



SRGC

# Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 25.....21<sup>st</sup> June 2017





**Dactylorhiza** orchids flowering with **Meconopsis** feature on the cover and are the main topic this week - but first an update on what is flowering in the front drives.

Spikes of **Phyteuma spicatum** flowers currently dominate the west drive attracting a constant stream of bees harvesting pollen – they appear to love this plant.

Now we have a good colony and no longer require seed we remove the flowers as soon as they turn brown all the way to the top of the spike - we pull them off

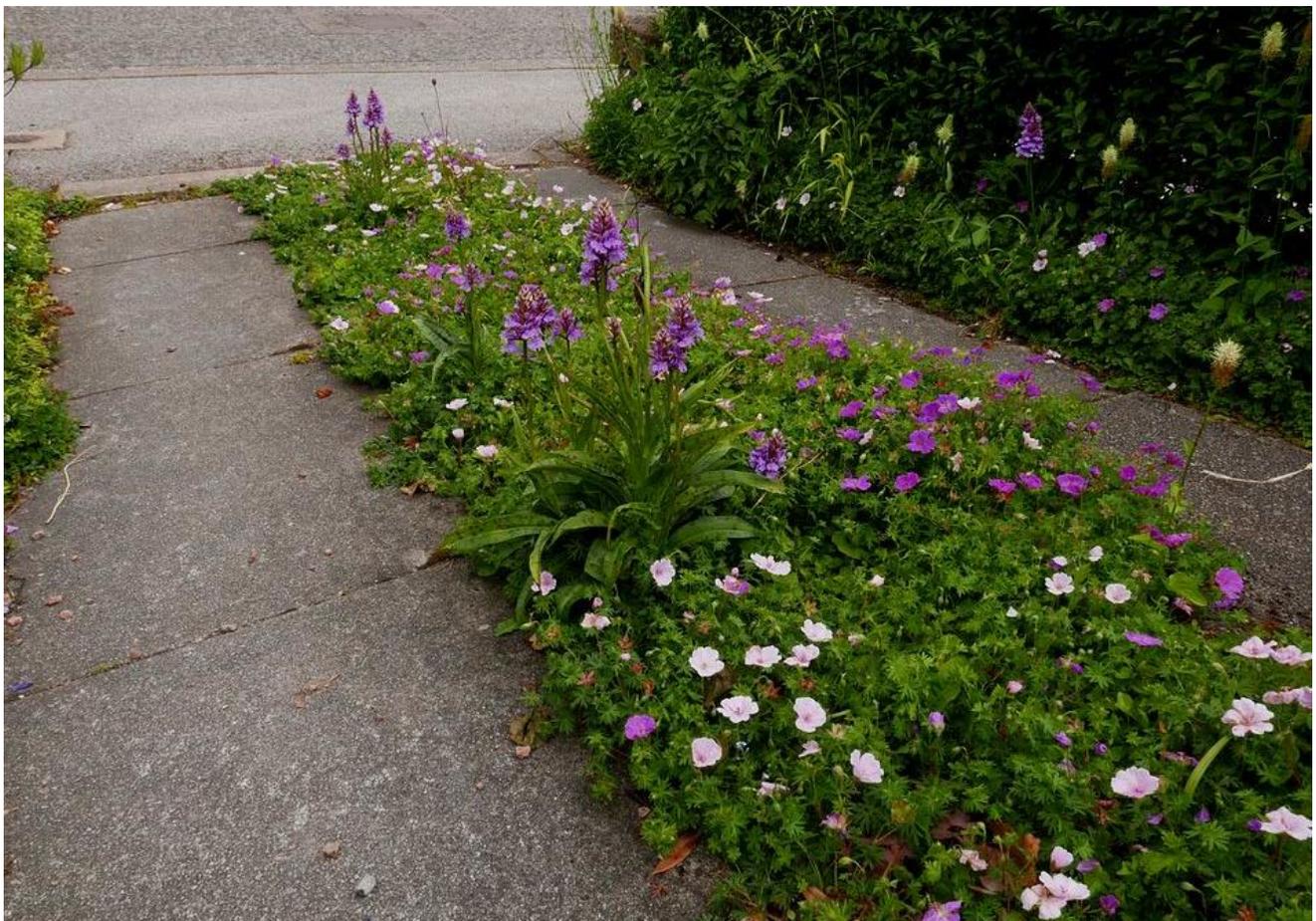
with a sideways tug. This opens up the bed for the *Geranium sanguineum* which will continue to flower all through the summer and as you can see the premature removal of the stems does not hinder the *Phyteuma* from flowering again next year.



**West Drive**



**Dactylorhiza** have also seeded into the drive and this group were blown over in the recent strong winds – not to be deterred their stems simply bend upwards once more and they continue flowering.



We use the **East drive** for our car so we try and keep only low-growing plants there however that does not stop some taller ones appearing. During the season these clumps of *Dactylorhiza* can become a bit tall for the car to pass over without brushing across them and sometimes they get decapitated but by the concept of Darwinian Evolutionary Theory future generations should become shorter as the taller ones will be decapitated before they shed seeds.



Moving to the slab bed and trough area in the back garden where many of the *Dactylorhiza* pictures were taken.



As I developed the garden I wanted that individual features such as beds and troughs should work both individually as well as combining together into longer views as shown here.

Dactylorhiza appear in the most unlikely places – they seeds seem to thrive in areas which are not disturbed and often low in nutrients. Established troughs are a typical destination in our garden like this orchid growing in a small demonstration trough planted in 2008 using roofing slates to form crevices. The Dactylorhiza has formed a second side shoot and if you look carefully you will see some seedlings towards the front.





This metre long trough has become a real orchid farm – it is one of the troughs where the original planting which includes *Dianthus* and *Primula marginata* has survived for almost thirty years. Rather than adding plants some years

ago the orchids became so numerous that we had to remove around eighty to plant elsewhere.



Once you start looking in detail you will see a tremendous variation in the flowers and the shapes of the spike even within this trough. Looking at individual flowers is rewarding.



Two flowers side by side show distinct markings on the flowers and if you look below you will also notice that the leaves also differ with the darker flowered one also displaying more dark markings which are almost absent in the pale one,





**Troughs with self-seeded *Dactylorhiza*.**



The inflorescence in the trough above is very different with the flowers being more spaced out while the smaller dark *Dactylorhiza* that have seeded into this silver saxifrage trough are much more tightly packed.



I love this trough with ***Antennaria dioica***, grasses, ferns and ***Dactylorhiza*** at this time of year – it is like a patch plucked from the wild.





**Dactylorhiza purpurella and hybrids**

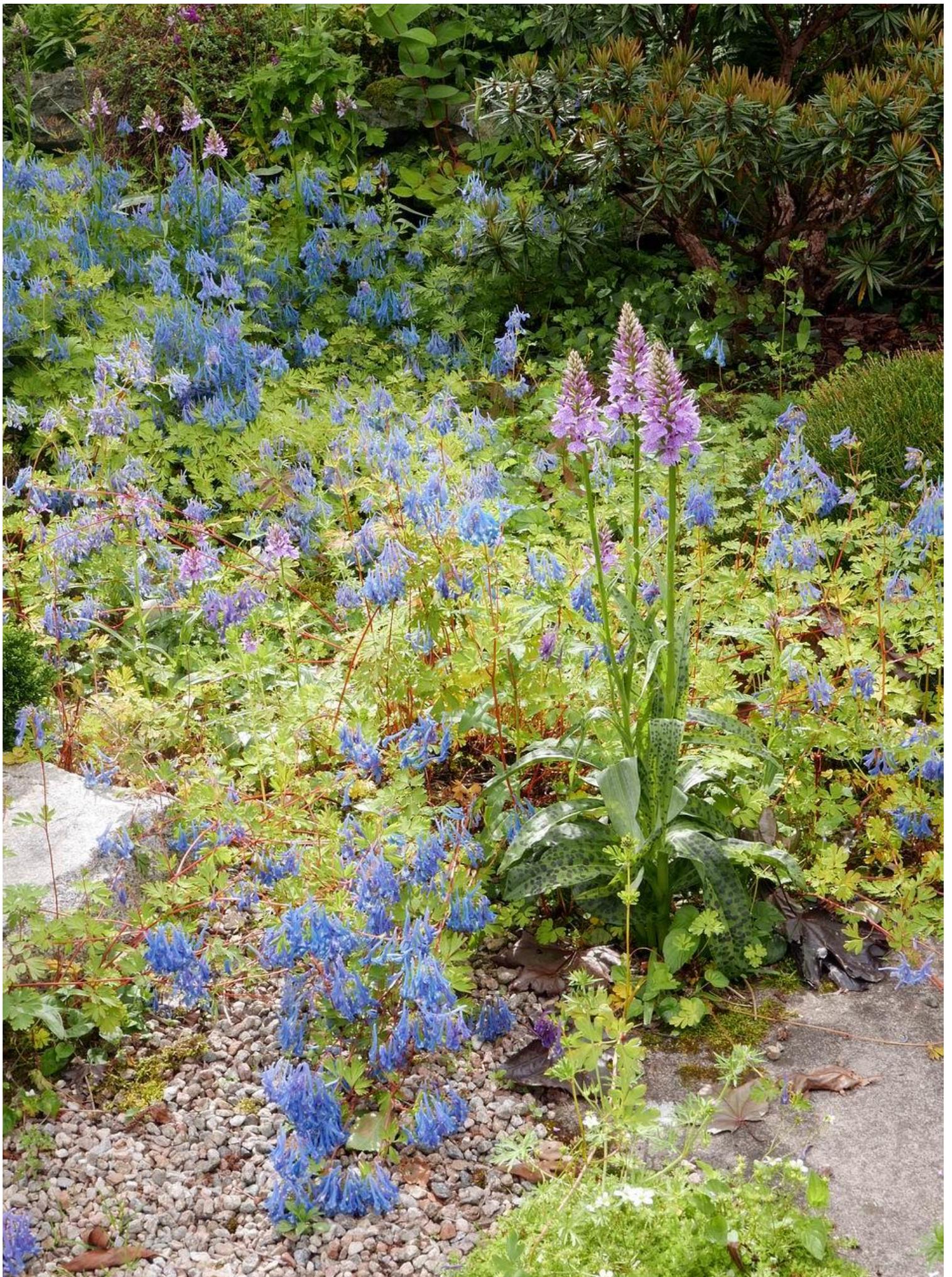
The very short orchids here are *Dactylorhiza purpurella* and they are the seed parent of the taller ones which obviously have hybridised with the other garden varieties.



Combined view across troughs, slab beds to the rock garden with our mini woodland beyond.



**Given time a single clone will form a clump.**



Nature is the best gardener having the ability to create colourful scenes like this where all the plants, including **Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** and the lovely **Dactylorhiza** have seeded themselves into the gravel – there are masses of other orchid seedlings here which have yet to reach flowering size.



**More views featuring *Dactylorhiza*.**





In the narrow crack between the slabs and pond edge is typical of the places where we will find **Dactylorhiza** seeding. It is not the ideal place as they are susceptible to getting knocked as we go past however they will have to stay there as it would be a major task to lift slabs to remove them.



**Molly and Megan** are enjoying the **Dactylorhiza** flowering in the new pond edge bed that I made the other week.

Many *Dactylorhiza* have seeded into the ***Salix lanata*** island pot which lives permanently semi-submerged in the pond.



The dark pink flowers of this ***Lilium mackliniae*** Nagaland form go well with *Dactylorhiza* and a pale pink seedling of ***Meconopsis baileyi*** all of which blend with the dark red *Acer* leaves in the background.



I am not usually keen on the purple forms of **Meconopsis baileyi**, to my eye that colour often appears muddy but I do find myself attracted to this seedling which has a clean pale pink/violet colour and it is forming a nice clump.



Nothing can beat the true blue of the Meconopsis – this is another **Meconopsis baileyi** seedling where the flowers are held in a cluster towards the top of the stem



**Meconopsis baileyi**

In this group of *Meconopsis baileyi* seedlings one displays the slightly muddy purple colour that I am not keen on.



A few more views of the garden and trough area where the **Meconopsis** and **Dactylorhiza** have flower power.





**Dactylorhiza hybrid**

I leave this week with a grouping of garden hybrid Dactylorhiza seedlings growing in one of the slab beds, click the link to join me in a [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) as I look at some Dactylorhiza and Meconopsis.....