



BULB LOG 33.....17th August 2016





Actaea rubra and Hypericum androsaemum

We have been waiting for summer to arrive and now at last we are under the influence of high pressure and are enjoying a few days of warm sunshine however there is a distinctly autumnal feel. I notice this especially in the early mornings and evenings and the plants coming into fruit also confirm that we are moving out of summer. The Hypericum is a volunteer plant to our garden and we do allow it to remain at the edge of the front drive. I will remove the berries before they shed their seeds

as we do not want it to take over. We did introduce *Actaea rubra* to the garden - its shiny bright red berries are probably its most decorative feature but, as with the *Hypericum*, I have learned to enjoy the berries for a short period removing them before they start to fall – this will be any day now. It is much less work to prevent them from dispersing their seeds than it would be to have to remove all the resulting unwanted seedlings. Timely management of plants prevents them from becoming problems.



Actaea rubra

I was delighted to see *Actaea rubra* growing by a river in Cordova on my recent visit to Alaska – it reconfirmed my pleasure in growing it.



I was reminded of this mixed media drawing I did of *Actaea rubra* in 2014 as part of a series of plant related works.



Here some of the *Primulas* in the front garden are setting seed which I will scatter around to encourage colonies to form - I will also sow some into a pot to ensure that I get more young plants to keep the populations going.

When there is plenty seed and we have good colonies of a plant I

much prefer to leave the plants to self-sow - however due to the random nature of where the seed falls, the percentage of the self-sown seed that reaches maturity can be small when compared to seed sown into pots where the majority of them should reach maturity. Where I am trying to ensure more plants I will also sow some in pots.



Staying in the front garden; this view shows some of the taller trees and shrubs with a mixed carpet under planting.



The wonderful new foliage of **Rhododendron bureavii** makes it worth its place in the garden.



Rhododendron saluense and R. 'Curlew'



Every year without fail both of these small Rhododendrons produce a second flowering at this time of year – Rhododendron saluense in particular has almost as many flowers now as it had in the spring.



The tiny leaves of **Rhododendron impeditum** are grey green and covered in tiny pores which when rubbed produce a lovely spicy scent – note also all the fat buds full of the clusters of small purple flowers that will appear in the spring.

Rhododendron yakushimanum

Rhododendron yakushimanum also has lovely new foliage which is covered in thick white indumentum. The furry indumentum slowly weathers off the top surface but remains on the underside of the leaves. In this picture you can see the different stages of growth - the branches that flowered this spring and I dead-headed (removed the old flowers to prevent seeding) have still to produce their new growth while the branches that did not flower this year have new growths and next spring's flower buds. Depending on the season the stems that flowered do not always get a long enough growing season to form flower buds so this species tends to have a two year flowering cycle in our garden.





The autumn-coloured foliage of **Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** as it starts to die down is very attractive – this is the best time to lift and divide this type of Corydalis - in around a month they will start to grow again producing a dome of new foliage which stays green throughout our winters. In good growing conditions it quickly forms clumps which will flower best if lifted and split every year or two.



This view from the East drive where another Hypericum is in fruit with some of the Corydalis behind it.

I suggested that we have not had much in the way of good summer weather and that is reflected in the growth of many of the plants. The cool wet conditions mean that many plants are still in leaf like these **Crocus pelistericus** - this species is in perpetual growth in our garden - the new roots have already formed before this foliage eventually dies back as the frosts come in.

This also means that I have now decided that I will not be able to lift the Erythroniums this year as many of them will also be making roots that would be damaged by handling.



Sanguinaria canadensis is another plant that in many gardens would be dormant by now - here it is still in leaf even growing in this trough at the base of our south facing wall.



It is very easy to walk around a garden and think there is nothing of interest to see – it is easy to look but not see, as it is to listen and not hear, so we need to pay attention using our brains in conjunction with our eyes. I would suggest that if you think there is nothing of interest you go back around again and see what is there. The variation of shapes and colours of the foliage of the different plants attracted me to look closer and take a picture.



Getting in close the white fruits and tiny leaves of **Gaultheria depressa novae-zelandiae** growing through the leaves of **Gaultheria pyroloides**.



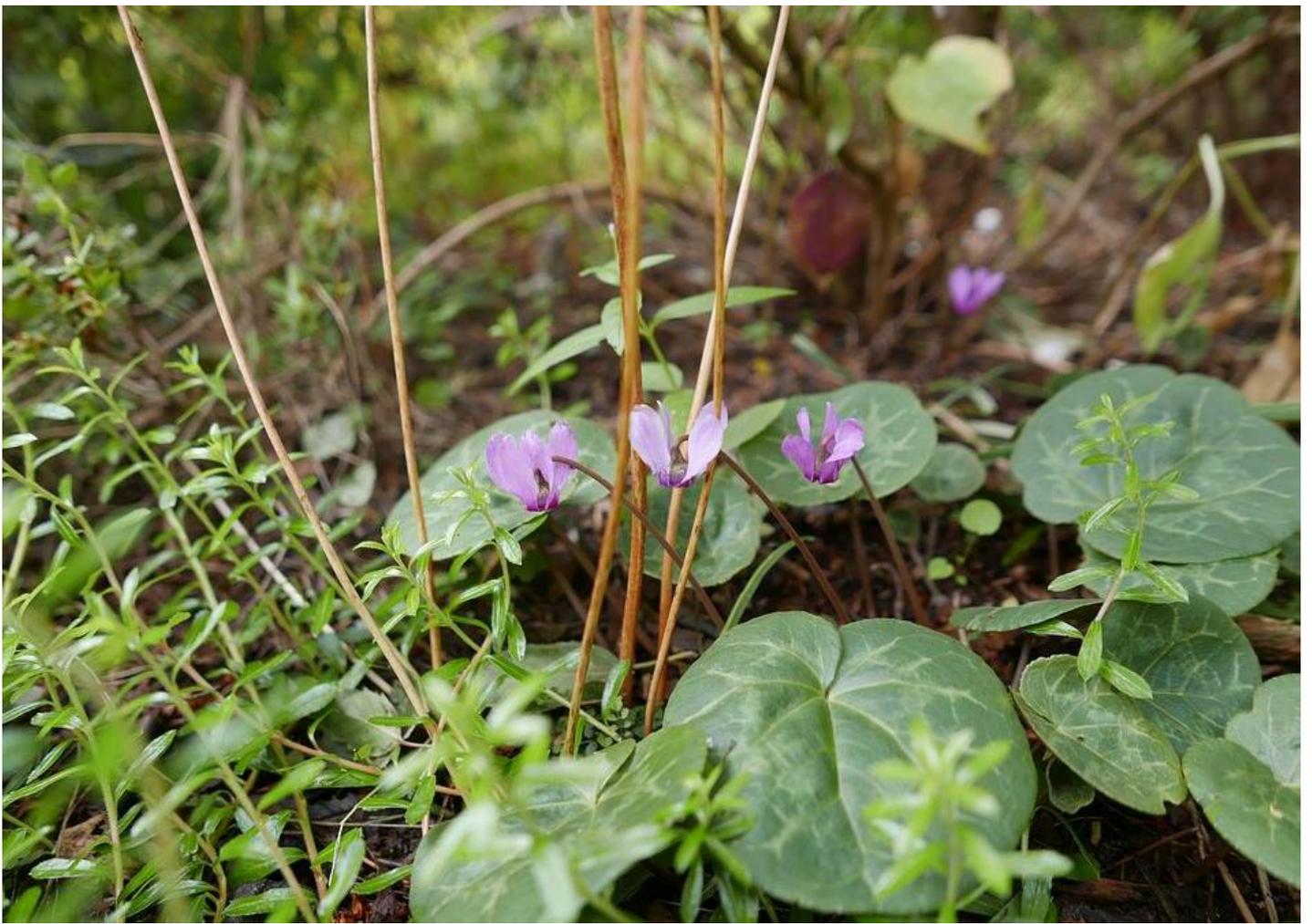
You can see the two *Gaultherias* growing at the edge of the path pierced by the leaves of *Allium wallichii* which is seeding around and will flower in the coming weeks. Also at the bottom left the silver leaved *Celmisia brevifolia* is taking over the slab path.



There are not so many flowers in our garden at this time of year but there is still plenty of plant interest.



Cyclamen purpurascens is the first to flower it is well worth getting down close so you can sample its beautiful scent.



Cyclamen purpurascens with the dried flower stems of *Erythronium* that have now shed their seed, the tiny leaves are of *Salix hylematica*.



In deep shade I found *Cyclamen hederifolium* flower stems emerging, also in the picture you will see a seed capsule (on the left) and a young one year tuber (centre) germinated from last years seed.



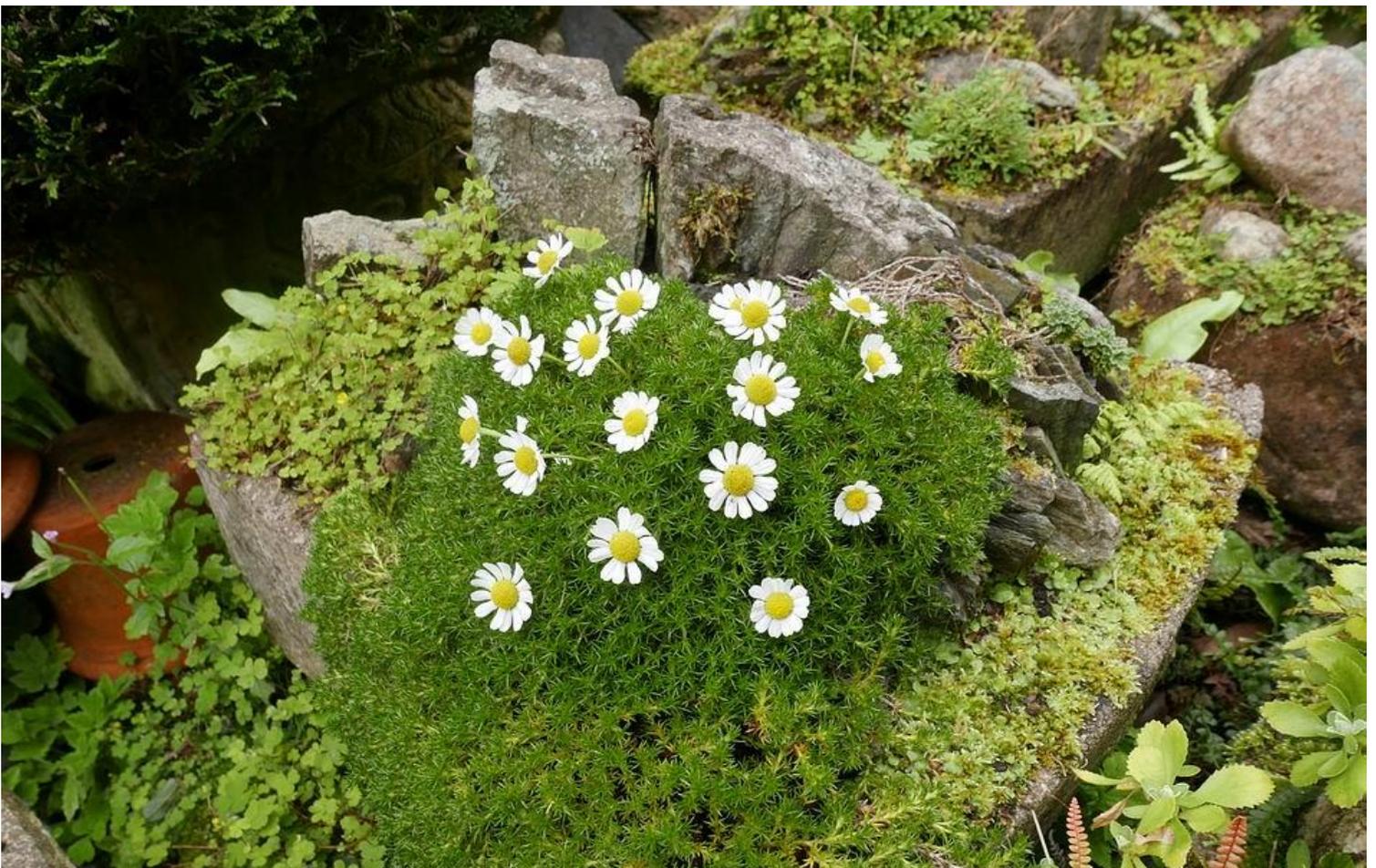
Cyclamen seeds take longer to ripen than any other bulb in the garden - this ripe seed capsule is the result of the flowers from nearly a year ago. A slug is attracted to the sticky substance surrounding the seeds.



In the shaded part of the rock garden the beautiful silver patterned leaves of **Hepatica pyrenaica** bring interest here they are being joined by some self-sown Meconopsis.



Looking closely you will see that the Hepatica are also seeding around the base of the parent plants.



As gardeners we can be very selective and 'Rock Gardeners' tend to be drawn to dwarf cushion-type plants especially when they have large flowers as seen above.

Tanacetum parthenium

I am teasing you with a trick plant: the cushion is an unnamed plant from South America, related I am sure to Azorella, and the flowers are of Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*). *Tanacetum parthenium* is another plant that like the *Hypericum* I showed on the cover commonly volunteer in our gardens. Both are used in herbal medicines and we should welcome them allowing them to grow in situations that may not suit other plants.



Tanacetum parthenium

Here it is growing at the base of a Sorbus next to the frames – last year it shared the space with a *Digitalis* which being a biennial died after flowering – there are new seedlings for future flowering. I will dead head these plants before they seed to control them and prevent them from becoming a problem. An interesting observation is that the flowers I picked and placed in the cushion have survived the three hottest days we have had this year without wilting.



I have been getting on with giving the hedges their annual cut which I see as a harvest of organic material because all these cuttings are shredded, composted then returned to the ground as a mulch in the winter.



I leave you as a happy gardener now the hedge is cut and the cuttings are shredded.....