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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 42.....18th October 2017





With careful selection and framing, an apparently mundane view can produce a colourful and appropriate cover image which sums up the season. The sculptural form of the **Roscoea** leaves having served their purpose are yellowing contrasting well with the fresh new green leaves of Corydalis just starting out on their seasonal growth. This bed is one of the areas I am reworking having cut back all the

overhanging shrubbery to open up a good area for planting. I formed quite a hummock of material from the compost heap into which I have been planting lots of bulbs, divisions and other plants from the seed frames.



The plants included the Roscoea on the cover and these **Scoliopus bigelovii** emptied out of a polystyrene box.



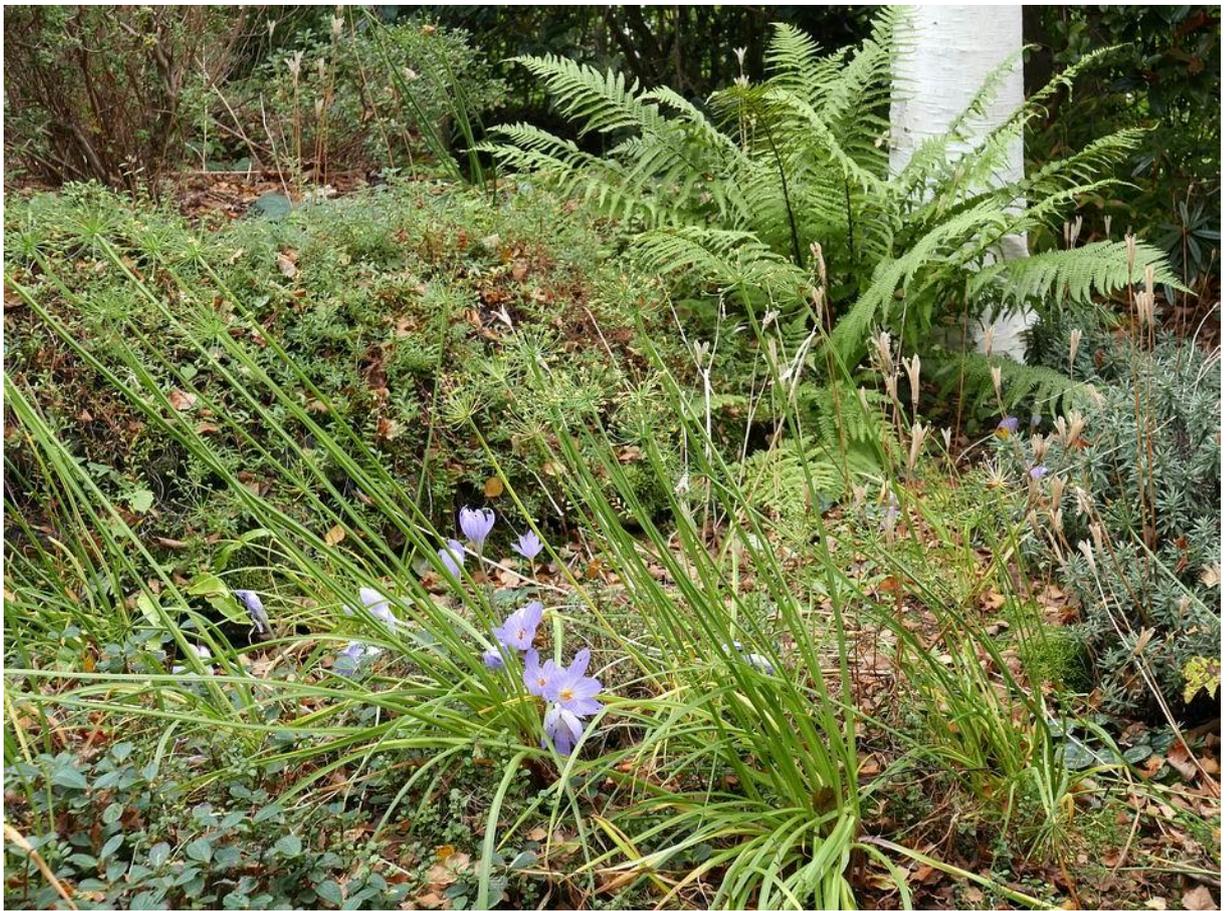
Also emptied out of a polystyrene box are these tubers of **Codonopsis grey-wilsonii** along with a few *Corydalis* that had joined them in the box. I planted these out in various places around the garden where the plants can climb and sprawl among shrubs producing their lovely flowers in mid to late summer.



Looking back from the recovered bed across the garden you will see the white bark of **Betula utilis var. jacquemontii** rises above a mat of **Celmisia walkerii** with ferns adding to a woodland setting.

You may have noticed some stems of **Allium wallichii** towards the centre of the previous picture but you need to get closer to see the mass of **Crocus speciosus** flowering through the taller allium stems.

This grouping has primarily formed by self-seeding which continues each year allowing the colony to slowly spread out.



Although showing the ravages of garden conditions **Crocus speciosus** flowers continue to delight.



Crocus pulchellus



Also to be found at the edge of the path beside the **Celmisia walkerii** is a group of **Crocus pulchellus** which is completely self-seeded, jumping from the bed into the gravel area between the slabs. You cannot fail to notice the growing carpet of leaves covering the ground – these will occupy my time for several weeks now as I work to remove them especially from smaller plants that would suffer under a blanket of soggy leaves.



Leaf vacuum and blower.

The leaf vacuum and the leaf blower make this a much easier job especially when the leaves are dry.

I can blow them into clumps then gather them up with the leaf-vac which shreds them as it collects.

The leaf-vac does not work so well when it is wet as the small shredding part gets clogged up with damp leaves.





Acer and Sorbus leaves before being lifted and shredded.



I scatter some of the shredded leaves directly onto certain beds then I will spread out the mulch of the shreds I made and piled under the Rhododendrons some weeks ago ([Bulb Log 3717](#)) to compost.



This area of gravel between the path and the rocks that form the edge of the bed is completely obscured by plants, mostly *Oxalis magellanica* but when you get close there are other plants to be found.

All the plants in the gravel have grown from seed scattered directly some, like the Cyclamen, by me others like the Oxalis, got there themselves likewise the Aquilegia which I do not want there so I will remove.



Look carefully and you will see lots of thin leaves rising through the Oxalis carpet – these are of a colony of *Narcissus bulbocodium* increasing itself naturally by seed with more flowers appearing every year.

**Narcissus
bulbocodium**
(1st April)

Looking back
this is the
same scene at
the beginning
of April – I
left all these
flowers to
scatter their
seeds to
further add to
this colony.



Back to the autumn garden with the bright red **Arisaema** fruits lying scattered among **Dactylorhiza** and **Roscoeia** leaves with **Crocus** flowers in the back ground



Crocus banaticus with a single **Crocus pulchellus** in the background.



Arisaema candidissimum leaves are turning.



Uvularia leaves.



The yellowing leaves of some of the smaller species of **Roscoea** on the rock garden bed.

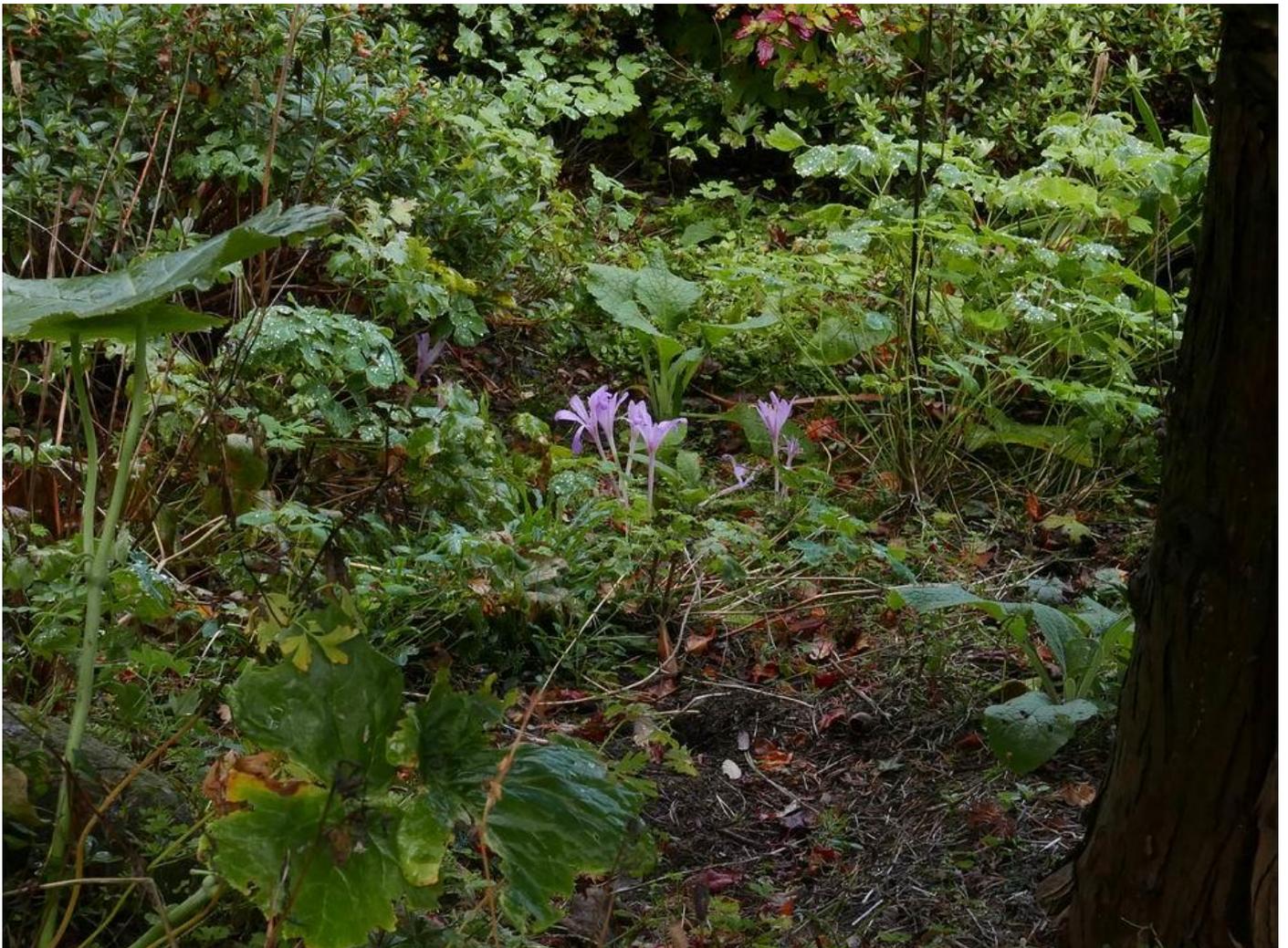


A grouping of grasses, ferns and Primula in the new marginal bed I made at the edge of the pond - compare that with the same view (below) I photographed on 7th July.





I love it when the contrails of transatlantic jets form the Scottish flag in the sky above the garden.



It is a group of **Colchicum laetum** flowers that draws the eye as you look from our front door.



Colchicum cilicicum

Staying in the front garden for the next few pictures here *Colchicum cilicicum* flowers after those of *Colchicum speciosum* have passed giving a nice progression.



Colchicum ciliatum



Crocus banaticus and Crocus pulchellus

We should not be worried about growing bulbs through other plants, these crocus grew through a carpet of Geranium from the seed I scattered in the gravel drive.



Similarly a spreading and now self-seeding colony of **Crocus pulchellus** started when I scattered a few seeds onto the narrow strip of gravel between the hedge and the slabs of the driveway. The way the crocus adapt to grow through the many other plants that are there is a good lesson to learn.



I found this very large flowered pale form of **Crocus pulchellus** flowering through some dwarf Ericaceous shrubs.



In the bulbhouses I find open flowers on **Galanthus reginae-olgae** and **Crocus hadriaticus** in the 7cm pots.



More crocus growing in the bulb house sand beds are encouraged to open their flowers in the warm conditions (15-16C).

Crocus goulymii



Crocus asumaniae



Crocus ligusticus



Crocus speciosus

At first the *Crocus ligusticus* above looks very attractive with the darker veining in the flower until I realise that this is the early signs of a virus infection. Also the strange shape of the *Crocus speciosus* flowers on the left caused by the flower failing to open normally drew my attention when on closer inspection I find this also to be the symptoms of a virus.

Because of the risks of cross infection I have a zero tolerance to having bulbs I know to be virus infected growing in the bulb houses so both of these are now destroyed.

Before I destroyed the *Crocus ligusticus* I took the opportunity to photograph the complete plant (below) – which looks to be growing well with many extra shoots arising from the corm. Some plants can tolerate the virus growing and increasing well and this is the problem: the infection can be passed on and can prove fatal to other bulbs in the garden so the best insurance is to destroy those that are infected.



Crocus ligusticus



Healthy plants of *Crocus ligusticus*



More *Crocus pallasii* 'Homerii' are flowering in the sand beds where so far all the bulbs are growing extremely well, even better than they do in pots.



I knew growing bulbs in the sand beds without labels would challenge my memory and indeed I could not recall what the small Crocus with the black anthers was. I asked Janis Ruksans who immediately identified it as **Crocus wattiorum**, the others are on the left **Crocus pulchellus** with **Crocus laevigatus** on the right.

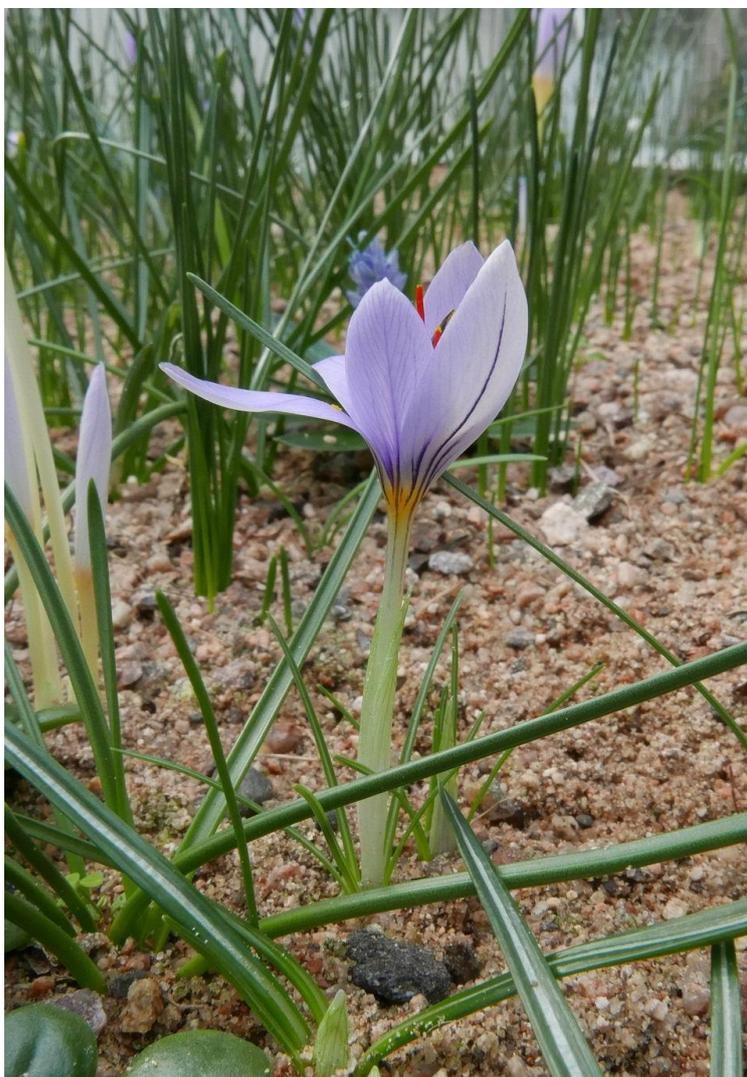


Crocus wattiorum



Crocus wattiorum

I immediately referred to Janis Ruksans' masterly book 'The World of Crocuses' where all the species are described and illustrated in great detail - if you do not have a copy I recommend it to you.



I found my reference pot two days later when a flower pushed up –until next week.....