



SRGC

# Bulb Log Diary

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Pictures and text © Ian Young

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Walking to the south end of the garden is a bit like traveling back through time because here the plants are flowering around a week behind plants in the sunnier parts. The boundary wall, along with the trees and shrubs we have planted there, cause these plants to be in more shade, especially at this time of year when the sun is still relatively low in the sky. As the season

advances the sun will climb higher then it will warm up the air and the ground, reducing this time delay.



On cold days it can look like there is not much to see here but when you get close and the sunshine encourages the flowers to expand to their full display, it is a different picture I see. The majority of the bulbs flowering here have been planted over the last two years since I cut back the shrubs that had shaded the ground out completely.





We enjoy a simple mixture of Crocus cultivars like this across the garden.







Some more images of the flowers in the shaded end of the garden.



*Corydalis solida* in various colour forms add pink, red and purple hues to the mixed plantings and these will be encouraged to seed around. I have also been scattering *Corydalis malkensis* seeds across this bed to further build up the mass

plantings that give the naturalistic tapestry look I favour.





The yellow flowers of **Erythronium tuolumnense** add colour highlights to the dark depths right under the Rhododendrons and the birch tree. In our climate Erythronium do not require to be grown in shade but they will tolerate it - Erythronium tuolumnense which has evolved large leaves is especially well adapted and thrives in the deepest shade.





Moving on into the sunnier parts of the garden the flowers and growth of commonly available plants such as these Narcissus and Crocus bring me as much delight as the rarer ones we grow.







The first few flowers of **Corydalis malkensis** opened in this container over a month ago and now they have been joined by many more. This self-seeded volunteer probably got into the pot with some old potting compost that I use from time to time to top dress some of the containers.



From a single plant it has seeded around the pot to form a complete carpet and now most of the flowers have opened it is putting on a fine display.



We have enjoyed a number of clear days this week with the absence of clouds giving us sunny days but also cold frosty nights.

If you look carefully at this early morning image you will see the **Corydalis malkensis** is lying collapsed on the ground - this is because the plant has withdrawn excess moisture to prevent the freezing conditions damaging its structure then as the temperature rises up so do the plants.

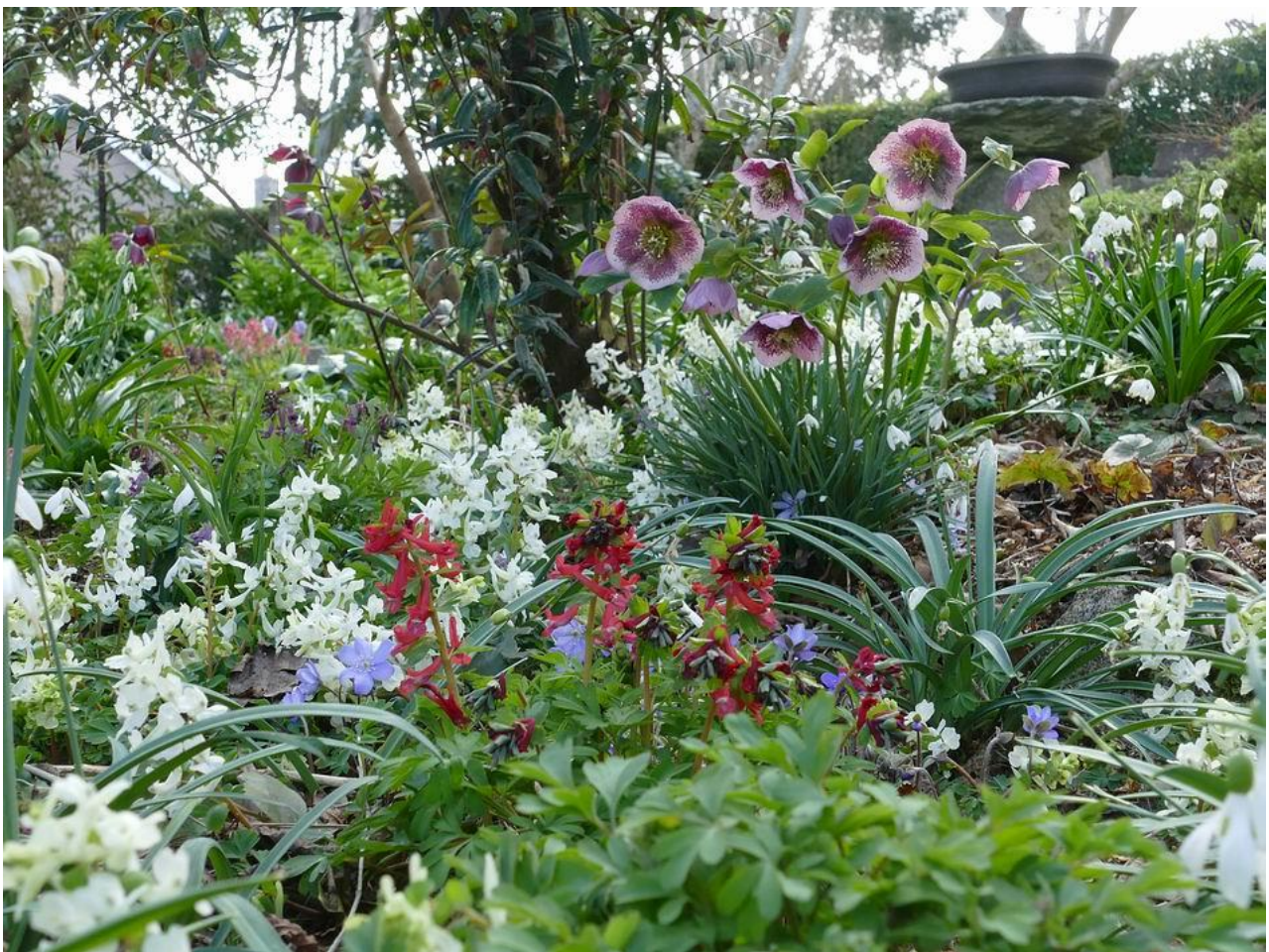


Similarly when I looked out first thing this morning these hellebores were lying flat on the ground but by the time I went to take these pictures their stems were arching upwards. With a flock of around fifteen Goldfinches foraging in the trees above my head I watched the gently jerking movement of the hellebores as the moisture pumped back into their stems and within no time they were fully upright again as seen in the picture below.





Like so many of the plants in the garden these hellebores have been allowed to naturalise by seeding around, however to maintain a balance with other plants in this in area for the last few years I have prevented them shedding their seed here by collecting it.







A hellebore seedling with nice markings.

In this view across some of the beds towards one of the bulb houses it is the white of *Corydalis malkensis* and *Galanthus* in the far away bed that are still prominent.







In other spots there is a change happening as the flowers of the early wave of white provided by the Galanthus and my yellow river of Eranthis start to fade passing the baton to the Crocus, Corydalis and Helleborus.



**Erythronium tuolumnense** is always among the first of the Western North American species to flower: here the flowers are still opening, depending on our weather they will not reach their peak for a week or more.



**Corydalis solida** comes in many colours from the rarer white forms through pinks and reds to purples; some of which are dark enough to appear almost black from a distance.



**Corydalis solida**





*Corydalis solida* also seeds around but not as readily as *Corydalis malkensis* does but where it does seed you will get groups of mixed colours growing. These *Corydalis* are in leaf for a relatively short time and to ensure that they get the best chance to form new flowering sized tubers for next year I go around at this time throwing a small pinch of a balanced N-P-K Growmore type fertiliser at each little group.



From all the many seedlings that occur in the garden ***Corydalis solida*** 'Craigton Red' is the only one that I have selected to name – this is a small mesh basketfull growing in one of the plunge frames which allows me to divide the tubers every year to help the rate of increase





When all are combined these plants make for a very attractive early flowering display.



This next sequence of pictures are wider shots in the garden.









Even at this time of year variations of foliage shape and colour can provide wonderful decorative effects such as here with the *Eranthis*, *Erythronium*, *Dicentra*, *Galanthus* and *Crocus* leaves growing happily together.





This silver leaved form of *Cyclamen hederifolium* has a colour co-ordinated *Erythronium* hybrid for company.



The flowers of some forms of ***Erythronium oregonum*** are always way ahead of the others, which may not open for another four weeks.





I am still working on building up the number of the beautiful pink flowered form of **Erythronium caucasicum**. Like all forms of this species this is a slow process of raising it from seed because it does not increase readily by offsets from the bulbs.



**Erythronium caucasicum pink**





**Erythronium dens-canis** is also opening around the garden this is a nice dark form and this species does increase by multiplication of the bulbs.



Some seed raised **Erythronium dens-canis** displaying dark flowers and heavily patterned leaves.





**Erythronium dens-canis**

When everyone is confined to their homes we are lucky to have a garden where we can find comfort – click on the link to join me for ten minutes of colour in the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#).....