



BULB LOG 25..... 22nd June 2016



The front cover shows a group of *Dactylorhiza* that have self-seeded - obviously they have hybridised as they are taller than the more compact *Dactylorhiza purpurella* which can be seen behind.



As you can see above there is significant variation even within this group of three hybrids. It was my original thought to remove the taller forms from the slab bed and just leave the shorter ones but now I am not sure so for now they will remain there.

In the foreground you will see one of the troughs, grouped around the slab bed, is full of the easily grown ***Erinus alpinus***.

These were all established by simply scattering

the seeds on to the trough and waiting – now they are allowed to self-seed so there are plants of all ages from full flowering mature plants to germinating seedlings.



Towards the front is the silver saxifrage trough into which the **Dactylorhiza purpurella** seeded – here they remain short with many more seedling leaves appearing though the rosettes of the saxifrage.



Dactylorhiza purpurella is a native and can be seen growing in many locations around Aberdeen - from a few individual specimens I spotted growing in the grass at our local Medical Centre to this expansive colony in a field a few miles to the west.



There are literally thousands of them growing in the wetter areas of this field the majority are *Dactylorhiza purpurella* but we did find one *Dactylorhiza maculata*.



Dactylorhiza purpurella



Dactylorhiza maculata



Dactylorhiza purpurella can also be found at the seaside by the mouth of the River Dee, the entrance to Aberdeen harbour.



A few weeks ago I was complaining the garden was very dry and I had to water some new plantings and troughs however since then we have had almost a week of constant rain and wind which has both helped and battered the garden. You can see the damage of constant rain in the flowers of this pink form of **Ramonda myconii**.



Molly helps be assess the damage caused to the plants by the wind and rain. The damage is mostly to the taller flower stems of Aquilegia and Camassia which have been battered flat. This is superficial damage and my disappointment of not having a longer sunny dry period to enjoy these flowers is put into perspective by the long term benefit of the plants having a good supply of moisture.



Rhododendron leaves

Many Rhododendrons are considered 'evergreen' which means they are never without leaves - it does not mean that the leaves last for ever. The leaves of different species (and hybrids) last for different periods but they all eventually turn yellow and fall off.



Some, such as *Rhododendron decorum*, have leaves that last one year - in this picture you can see last year's leaves already starting to turn as the new growth leaves emerge. Others have leaves that will last two years - whichever cycle they follow the new leaves grow before older ones are dropped as a result these shrubs are never without leaves. Now Azalea has been sunk into 'Rhododendron' we have to remember that many of them are deciduous.



Rhododendron



Rhododendron ponticum



Yellow flowers of Laburnum, cinnamon peeling bark of *Acer griseum* and *Rhododendron ponticum*.



The cool wet weather means that many *Celmisia* grow very well in our garden.

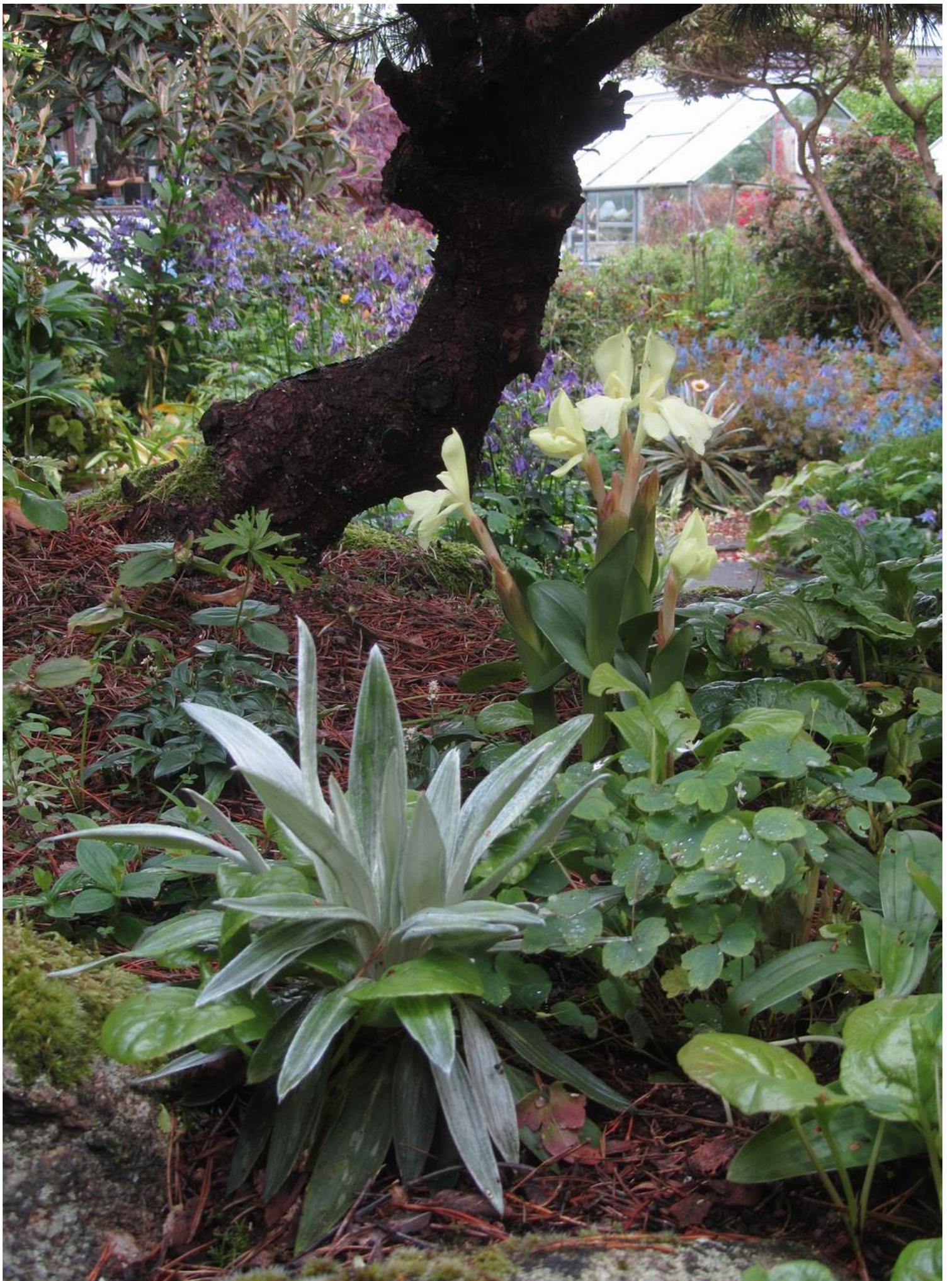




Celmisia walkerii



Celmisia spectabilis



Celmisia semicordata seedling with a yellow flowered form of *Roscoea cauteloides*.



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' has been knocked sideways by the wind but the colour and the scent are still lovely.



My single box of **Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'** is also still flowering and growing well – I intend to split this as soon as the main growth is over to maximise the rate of increase. There are several similar hybrids in the garden but this is my confirmed favourite because of the clean colour of purple, the number of flowers and the way they are

displayed above the foliage.



I planted a group of **Corydalis pseudobarbispala** seedlings out in this bed last year and now they are flowering for the first time.



Corydalis pseudobarbispala



Collecting and sowing your own seed is especially important for monocarpic species such as **Saxifaga longifolia**.



Muscari seed pods will soon be ripe.



Codonopsis obtusa

Seeds are germinating in the seed frames with some seedlings growing on to fill the pots.



Tricyrtis flavus



Corydalis temulifolia

I know that the general advice is to prick out seedlings 'as soon as they are large enough to handle' but that is not what I have found to be best for all plants. I can understand doing this if you are raising cushion plants that would get deformed if grown too crowded together but for the majority of plants that I grow it is far better to leave them undisturbed until growth appears in the second spring. If they look to be too crowded I will pot them on en-masse which gives them a larger root run with minimal disturbance in the first year



I place some compost into to bottom of a larger pot then place a pot the same size as the seed pot before filling the pots up with compost. Next I water the compost and the seed pot fully and allow them to drain, this firms up the



compost allowing me to remove the smaller pot leaving a pot sized whole.

Next I turn the seed pot upside down and tap the edge which releases the contents, you can see that the roots have grown all through the compost and are ready to explore the new compost. Now I drop this into the void and give the pot a tap on the ground to firm it in



The seedlings roots now have more room to grow undisturbed – and I have a seed pot full of moist compost ready for sowing any of the seeds that I am collecting, such as *Corydalis*, that are best sown fresh.



Sand seed bed

I have always noted how well the seeds that strayed into the sand beds grew so a few years ago I converted this part of the seed area from a frame for conventional seed pots to just a bed of sand. So far the sand seed bed is very successful with many Trillium, Erythronium and Lily seeds simply scattered onto the sand growing on well.

I have sown a few in mesh plunge baskets, also just filled with sharp sand, so that I can keep them labelled but the rest are sown in with no labels. As they are just for the garden I am not too worried if they get mixed up, hopefully we will be able to positively identify them when they flower.





The seed area is down the West side of the house and it is separated from the front drive by a wooden fence and gateway which in turn is hidden from view, from the front, by *Crinodendron hookerianum*, a *Clematis australis* and an old rambling rose that has thorns so vicious that it provides better security than razor wire.



Clematis australis



The feature plant in the front, west drive just now is **Phyteuma spicata** which is loved by the bees.



As soon as the flowers are past we pull the stems of most of them, just leaving a few for seeds, this opens the way for the *Geranium sanguineum* to be seen as they come into flower.



East Drive

The *Phyteuma spicata* is too tall to be gown in the other drive where our car sits we just get away with the *Dactylorhiza* that have seeded in as so far they are undamaged by the car passing over them.



The *Dactylorhiza* in the drive brings me neatly back to close this week with a wider view of the slab bed shown on the cover.....