



SRGC



Bulb Log Diary



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BULB LOG 04.....17th April 2024



For the first twenty years, I wrote the Bulb Log (BL) every single week covering what was going on in the garden. Since 2023 I have cut back to a monthly edition and I have had to adjust to the fact that there can be big changes in the growth and flowers in that time, especially at this time of year, and I only share highlights. Some of you may have wondered why the Bulb Log period now goes from mid-month to mid-month and does not follow a calendar month which may seem a more logical thing to do, well here is the reason. The free and open online magazine [The International Rock Gardener \(IRG\)](#) goes online at the end of a month and we wanted to avoid two publications appearing on the site at the same time hence I choose the middle of the month posting date for the BL.

While on this subject of the IRG I am delighted to state that [The North American Rock Garden Society](#) has honoured **Margaret (Maggi) Young** with the **Carleton R. Worth Award** in recognition of her outstanding work as **Editor** of **The International Rock Gardener** since its first appeared in January 2010 totaling 170 editions and counting.

No one knows more than me how much work and dedication Maggi puts into delivering the IRG. She spends hours liaising with the authors, editing and sometimes also translating articles that are submitted then searching for additional pictures and permissions if required to complete or enrich an article. She is constantly encouraging more people to submit articles to be shared openly with the world wide rock gardening and plant community.

It is simply true to say that without Maggi, and of course the authors, The International Rock Gardener would not appear so I am delighted that her dedicated work has been recognised by NARGS with this prestigious award: this is one very proud husband.



This month has seen the garden transforming from the large areas of warm colour such as **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** brings, to a more subtle stage when for a while green became the dominant colour then back to more flower colour. The weather has such an effect on how the garden displays each year because the same plants can, in favourable conditions, share at least part of the flowering time but this year it has turned cold and very wet again so as flowers start to go over they are not being replaced by the next sequence of flowers which are waiting for the weather to turn. At the start of the month, or should I say four week period, the flowers of **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** took over as those of the earlier flowering **Eranthis hyemalis** faded. Although I have heard some reports of **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** producing seed the form that we have, which we got from the late Kath Dryden some forty years ago, has never produced any seed but it does increase as the tuber expands and separates.



So all the plants we have of **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** are clones of that original small tuber. I showed the flowers just emerging last month but here they are in full bloom and are joined by some other early risers such as **Narcissus cyclamineus** and **Erythronium caucasicum**.





We are slowly increasing the population of **Erythronium caucasicum** in the garden: it is slow because the bulbs generally do not increase clonally so we are dependent on seed.



In line with our methods this group of **Erythronium caucasicum** are allowed to self-seed and are slowly forming an expanding colony.



This plant looks superficially similar to the previous species however closer inspection of the anthers, which provide a good indicator of the species, confirm they are purple rather than golden yellow so I can identify this as a white form of **Erythronium dens-canis**.



This dark form of **Erythronium dens-canis** always flowers earlier than the paler pink coloured ones; here it opens and reflexes in the warmth of the sunshine



An early flowering form of **Erythronium tuolumnense** is also in full flower well ahead of other seedlings which flower up to four weeks later.



Another yellow flowered species is **Erythronium grandiflorum** and again seed raised plants will extend the flowering period with different clones flowering weeks apart.



Early in this period the **Cyclamen coum** was looking magnificent in full flower but, as I write towards the end of the four weeks, the flowers are all but over.



While photographing the Cyclamen I noticed **Crocus pelistericus** was also flowering.



In the shaded area at the south edge of the garden the same plants flowers later than they would in the sunnier parts so the snowdrops are still flowering and Crocus flowers are just coming out but this scene will quickly change.



Following the lead of the bulbs that have self-seeded into the walls I have also planted some bulbs into the walls such as these *Crocus tommasinianus* where I think they look very happy and natural.



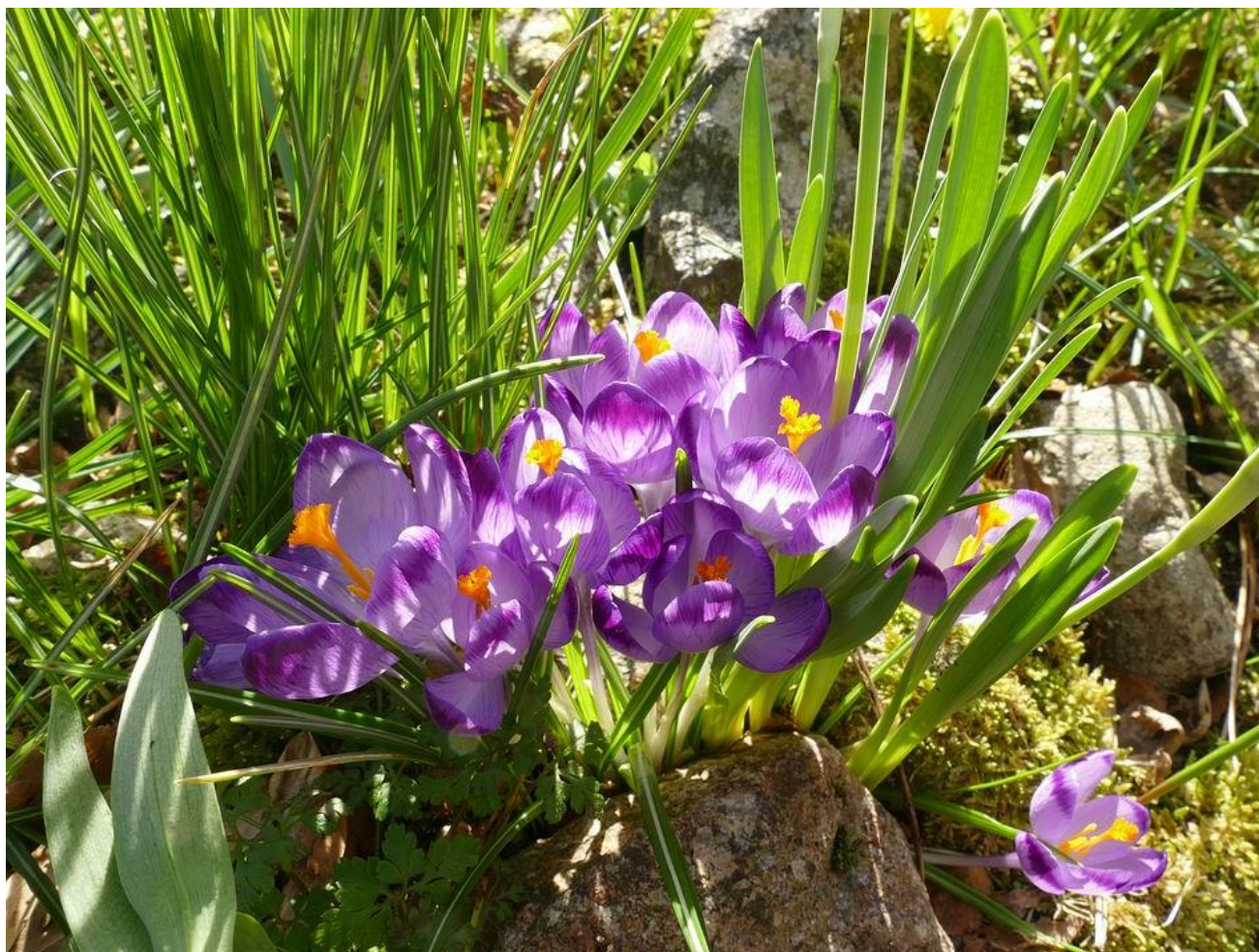
Crocus tommasinianus growing crevice style in this low raised wall.



Crocus heufelianus is a great plant in our garden it increases well clonally as you can see from this clump formed in a few years from a single corm and it also seeds itself around producing a range of colours always with the typical dark 'M' shape towards the top of the floral segments.



In the warm sunshine **Crocus heufelianus** reveals its flamboyant golden style which contrasts beautifully with the delicately shaded petals.



This is a darker coloured form of **Crocus heufelianus**.

This has also been the prime flowering period for the *Corydalis* which mix and merge in harmony with many other plants in a range of habitats. Once again these are mostly left to seed themselves although as the seeds don't travel far from the parent plant I do occasionally grab a handful of seeds scattering them into other spots where I would like them to appear.



Hepatica nobilis and ***Corydalis solida*** are excellent companions; both seeding around in this small landscape formed from moss covered concrete.



This is a wider view showing this small landscape at the edge of the path rising up to the *Erythronium* plunge which is currently full of *Corydalis malkensis* and *solida*.



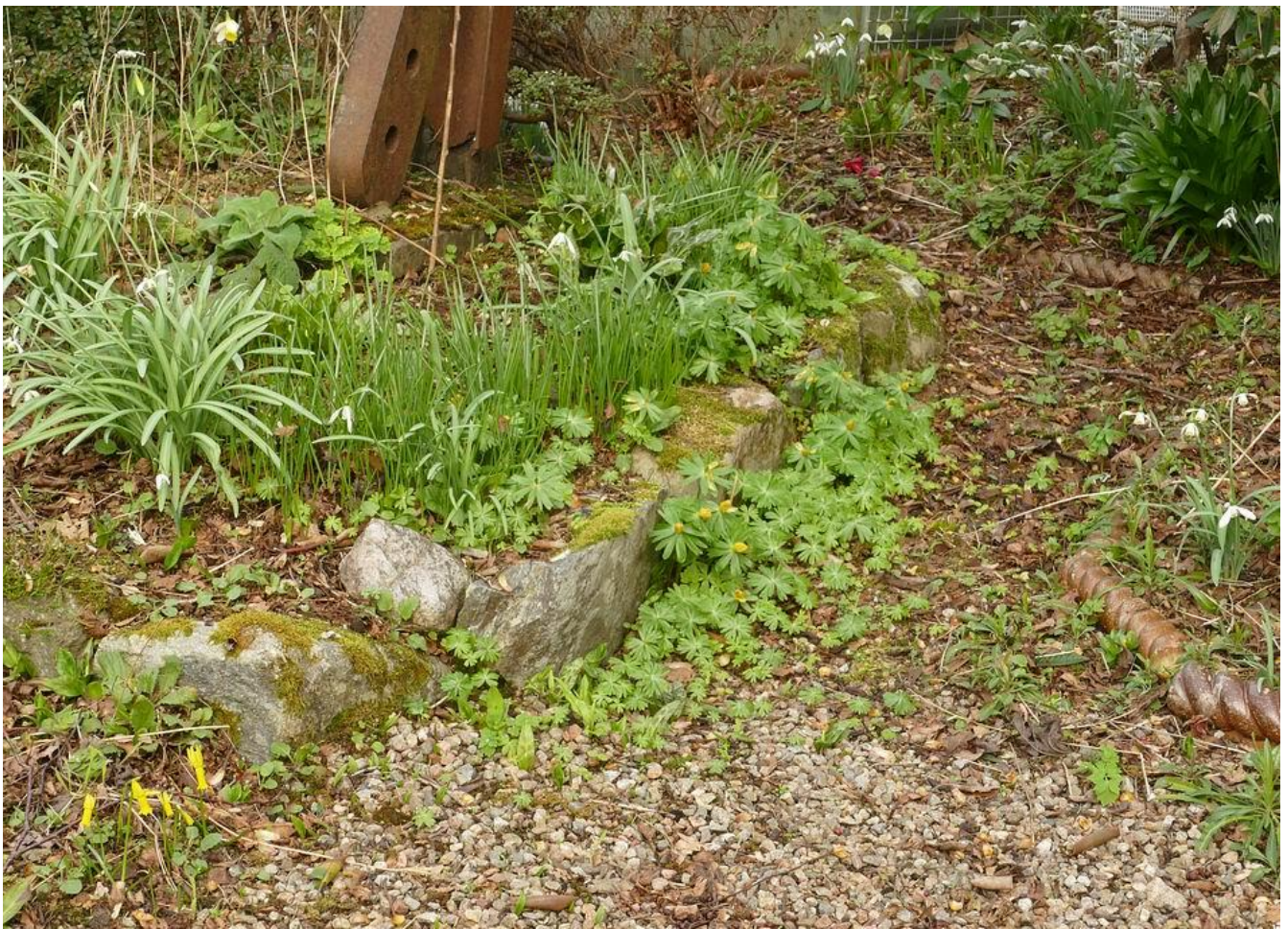
The *Corydalis malkensis* and *Corydalis solida* provides early interest in this plunge bed before the *Erythronium*s growth reaches up and flowers.



This is the reverse view across the same plunge bed looking towards the wider garden where there are many similar natural plantings.



All around the garden the plants are escaping from the beds and invading the paths. The plants cannot seed where there are paving slabs but the slabs are surrounded by gravel and that gravel is the most successful seed bed in the garden. Over the years the boundaries between beds and paths has become increasingly blurred and at certain times of the year some gravel paths are so full of plants that they have become no go areas.



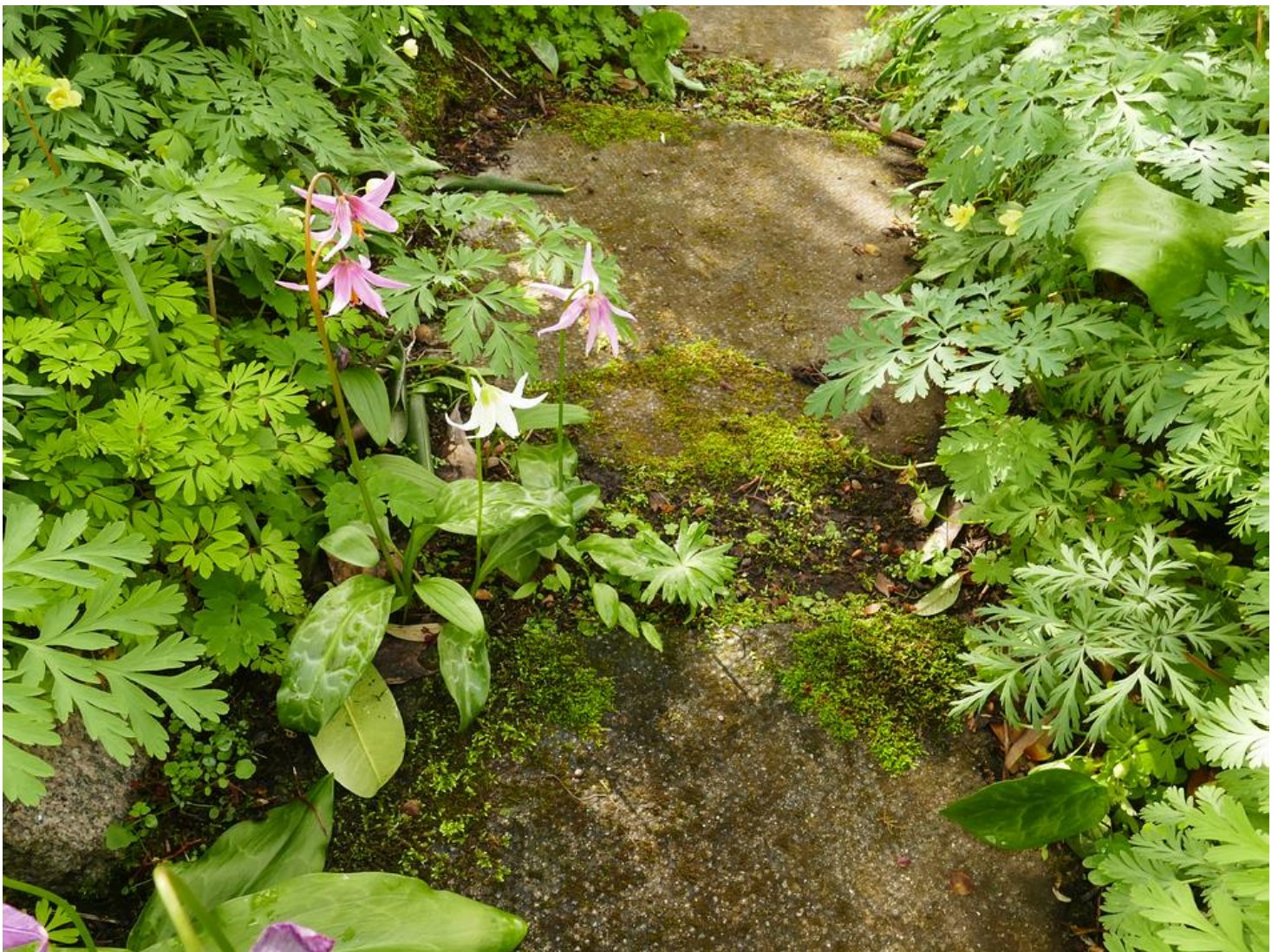
Eranthis hyemalis is one of the main culprits as its seed spills out from the bed and is gradually taking over this narrow gravel path that leads round to the bulb houses.



If given free reign *Eranthis* is one of the many plants that seeds into the gravel covered gaps between the spaced out paving slabs.



It starts with a few mixed seedlings as shown above and before long you will have mature plants flowering (below)





Hellebores are another plant that brings its flowers to the garden early in the year and it is nice that some clones form great clumps of flowers.



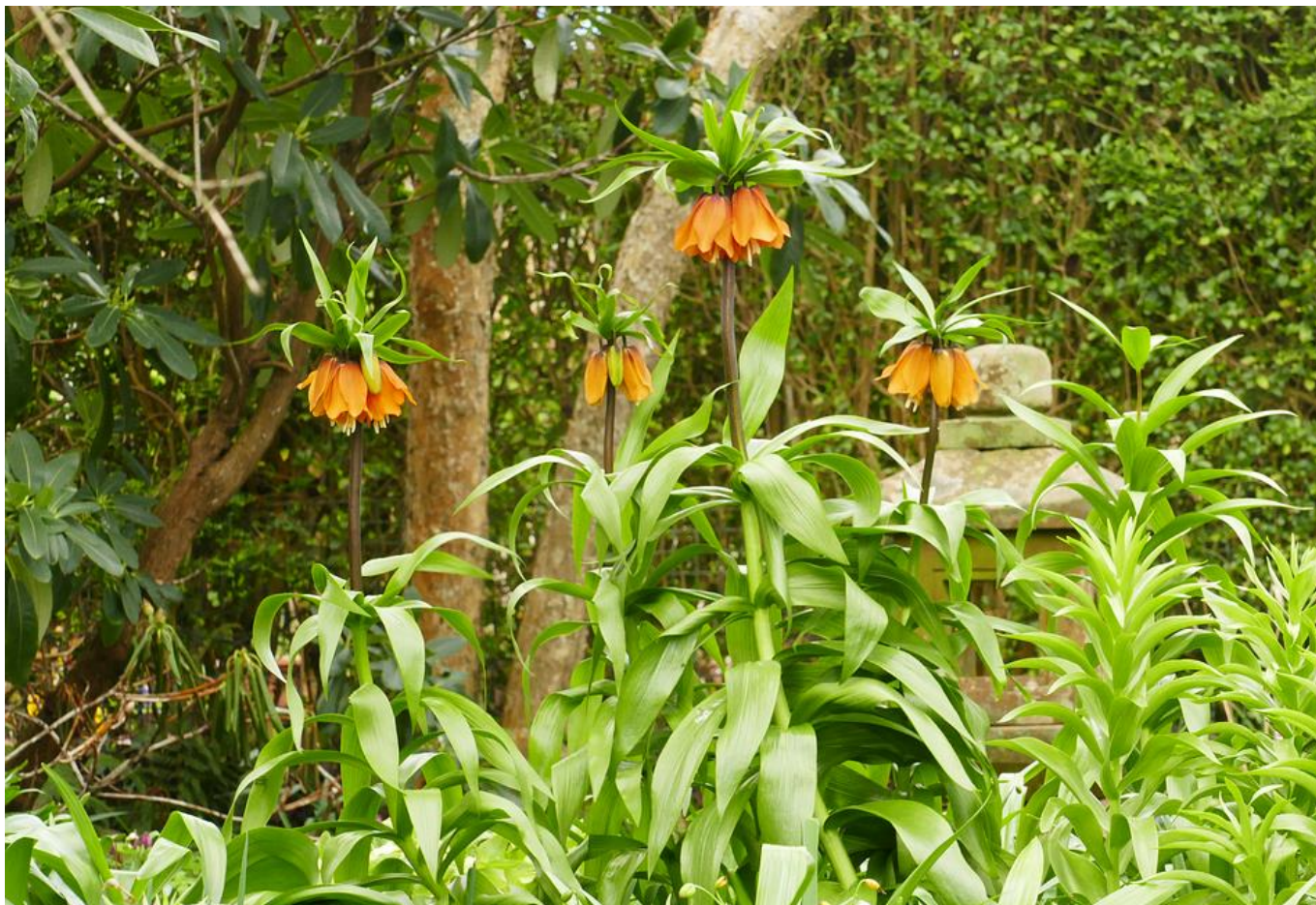
My preference however is for the Hellebore plants that seed around in the beds forming scattered populations displaying a range of flowers colours as they rise up through the green carpet that now covers the ground.



Primula marginata is another of my favourite early flowering plants that we use in the rocky habitats around the garden and although we do not get seed from them very often, we do grow a wide range of forms that we increase by cuttings.



Primula marginata



So far the tall flowering stems of **Fritillaria imperialis** have survived the winds and weather as various storms passed over us.



The incredible blue colour of **Scilla rosenii** flowers as they rise up –when fully open their flowers reflex like little blue erythroniums.



We should all appreciate the foliage that appears both before and after the plants flowering time. These snowdrops have finished flowering but their leaves will continue adding to the look and environment of the garden and combined with all the other greenery will shade the ground keeping it cool and moist.



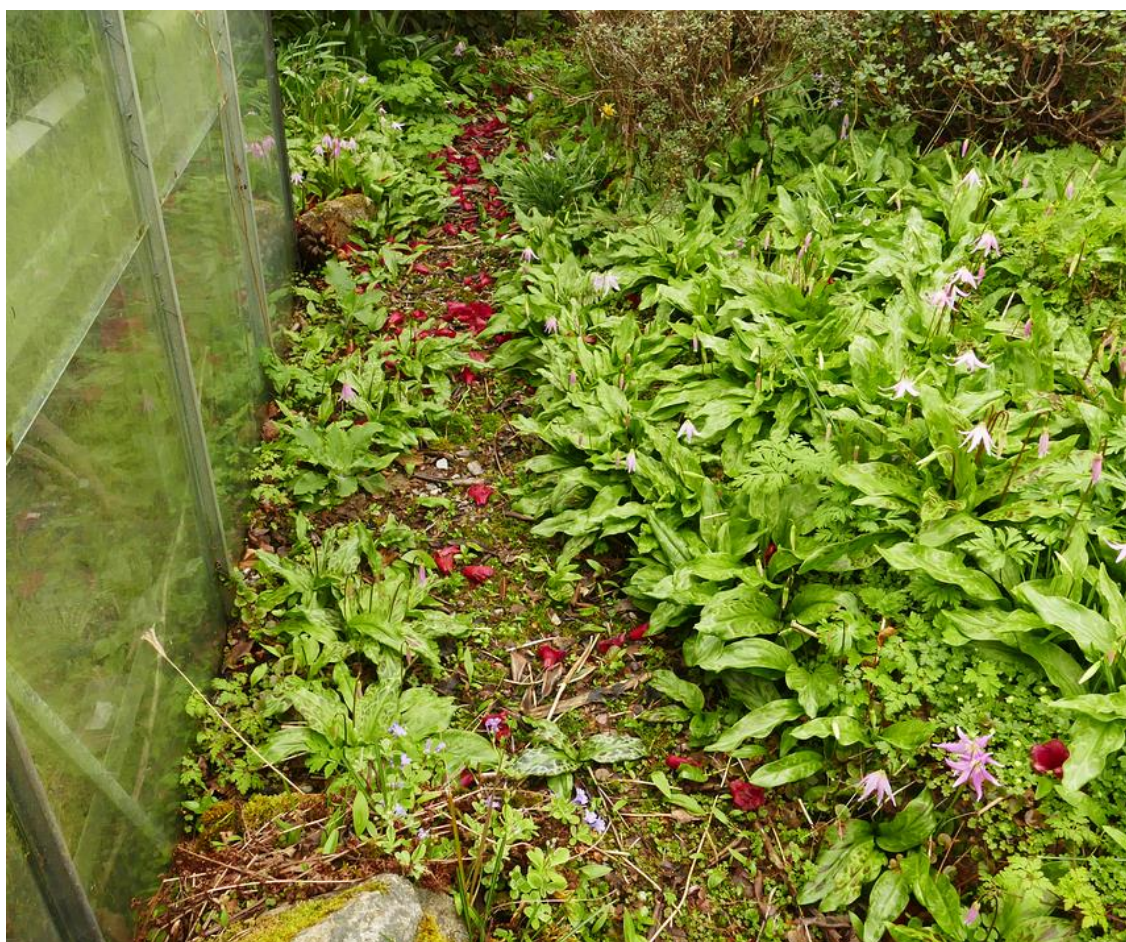
Enjoy the mixed foliage.



While flowers are relatively short lived, leaves can be with us for many months. The silver green leaves of these *Cyclamen hederifolium* first appeared last August and depending on the weather may well be with us until June/July. If it is cool and moist they will stay green, if it gets warm and dry they will die back sooner. I also like that many of the surrounding plants have a similar or matching colour including the greeny-cream flowers of an *Erythronium* hybrid and the *Trillium* leaves all blending together.

This is the other end of the narrow path I showed on page 14 and it will not be long before it becomes a complete carpet of *Erythronium*. Do you think I have lost control?

Generally we have had cold wet and windy weather during the four week period covered here but then we got a freak condition and for one day 12/04/24 Aberdeen was among the warmest places in the country with temperatures reaching 17C, bringing a lot of plants into flower and I include some of the many pictures I have taken as a trailer of what the next Bulb Log might feature.





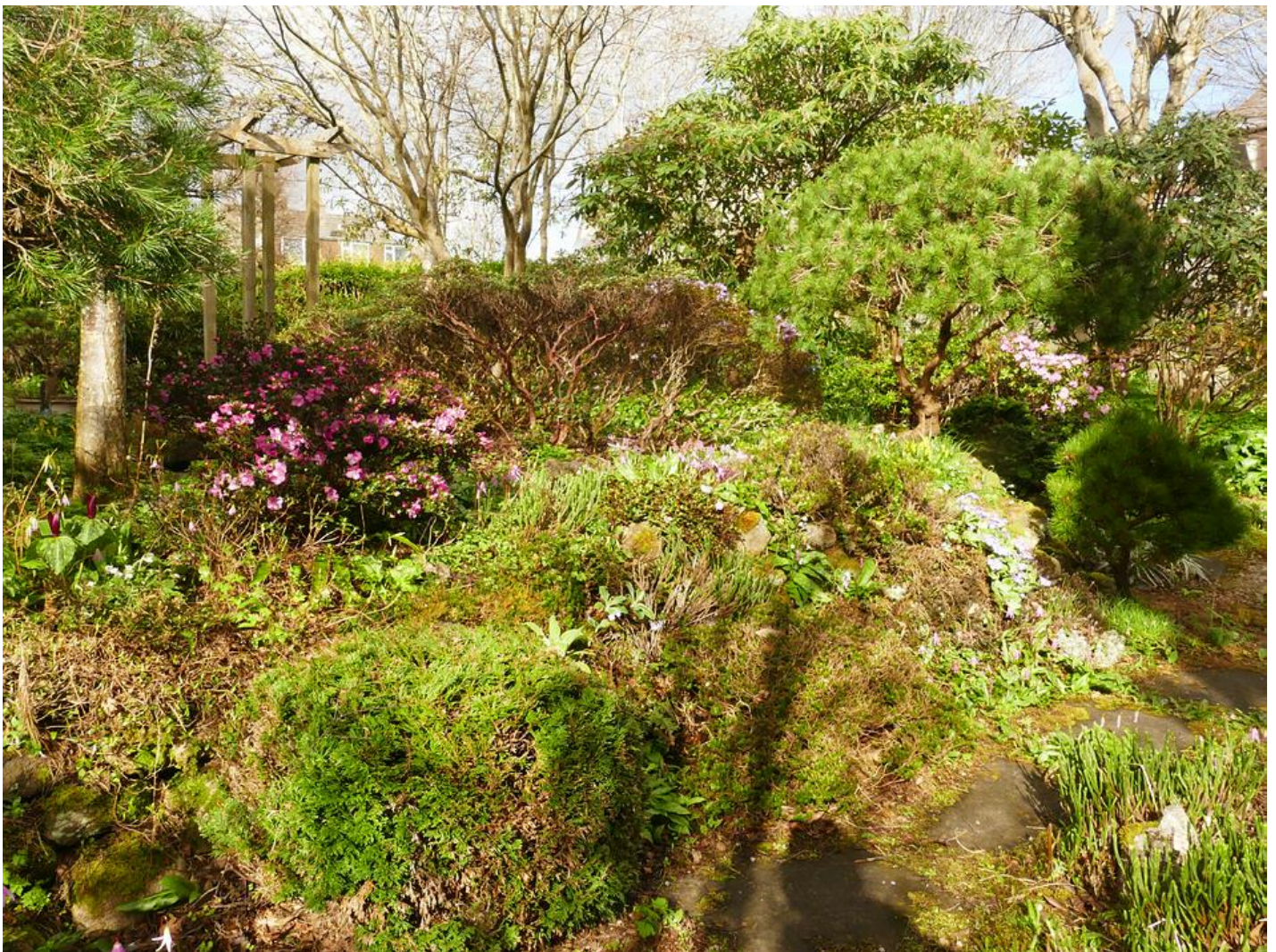
Beds where Snowdrops and Eranthis featured a short while ago are now transformed into a multi-textured green carpet through which many flowers rise to open in the light.



No surprises when I say that Erythronium will feature strongly in the next edition



And more than likely there will be a few Trillium including my favourite **Pseudotrillium rivale**.



If you have not viewed these videos since the last Bulb Log I have posted two Bulb Log Video Diaries one a [garden walk 22nd March](#) and another [garden walk on 11th April](#). Please click the links to walk with me and view some of the many spring flowers in the garden.....