



BULB LOG 25.....24th June 2015





None of the *Meconopsis* currently growing in the garden were planted by us: they are a naturalised population seeding themselves around. Occasionally I will help the seed distribution, scattering it into new areas, but for the most part the plants grow where the seed lands – if it germinates in an inappropriate place I will shift the seedlings as they start into growth in their second or third spring. This is one of the governing principles behind our garden that it should mimic as near as possible a natural feel, albeit in an unnatural setting. We adjust and create the environment where we can have an influence, mostly by ground work, then the plants and our weather do the rest.



The second principle is that wherever possible each bed should change through the seasons providing interest for as many periods as possible. Above left is one of the spring beds as it is today on the right how it was around a month ago and before that it had *Eranthis*, *Galanthus*, *Corydalis solida* etc so this is at least the third major flowering phase in one bed and it there is more to come.



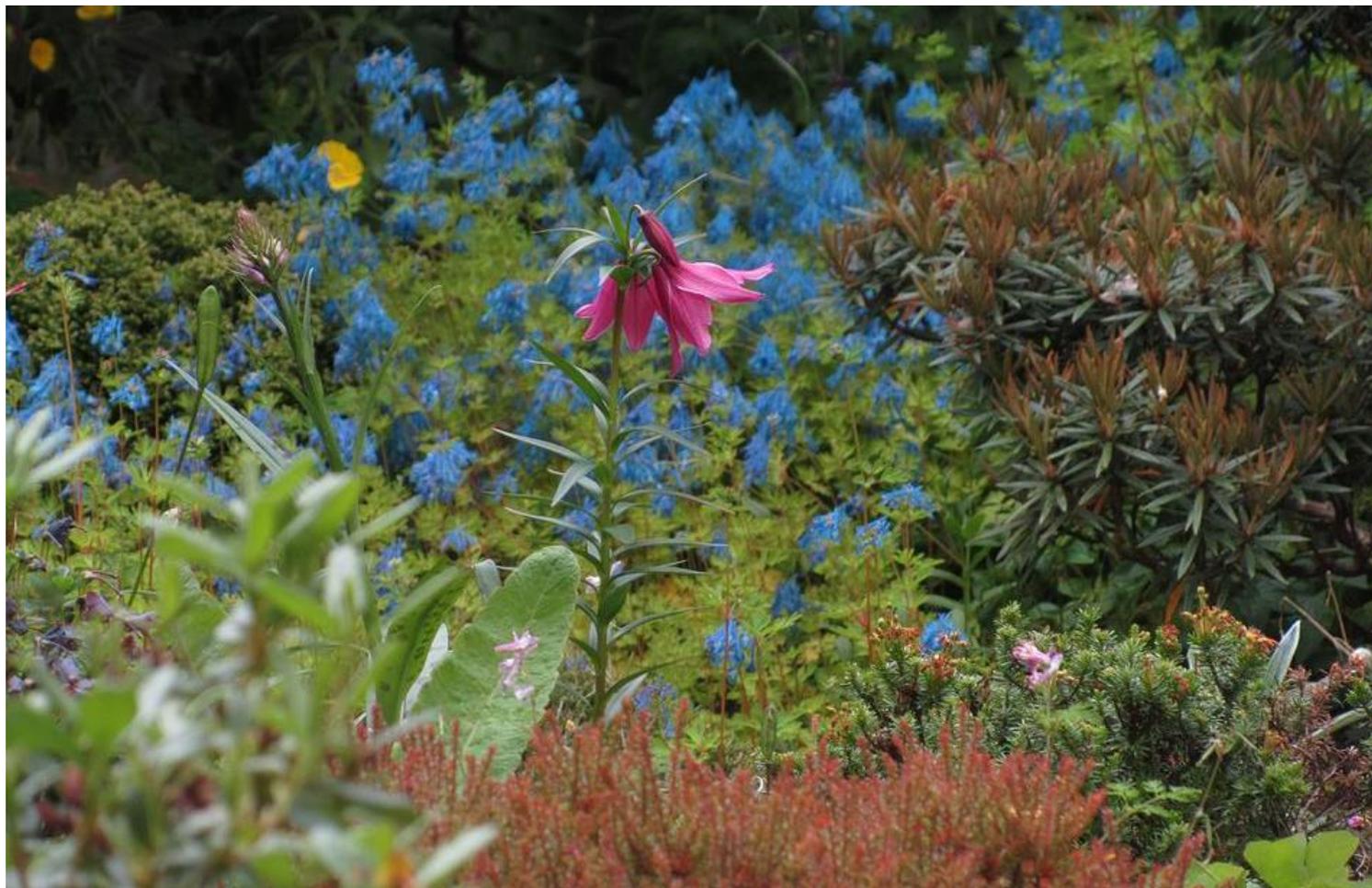
If you look carefully in the previous picture you can see the next wave of growth part of which is in the form of *Arisaema ciliatum* and *Dactylorhiza* - these are both seeding and running around.



Lilium mackliniae is high on my list of favourite lilies.



This is a dark form of **Lilium mackliniae** the result of crossing the commonly seen white form with the more recently introduced shorter and much darker coloured Naga form. It is growing here with *Arisaema ciliatum* and a purple *Corydalis* hybrid – a cross between *Corydalis capitata* and either *Corydalis* ‘Craigton Blue’ or *Corydalis flexuosa* – in the background is *Vaccinium numularia*.



Lilium mackliniae Naga form grows much shorter in our garden and it also has very dark flowers – here it is growing on the raised humus rich wall with Corydalis ‘Craigton Blue’ forming a contrasting backdrop.



Lilium mackliniae Naga form



Most of the flowering plants in this view have resulted from self-seeding, the *Aquilegia* and *Corydalis* included.



This Peony, seen in the background of the previous picture, was the kind gift of a friend from the Forum who sent us a small plant a few years ago, now it has really settled into its new home.



The yellowing *Colchicum speciosum* leaves have now served their duty of feeding the bulbs so they can now be removed. You always have to remember to take this spring leaf growth into account when you plant *Colchicum* which flower in late August and September filling this bed with large goblet shaped flowers of white and purple.



For companion plantings we choose subjects that are large enough to rise up through the *Colchicum* leaves such as Hellebores, *Aquilegia*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and the taller *Alliums*.



Weeds are a state of mind so plants only become a weed if I decide it is in the wrong place or not wanted. You may have noticed this stylish plant in the foreground of the picture at the top of the last page. The thistle-like **Sonchus asper** is a common plant seen in mountain areas, waste ground, as well as our gardens where most people would condemn it as a weed. I

spotted this one last year as a small rosette and as a biennial it flowers in its second year so I left it growing in the rock edging around this bed and now we are rewarded with the superb form of its leaves it will have small yellow dandelion like flowers.



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' - we were pleased to see this featured in an article by Roy Lancaster on the excellent [Hartside Nursery](#) in the July RHS journal "The Garden".

If we did not allow plants to self-seed or weeded them all out when they did we would never have found **Corydalis** ‘**Craigton Blue**’, seen on the right, still growing where I first discovered it. Now; for seed to germinate it has to fall on suitable ground and that old biblical saying that suggests seed that falls on stony ground will fail is far from factual as it is the gravel areas where most of our seedlings appear. Few seeds will germinate in a lawn of grass and any that do are likely to be cut back by the regular cutting of the grass so my advice is to replace your lawn with gravel which will become a wonderful seed bed. We are lucky that few weed seeds germinate!



These two pictures show **Meconopsis seedlings** self-sown into a gravel area above and a sand bed below. All our weeding is done by hand and the rule is you first have to identify the plant, then you must decide if it is in the wrong place, before you pull it out.



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All the Meconopsis on the rock garden bed put themselves there. I would not have thought of planting them in a bed full of small plants and bulbs but nature shows it works as all the smaller subjects flowered long before the meconopsis came into active growth giving us a wonderful display.



Meconopsis cambrica is among the many self-seeders we allow to grow only removing it where it would out-compete other smaller plants. Here and below some other plants in growth just now, like the Delphinium, are well able to hold their own territory.





The bulb bed that started the year in February with Galanthus, Eranthis, Crocus, Corydalis, etc has also gone through a number of flowering phases and now it is in a summer jungle-type growth. Soon Primula florindae and Dactylorhiza flowers will feature.



Looking down the large dark flowers of **Podophyllum peltatum** are hidden from view by the large leaves but from a low level view their dark colour makes them stand out from some distance.



I love to create, or perhaps I should say allow such plantings as this to occur, where a number of plants, some rare many common, grow in a happy community forming a delightful tapestry.



***Celmisia spectabilis* and *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'**



Celmisia incana growing through a spreading carpet of *Galium odoratum* – the *Galium* will die back during the summer leaving the silver *Celmisia* leaves to become the star feature.



The same *Celmisia* is pictured here with a *Primula? cernua*. Remember to check for the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplements on the forum](#).....