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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 26.....24th June 2020



Meconopsis baileyi



We are fortunate that our weather and garden conditions allow *Meconopsis baileyi* to seed around.



While the majority of seedlings are of a similar colour of blue there are some flowers where red comes through, giving shades of violet and purple with the occasional almost pink specimen appearing. Recently Ian Christie shared pictures of the pinkest specimen that I have seen.

Unlike manufactured dyes, colour in nature is complex with layers making up what we observe as a single colour, this leads to the hue going through changes as the flower ages. The blueness is also affected by light, temperature and the PH of the ground with

the purest blues seeming to appear when it is colder in good light and the plant is growing in acid ground.



Along with the majority of people my preference is for the cleanest blue as shown above but, when you look carefully, even these have underlying hints of red as a result of anthocyanin which develops as the flowers fade leading to the purple shades just like we witness in autumn leaves.

The colour value and intensity of the light in which we view the flowers also changes the precise shade of blue that we see. Try changing the colour balance on your camera, which is so often set to automatic, to see the range of colours you can get of exactly the same subject.





Even in the best blues when you look carefully the reds are there.





This is the pinkest of the **Meconopsis baileyi** plants seeded in our garden.

Although the flowering stems die back, *Meconopsis baileyi* is soundly perennial in our garden because new growths come from around the base of the stem as it dies back and provided there is suitably cool moist growing conditions these will establish through the late summer and autumn, forming clumps that will flower the following year.



Lilium mackliniae is among my favourite lilies and once more we have raised them from seed resulting in a variation of flower colours from pure white to a red-purple, as well as plants of different stature.





Lilium mackliniae

We have some forms that never get taller than 40cms with two flowers while others, above, can grow to 140cms and have eleven flowers, others have a single flower on top of the stem.



Lilium mackliniae variations include soft pink with a white throat and pure white with a deep blackcurrant throat.



The form we received as **Lilium mackliniae Nagaland** has very dark flowers which appear much earlier than any of the others, pictured a month ago – the seed capsules are swelling now on short stems of 50cms.



The biggest flowers in the garden are on these tree peony cultivars ***Paeonia ostii*** 'Feng Dan Bai'.



Paeonia ostia seedling



Polemonium pauciflorum

My preference is for plants that will establish self-seeding colonies in the garden without dominating the space to the exclusion of other plants and these Polemonium, with their light ferny foliage, do just that.



Polemonium caeruleum



Polemonium pauciflorum can be seen seeding around in the new bed beside the pond flowering along with *Corydalis mucronipetala*, *Meconopsis baileyi* and *Dactylorhiza*.





All the **Dactylorhiza orchids** currently flowering all seeded in the garden: none of the original tubers we introduced, over thirty years ago, have survived the test of time. Having generations of garden seed raised plants is the best way to ensure healthy plants in the long term you will find the young seedlings are healthy growing more vigorously while older specimens can get sick and die.



Dactylorhiza and Meconopsis



Dactylorhiza in a raised bed.



Dactylorhiza on the rock garden bed.

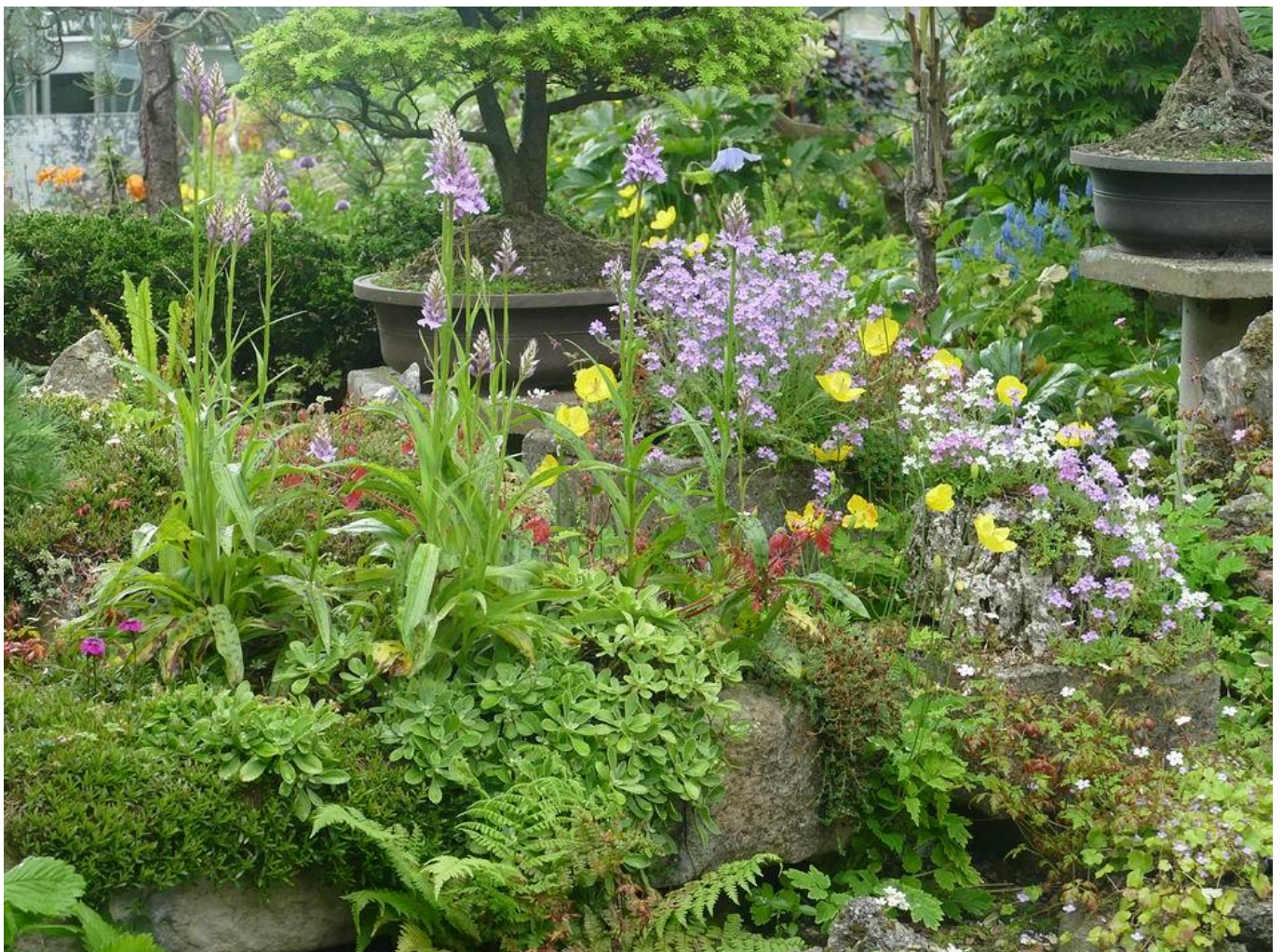


Dactylorhiza seeded in the raised slab beds.





Dactylorhiza seeded in the troughs.





Dactylorhiza growing with **Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** where earlier in the year Erythronium flowered.



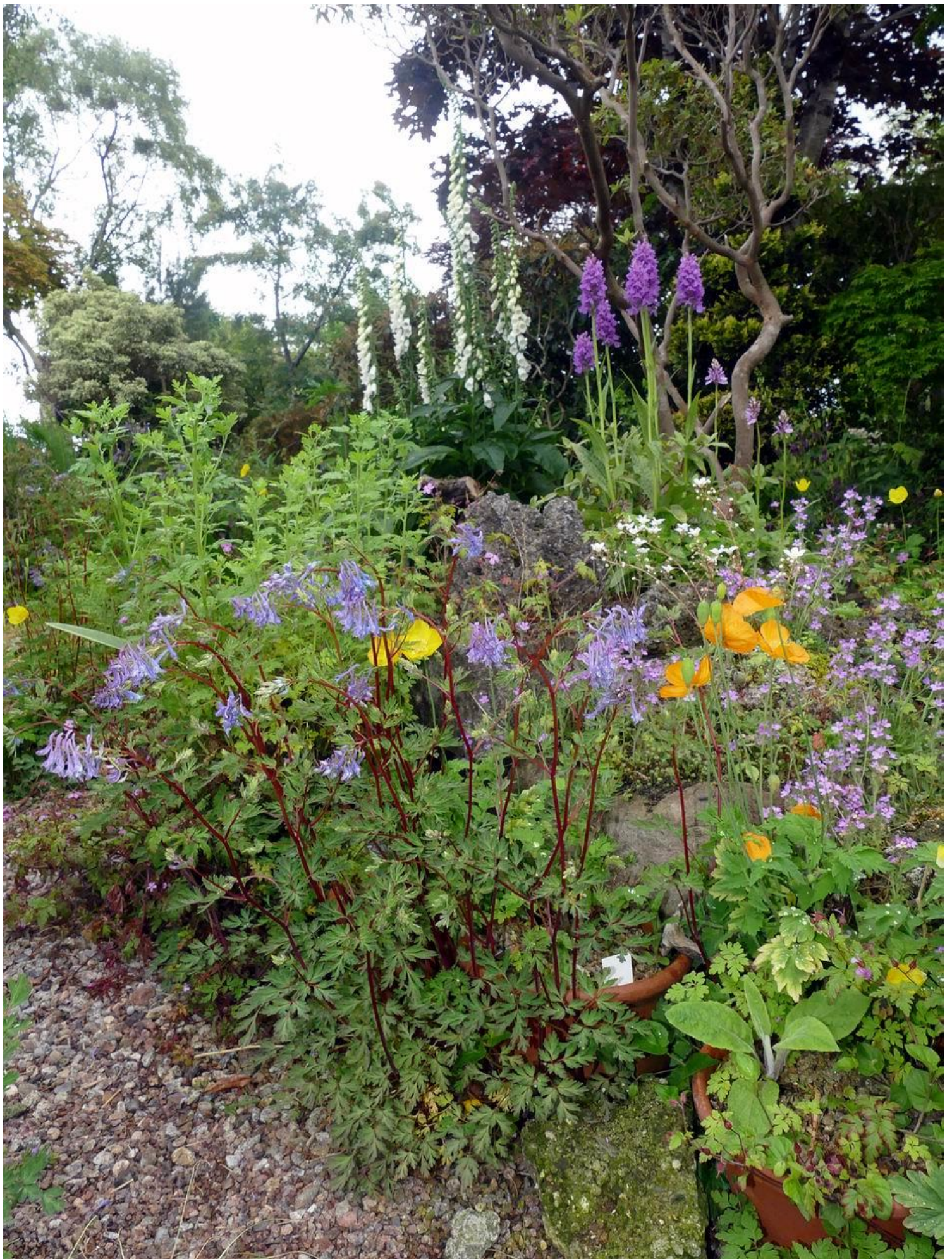
Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'



Corydalis mairei is not the showiest of the genus but its red stems, finely cut foliage, and clusters of small violet blue flowers brings interest as it gently seeds moving across the garden.



Corydalis mairei



A garden planted by nature.

Except for the saxifrage all the flowering plants shown in this picture have seeded themselves.....