



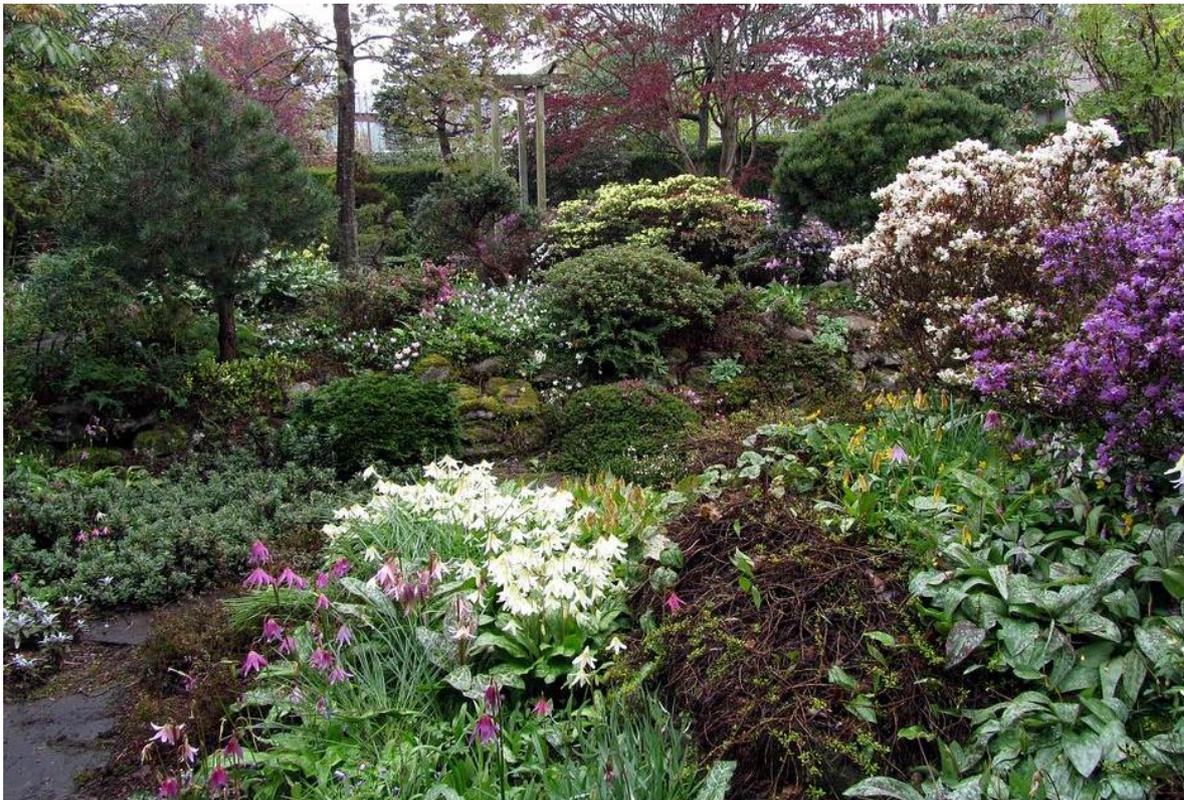
BULB LOG 19.....7th May 2014



A beautiful **Ledum** fills the foreground of the opening picture - we raised it many years ago from seed collected in Japan. This genus is now sunk along with Azalea into Rhododendron but in our garden at least we retain the distinction as meaningful to gardeners. The view also reminds me how important having a good structure is to any garden – no matter how much I love bulbs nor how many months we can have some in flower, they are all transient additions decorating the areas below the structural plants that are highly visible every day of the year.



Erythronium oregonum and Fritillaria meleagris



The peak of the Erythroniums has now passed accelerated by the changeable weather - a mix of warm sunny days, then temperatures which plunged down to zero followed by cold wet days all hasten the demise of the already wilting flowers. However there are some later flowering forms and species that are just coming out to extend the Erythronium flowering season for a few more weeks. On the seed front the first signs are that we will

get a reasonable seed harvest this year – the weather was so bad last year we got hardly any bulbous seed from the garden. On the left you can see some pink Erythronium revolutum flowering beside creamy white Erythronium ‘White Beauty’ these have resulted in many hybrid seedlings.



I showed the leaves of these **Erythronium revolutum** hybrids a few weeks ago on the [Forum](#) and here are the flowers of hybrid 2. Although not the best of the group as far as leaf markings this plant certainly has flower power with up to eight flowers per stem and it is showing a willingness to clump up.



Erythronium revolutum with eight flowers



Ericaceous plants form so much of the evergreen structure in our garden from small *Vacciniums* and *Cassiope* through to the larger *Pieris* and *Rhododendrons* all are every bit as important as the bulbs.





Around the path another group of self-sown *Erythronium revolutum* showing a much darker colour. There is a tall violet/pink form that is quite typical of many but we also have groups that are almost red - this colour is passed on to the seedlings.

Colchicum leaves are featured in the foreground – they can be large and you need to take that into account when you plant them. We associate them with bulbs that flower very early, *Corydalis*, *Eranthis*, *Galanthus*, before the *Colchicum* leaves appear. *Hellebores* also flower early and are large enough to compete with the *Colchicum* leaves and other bulbs, such as *Allium*, that will emerge as the *colchicum* leaves die back, then we are treated to the amazing display of *Colchicum* flowers in Late August/September.





It is now as the leaves of *Corydalis solida* turn yellow and collapse that I lift and divide the tubers - if I leave it too long the leaves will disappear making it difficult for me to find the clumps of tubers.



It really makes a difference to the vigour of the clumps if you can lift and divide them at least every two or three years then you can expect the tubers to at least double in numbers each year. If left undivided the clumps can become congested resulting in ever smaller tubers with smaller leaves and few flowers. I have some of the plants plunged in these mesh bottomed pots which makes it very easy to lift them without any damage. Mixing some fresh leafmould back in with the soil will invigorate the plants.



Fritillaria pallidiflora* and *Trillium grandiflorum

Remember if your season is more advanced than ours that the best time to divide your Trilliums is as the flowers start to fade. Handle them carefully, replant and water them in well then they will grow on next year without any check in growth – lift them in the spring or autumn as many books advise and they will take a year to recover.



Fritillaria pallidiflora is a wonderful plant for the garden; we have it in many beds and find it self-seeding.



Here is *Fritillaria pallidiflora* again in another bed with the less showy brown flowers *Fritillaria pyrenaica*.



Acers and Rhododendrons help divide the garden up making it an interesting landscape rather than the almost flat garden it actually is. Even standing in one place and just turning around, as I did for the next two pictures gives us many different aspects and views



Rhododendron primuliflorum with its clusters of tiny pink flowers and small fragrant leaves is one of our favourites.



Across the path in the trillium bed is a beautiful pink hybrid with much bigger flowers and outstanding foliage. It is a *R. yakushimanum* x *recurvoides* cross.



Rhododendron yakushimanum x recurvoides





I cannot resist showing you a few later flowering Erythroniums like this group of **Erythronium grandiflorum**.



Erythronium grandiflorum has yellow flowers with different colours of pollen this picture shows the yellow and cream varieties.



Erythronium montanum has struggled to open its flowers during the cold wet spell but when the sun shines they are magnificent. You can see the rain damage to the flowers in the close view of another group below.



Erythronium montanum



Busy Bee with laden pollen sacks on its hind legs takes a well earned rest – it is not designed to pollinate many of the alien plants that populate our garden its shape makes it more suitable for landing on a large flat upwards facing flower such as my dandelion below.



I have been taking around 30 spent flowers a day off my **Dandelion** for well over a week now to prevent it seeding – not many plants flower this freely.....