



BULB LOG 25.....22nd June 2011



Delphinium?!

Sometimes or more correctly, *often*, we place a plant in the wrong place. The large flowering stems of this plant we raised as a Delphinium look completely out of scale growing in the raised bed. Beautiful though they are with these sculptural buds looking like sleeping aliens that open to form docking bays for bees I feel this plant has to move. For the first few years after we planted it out it stayed reasonably compact with flower spikes around 30cms tall.



Aconitum ferox

When the plant flowered we were able to check its identity and I believe it to be *Aconitum ferox*. Now the plant has become established, forming a good root system, it is showing its true stature which is not really suited to a raised bed like this. I will wait and collect seeds that will provide us with plenty of stock then I will investigate what sort of root system it has to assess how easily I can move it to a more suitable home. I love the flowers so I do want to preserve it and that love is shared by the bees that are constantly visiting it in the long hours of daylight.



Delphinium

Here is another similar story of a *Delphinium* – this time it is a real *Delphinium*. I received seed of it described as ‘dwarf *Delphinium* sp – ex USA’. When the original seedlings were planted out they too outgrew the home we had chosen for them and had to be moved to a bulb bed where their 1 meter plus stems can flop around and provide flowering interest along with the taller *Alliums*, *Digitalis*, etc. at this time of year. Yes, I know, we *could* stake

them to hold them up. We don't go in much for that sort of effort!



Erodium sp

This Erodium has an identical history – received as a small cutting and placed in the edge of a crevice in one of the slab beds. It was not long before it showed its true stature making it look completely out of place. I lifted it in summer with as much of the tap root as I could get and replanted it at the edge of a bulb bed. After about three weeks its sorry looking foliage picked itself up indicating that the plant had successfully established a new root system to support the plant. This year it is bigger than ever enjoying

its new home and sending up masses of stems each topped off with a cluster of lovely flowers. My advice is that if mistakenly planted in an inappropriate place do not be afraid to move it – just do it at the best time of year to allow the plant to survive. With most herbaceous plants the best time to move them is when they are just coming into active growth. All those hormones and nutrients flowing through their system should in most cases enable them to recover quickly provided you water them well, making sure they never dry out.



Nature put this Digitalis next to the Allium and provided me with a lovely photo opportunity – it is not just the individual plants that make a garden but the combinations and contrasts that they make.



Allium schoenoprasum (above)

We always have a few pots of common chives for cooking and one pot has produced a few stems of with much better flowers. The flower on the right is typical of the ones we grow but I much prefer the bigger flower on the left that has appeared this year.



View

One of the many combinations that are providing the flowering interest can be seen in this view with Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' in the foreground, the white daisies of various Celmisia species next to Dactylorhiza from garden seedlings and Meconopsis baileyii in the background



Dactylorhiza

Once you establish some Dactylorhiza in your garden you should find that they will start to seed around naturally. I always help by distributing some of the seeds around into areas that are not going to be disturbed for a few years. Although they can grow most places the seedlings appear most often in troughs, old seed pots, and through the middle of mats and cushion forming plants.

This constant supply of young vigorous plants allied with regular division means that we can have lots of these all over the garden.

Here they can be seen growing with what I think is *Arisaema jacquemontii*.

Despite having the Gusman's *Arisaema* book I have still not become familiar with the names of this fascinating genus.



Poppy and Dactylorhiza

This is the ultimate ‘time share’ in our small south facing hot bed where among other things we grow Tulips that enjoy the heat to ripen their bulbs. Poppy also enjoys this heat and decided that there was nothing much growing there just now so she would have a snooze in the warm sunshine.



Lilies

Lilies are another group of plants that are appearing everywhere – they are well capable of pushing themselves up through the undergrowth of leaves to flower above the green carpet.

Cardiocrinum giganteum

Cardiocrinum giganteum is the giant among lilies and I have read reports of it growing up to 'twelve feet tall'. Our plants generally reach about half of that and flower at around two meters tall. I suspect that the wetter your climate the taller it will grow and the giant form was growing on the west coast of Scotland where they get a great deal more rain than we do on the drier east coast of Scotland. I must say that as I write the rain is tipping down here in Aberdeen which, while miserable for us on the longest days, is essential for the garden which has suffered an unusually prolonged dry spell. No matter how much rain we get I always give the Cardiocrinum a watering can of water supplemented by some potassium rich liquid feed at half the recommended strength every few days. These are primitive monocarpic bulbs that will die after flowering however if the conditions are favourable they will produce a ring of small daughter bulbils around the old bulb. If they are dry at this stage of growth they will just produce some seed heads but give them plenty of water and you should get some bulbils as well.





Cardiocrinum giganteum



Lilium szovitsianum

A few more pictures of some of the lilies out just now.



Lilium szovitsianum

Nomocharis

Because they are so promiscuous and hybridise so freely I no longer attribute species names to Nomocharis in the garden but with its whorled leaves and very spotted flowers this one comes very close to being *N. pardanthina*.

A close up of a flower appears below.





Corydalis davidii



Corydalis davidii leaves

I got *Corydalis davidii* from the same source and while it is not spectacular it is a pleasant garden plant with good yellow flowers.

It is described as a common species in southern Sichuan where it is found growing along roadsides, fences and walls as well as in secondary forests. This suggests that it should adapt well to most conditions in our garden and I do

hope it will seed around and give added colour to some of the bulb beds at a time when many of the bulbs are going dormant for the summer.



Corydalis calcicola

A few weeks ago, Bulb log 22-11, I showed a *Corydalis* in bud that I did not remember the name of or where it came from. Well just how good are our Forum and our Forumists, as within no time I had a suggestion of the name

Corydalis calcicola from Bjørnar Olsen and that was enough to spark my memory. That is precisely what it is – the flowers confirm this- I was given a tiny seedling by Peter Korn.

The reason I am showing two pictures is to illustrate the advantage of using the control of flash power if your camera has this facility. I used my Cannon PowerShot SX210IS which I think is a wonderful compact that can be used on fully automatic or set with all the manual control you could want.

It was a bit difficult to get the detail I wanted in the poor light without using flash. The picture on the right was taken with the flash on the default setting which, as I was close to the subject, has burnt out most of the light colours, by reducing the flash to minus two, I got a satisfactory exposure, left, that shows little evidence of being illuminated by flash.

If your camera does not offer this facility then an alternative way is to use the optical zoom on your camera. Zoom out to a longer lens setting framing the picture in the same way but from much further back – this will also reduce the effect of the flash. This is a useful method that I use a lot with my Cannon Ixus that does not offer control of the flash power especially at Shows where light is often low and you want a close up picture but do not want the sometimes overpowering glare of flash. One last view below to close off this week's bulb log.

