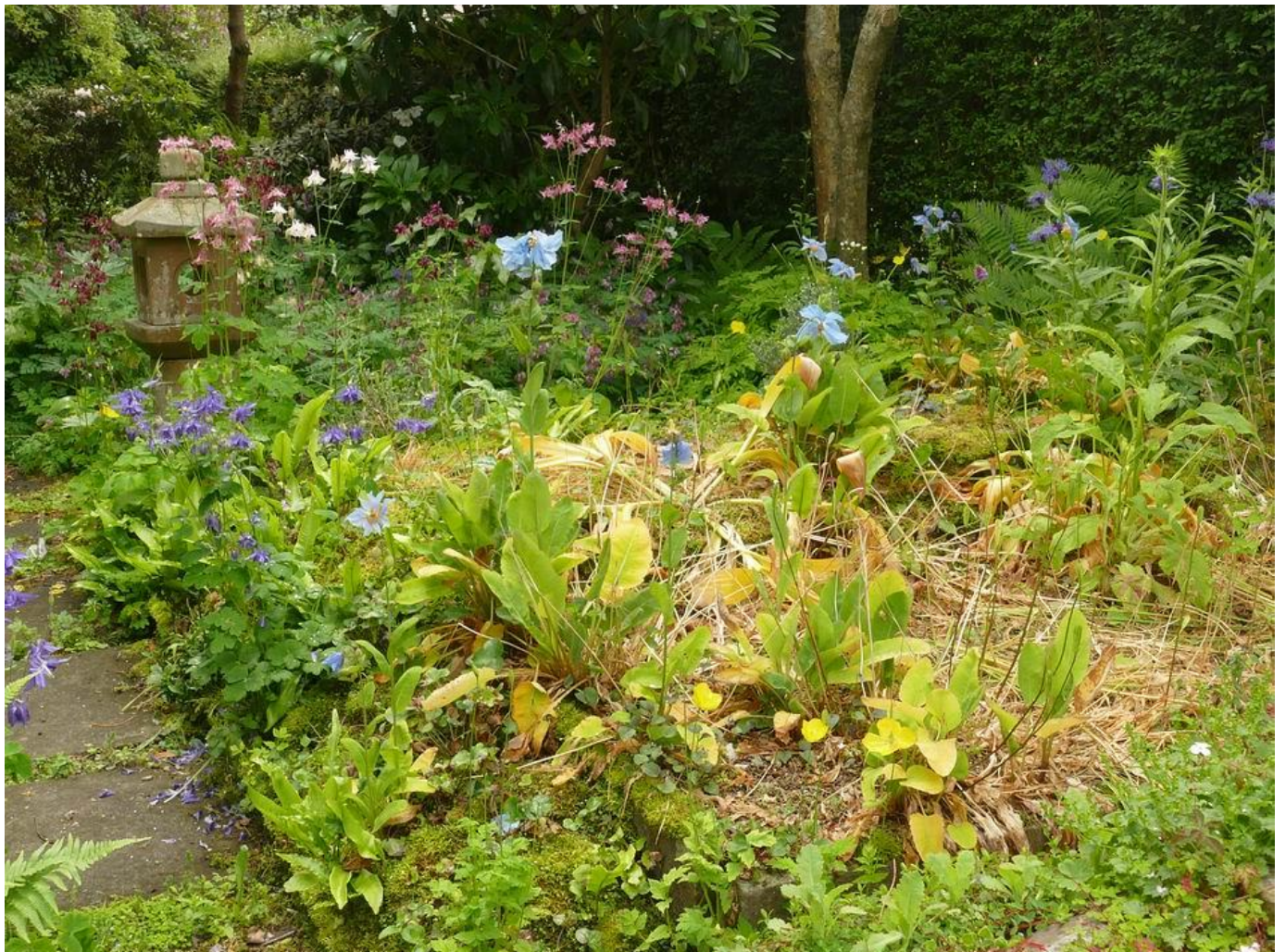
Sadly we are seeing many of the plants we grow are coming under significant pressure as the climate changes. An increase of half a degree may not sound a lot but it can push some plants beyond their tolerance and we are facing a rise of more than that and one of the consequences is the changing and increasing erratic pattern of rain fall.



There will always be plants that we can grow in our gardens but they may not be the same as we have now.

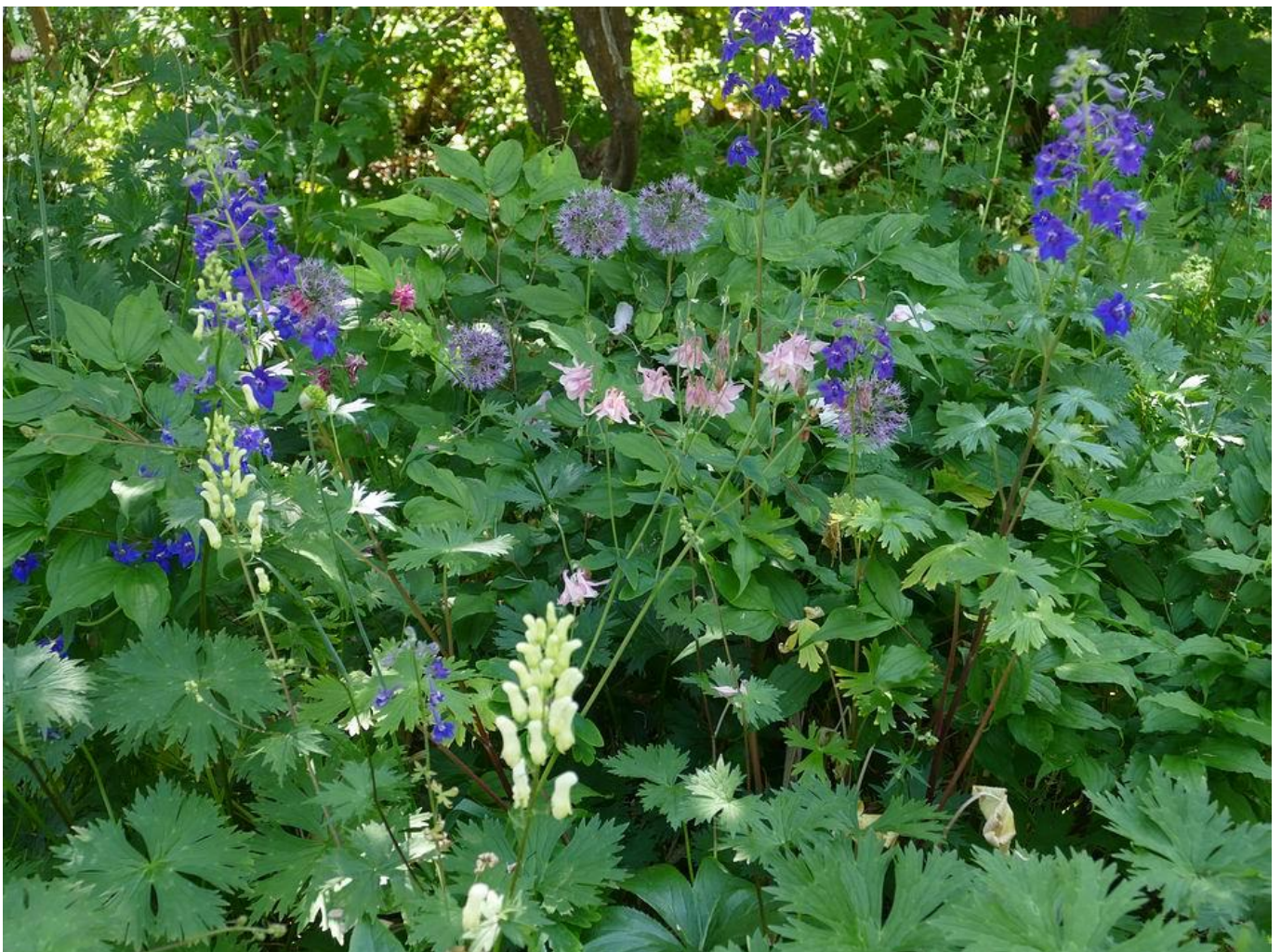


***Centaurea montana* growing with *Meconopsis baileyi***





The growth of foliage is at a peak in the summer garden it is interspersed by the colourful highlights of the flowers.



**Aconitum, Allium, Aquilgia and Delphinium.**



A jungle of growth has now sprung up across the very same beds where the many bulbs flowered earlier this year.



***Aconitum lycoctonum***



***Digitalis purpurea***

Part of the reason that many of the plants that seed around so freely are successful is that they have a greater tolerance allowing them to adapt and thrive in a wider range of ground and weather conditions.



Such plants have evolved to produce lots of seeds which mature and flower relatively quickly. Each subsequent generation adapts through natural selection to any changing conditions. Cultivars and plants raised clonally have a fixed tolerance so cannot adapt in this way. Maybe in these changing climatic conditions we can learn to

appreciate such willing and adaptable volunteer plants in our gardens.



In recent years we have lost a lot of the *Dactylorhiza* we had in the garden to black spot diseases but a new generation of seedlings is emerging with a number of plants across the garden. It is my hope that eventually again through the wonder of natural selection we can get a population that has a resistance to such diseases.



A visit to the seaside 2 miles away and visible from our garden I find *Dactylorhiza* are among the many plants growing on the steep slopes down to the beach. Look carefully and you will spot their purple spires rising among the grasses especially in the wetter seeps.





Higher up the drier slopes among the grasses the colour includes Potentilla, Heather and Hogweeds.



It is not just pictures and inspiration that I bring home from the seaside. It usually results in me making something from the flotsam and jetsam I find there such as this small construction.



I will continue to try and capture the colour and chaos of nature in both our garden and my art.

I made these masks this week from some drift wood I found on the beach. It is not difficult to suggest a face and it is just as easy to allow nature into your garden.

We all wear masks but please be bold, shed any masks, and let your true self come through in your garden.

Allow your creativity to grow without concerns of what others may be consider to be tidy or wild. It is your garden; it can be what you want.

Now a link to the [Bulb Log Video Diary](#) that I posted since the last bulb log.

Art in the garden - the garden is art.....