



BULB LOG 24.....13th June 2012



Garden view



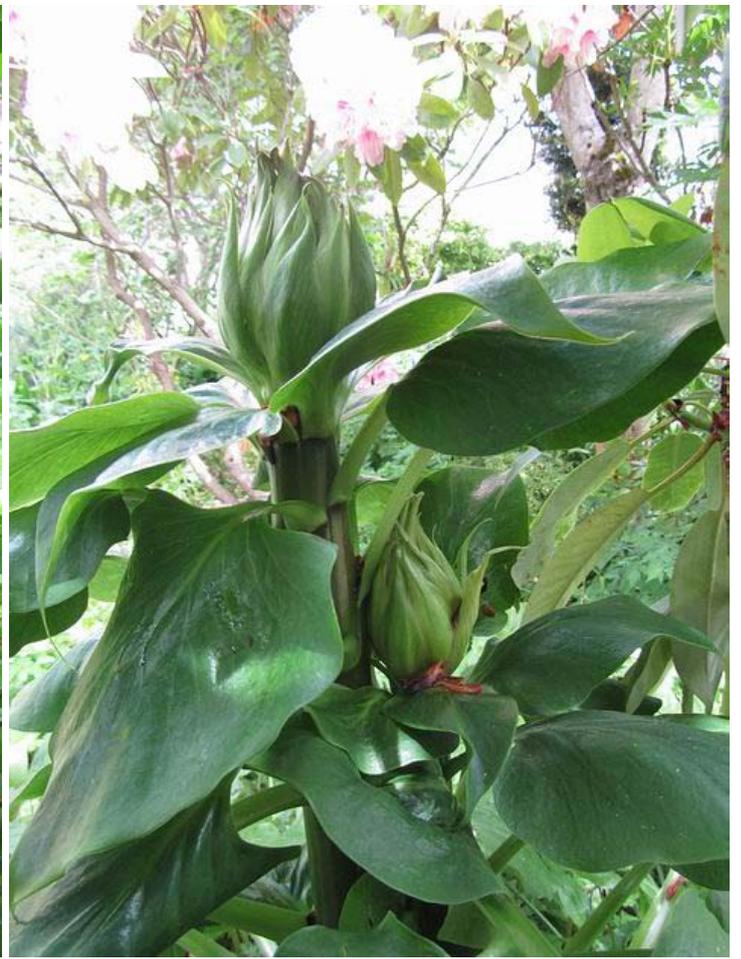
Rhododendron ‘Albert Schweitzer’ and Acer ‘Crimson King’

Creating views is a very important part of garden layout. You should never be able to stand in one spot and see all of the garden now matter how small or large your space is. In the foreground of the opening picture the rock work of a raised bed combines with the background of our mini woodland and shrub garden to give a uniform view. The trees and shrubs block your view in some directions but open up glimpses through to other areas to attract you to wander. All this contributes to the garden appearing bigger than it actually is.



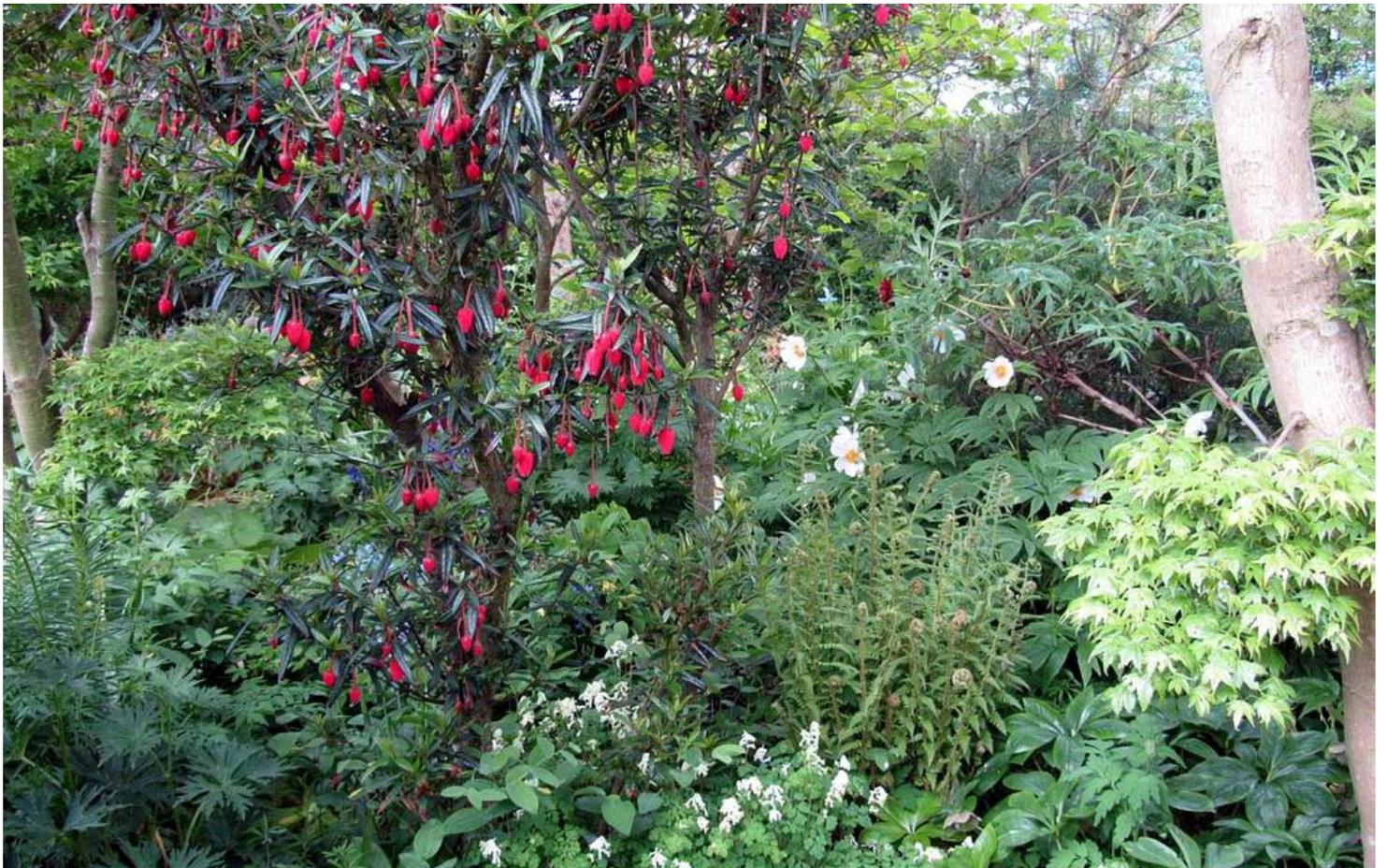
The beautiful and fabulously scented flowers of **Rhododendron decorum** raised from ACE seed and (below) how we use this shrub to form yet another vista to invite and lead you to walk around the garden. However you cannot walk directly that way as you have to continue on a sweep of path around a mature four metre high Acer.





Cardiocrinum giganteum

Hopefully as you walk around the trees and shrubs your eye is taken by the many plants such *Cardiocrinum giganteum* that grow below. This towering member of the lily family is always a big attraction for visitors and this specimen is unusual in that the stem divides low down into two, each capped with a cluster of flower buds – I have not witnessed this before.



Some views offer only a barrier to your progress and you have to seek another way around but pause to admire the scarlet red flowers of *Crinodendron hookerianum*.



Crinodendron hookerianum

This South American shrub was completely defoliated and many of the branches cut back by the cold winter of 2010/11 however it has responded to a good prune and is again covered in flowers. Note how just turning slightly around from the previous picture the barrier has lifted and another invitation to wander appears in the distance.



Mass plantings of Aquilegia and Meconopsis attract your eye.



All these *Aquilegia* and the *Meconopsis* have self seeded. I like to think I am in control and will decide where plants will grow but nature intervenes all the time and the control I exercise is to allow it to happen. We do have to move or weed out some self seeded plants if they are in a totally inappropriate place but others, like the group below, of *Meconopsis* seeded at the edge of the path are very welcome.





Meconopsis betonicifolia

I just cannot resist another close up of what must be one of the most beautiful combinations of form and colour in the plant world.



Corydalis capitata* and *Corydalis flexuosa

Another spontaneous planting where *Corydalis capitata* has self seeded into a group of *Corydalis flexuosa*.



Phylothamnus erectus

This colour combination of pink *Phylothamnus erectus* against the blue *Corydalis* was planned but what lifts it to a higher level is the few self seeded *Tulipa sprengii* adding spots of bright red. Observe the leaves of *Tropaeolum* on the left of the picture. This is also self seeded but cannot stay as experience has taught us that this rampant climber will kill dwarf ericaceous shrubs in a matter of weeks if it takes a grip.



The flowers of **Paris japonica** are developing a pink colour as they start to fade, just as we see in many Trilliums.



***Narcissus watieri* seedlings**

Although late summer early autumn is the optimum time to sow many bulbous seeds you will get success sowing them at other times. These *Narcissus watieri* seedlings were only sown in late February this year and placed in an open plunge where they are now germinating. When I sowed them I did not expect germination until early next year, typically as the parent bulbs would be starting to push up their leaves but I am

pleasantly surprised. Perhaps the strange weather we have experienced with cold then a heat wave in March followed by more cold then another heat wave a few weeks ago, when they appeared, made the seeds think they had been through a winter and a summer already.



***Fritillaria pluriflora* seed germinating**

My usual guide is to sow fritillaria seed within the optimum late summer window and any that I get after November I keep until the following September however I make exceptions of the North American species – I suspect that you could also include the Chinese species. You can see here that these were also only sown in late February and a few are germinating.



***Erythronium citrinum* and *Fritillaria atropurpurea* seed germinating**

Two more pots, *Erythronium citrinum* and *Fritillaria atropurpurea* sown around the same late date are also germinating now. I cannot remember so many late sown bulb seeds germinating so quickly before and I do strongly suspect that the many cycles of cold to hot temperatures caused by our very erratic weather this year has effectively unlocked the seeds' germination triggers.



Rhododendron yakushmanum

Rhododendron yakushmanum climbing over our dyke is one of the many trees and shrubs that have taken over our front garden.



Close by is a yakushimanum hybrid - Rhododendron 'Vintage Rose'



The new growth on *Vaccinium floribundum*, also over the dyke, shows you do not always need flowers to provide bright colour.



Vaccinium ovatum

Similarly the stunning new leaves of *Vaccinium ovatum* are a wonderful display of colour - this is followed by a mass of flowers and then delicious dark fruits in the autumn.



Trochocarpa thymifolia

Another delightful this time dwarf shrub of the Epacridaceae/ Ericaceae is *Trochoarpa thymifolia* – or whatever name it now goes under.



Galium odoratum forms a delightful green carpet with a froth of white flowers under the jungle of trees and shrubs that we call our front garden. It is more welcome than its taller growing relative *Galium aparine*, commonly called 'Sticky Willy' in these parts as it is covered in tiny hooks that cling to anything making it appear sticky. We have *Galium aparine* as a weed in our garden - I can say the young shoots are edible and give a delicious pea flavour as a foraged element to a salad

