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----- Bulb Log Diary -----

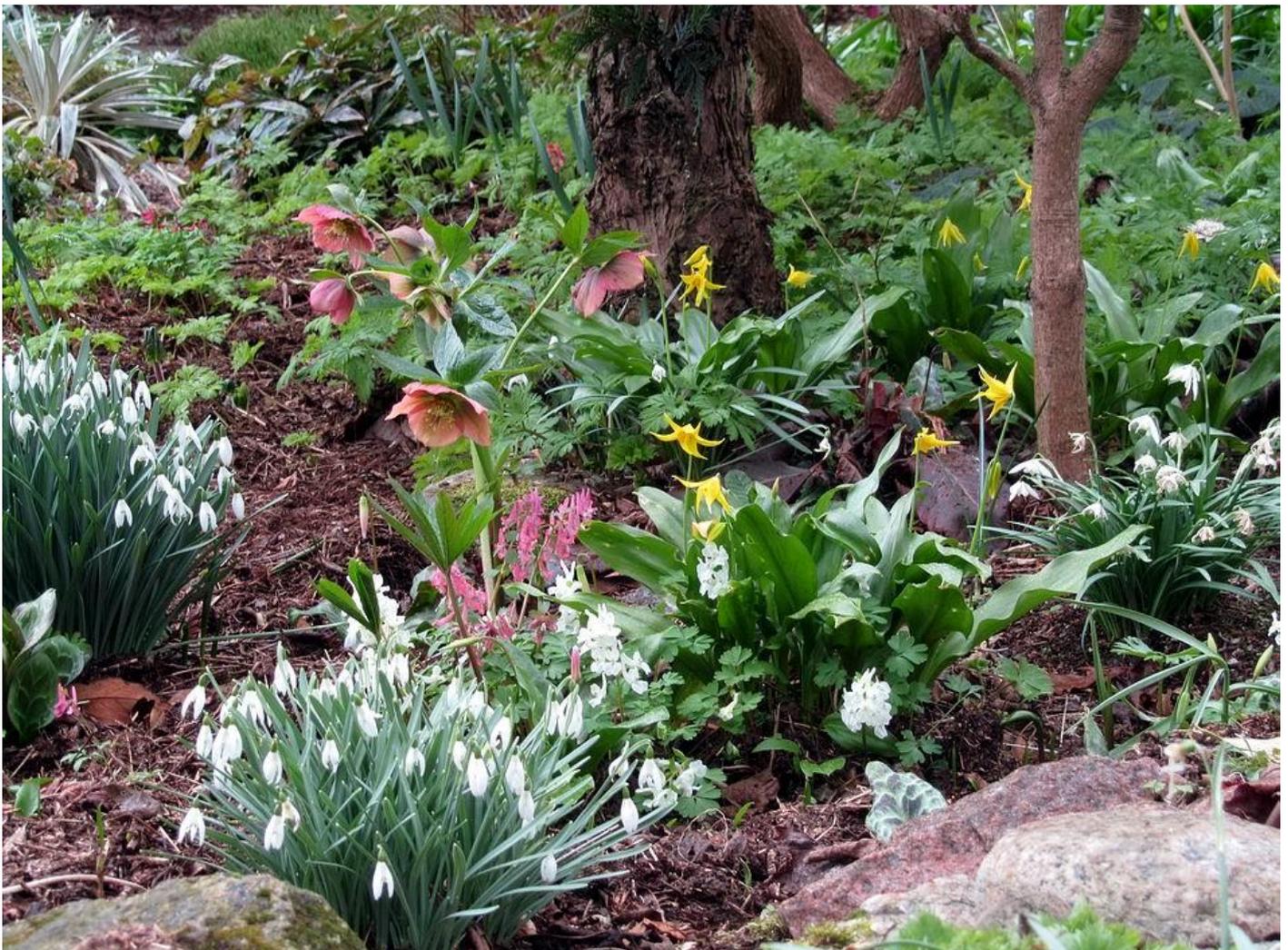
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BULB LOG 13.....30th March 2016





The number of hellebores we grow increases year by year - having originally planted out some attractive forms we now allow them to self-seed and it is fascinating to see the variations in the seedlings as they come into flower. Hellebores fit in well with the early flowering bulbs forming some very attractive colour combinations. In the foreground is an early flowering *Erythronium citrinum* hybrid whose flowers have a distinct green colour mimicking those of some hellebores.



The yellow flowers of *Erythronium tuolumnense* are among the first of the Western North American species to flower for us this year - here they create an attractive scene with *Galanthus*, *Helleborus*, and *Corydalis*.

More hellebores seeding around below the bonsai stands, along with *Leucojum* flowers that are starting to go over and the bright pink *Corydalis solida* forms growing in boxes beside the slab bed.

Now the *Eranthis hyemalis* flowers are over the foliage starts to grow strongly and seed will be forming.



Corydalis solida pink



Bulb bed

The bulb bed changes daily as leaf growth on the *Colchicum* increases and the *Fritillaria imperialis* stems rise up. Not all the *Fritillaria imperialis* will flower this year - it can take them two or three years to build back up to flowering size again. To supplement the feeding and encourage them to grow back to flowering size I scattered a small amount of an NPK 7-7-7 Growmore fertiliser when the growth first appeared then I will add some potassium

in around a month's time.



The degree of overlap between the flowering periods of different genera varies from year to year - this year many snowdrops are still in good flower as the ***Corydalis solida*** and white ***Corydalis malkensis*** approach their peak.

See more colours of *Corydalis* in a new [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#).



Erythronium tuolumnense, Corydalis 'Craigton Red' and Erythronium oregonum flowering in the pot frame.



I swapped two frames over last year- this frame used to be filled with mesh plunge baskets while the adjacent larger frame was the Erythronium pot frame but I needed more space for mesh baskets and less for pots hence the change.



Erythronium dens canis white form



This view looks over the Hepatica and Corydalis planting, by the path, to the Erythronium plunge beds with the rock garden bed backing on to that. It will not be long before the Erythroniums are in full and glorious flower again.



There has been quite a lot more growth in the Hepatica and Corydalis since I showed them last week.



Hepatica pink form

There is a long standing question about whether you should remove the old leaves from Hepatica and if so when is the best time to do it. I am guided by the condition of the leaves - if the leaves start showing obvious signs of dying back I will remove them otherwise I leave them through the winter removing them before the flower buds start to extend.

I could not bring myself to remove the lovely shiny green

leaves from these plants - they are growing in quite deep shade under large Rhododendrons and the leaves have provided winter interest.



Hepatica pink form

Now the flowers look good nestled among the glossy green leaves.



Erythronium, a white seedling of **Crocus vernus** and **Crocus herbertii** flowering happily through a carpet of **Adoxa moschatellina**.



A chance pairing of **Crocus tommasinianus** and **Crocus heuffelianus** flowering in an old neglected trough - I did not plant them so they must have seeded in but I rather like this naturalistic look.



Crocus pelistericus growing in a mesh basket in one of the sand plunges.



A mixture of *Crocus*, mostly forms of *Crocus tommasinianus* and *vernus*, all grown from seed simply scattered onto the gravel of the driveway.



Once the first seedlings started to flower I encourage them to self-seed and so the display will grow.

A yellow **Crocus chrysanthus hybrid** brings additional colour and is forming a nice clump.

All the plants in our gravel driveways were introduced by simply scattering seed.



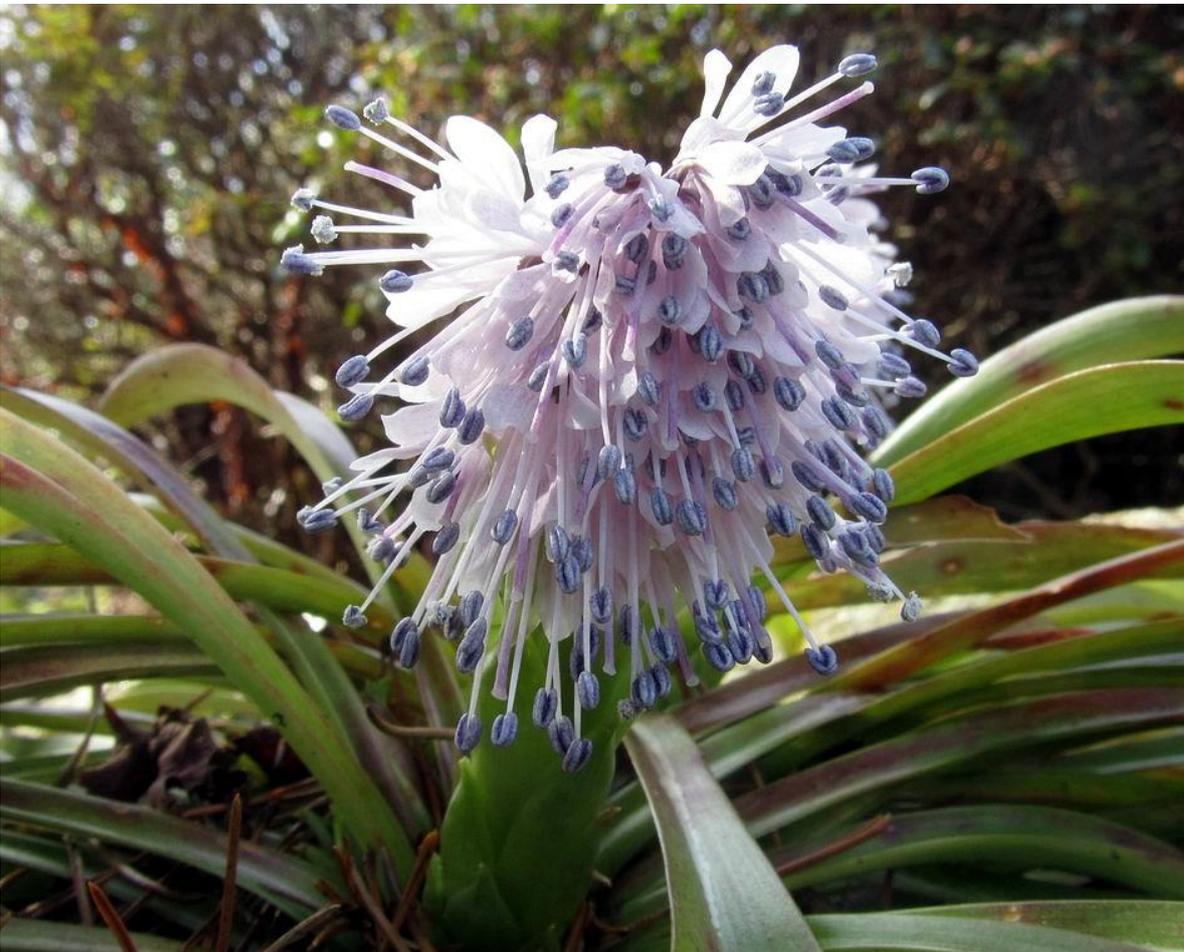


Artists are trained to see negative space, that is the shape of spaces between objects, and these two pictures sort of reflect that with the planted central gravel area between the concrete slabs above and the reverse below with the concrete slab of the path bounded by planted beds on either side.





Heloniopsis acutifolia BSWJ 218 and Heloniopsis orientalis



A few years ago I opened up an area under a dwarf pine when I removed all the lower branches – this gave me an interesting mini habitat to plant into and among the plants doing well there are these Heloniopsis

Heloniopsis orientalis



Eranthis and Galanthus with the red flowering Rhododendron thomsonii in the background.



Rhododendron thomsonii is always among the first to flower in our garden and this year it is looking magnificent, hanging heavy with flower. Most years we get strong winds as the flowers start to emerge which results in the majority of the flowers being blown off but that had not happened this year. It is just as the flowers first emerge from the bud that the petiole seems fragile after they have been out a

few days they seem to become a bit more resilient to the wind.



Rhododendron cilpinense is another of the earliest rhodos to flower and as a result it often loses its flowers prematurely to frosts but this year our weather has been kind and we are enjoying the flowers on this species.



Galanthus flowering through Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' foliage.



Most gardeners tend to be fixated with flowers but we should not ignore the foliage effects. Flowers on most plants only last for a few weeks while the foliage will be around for months and can provide very interesting effects especially when you contrast varying types, spiky, soft, patterned, etc.



Trillium ovatum maculosum

This form of *Trillium ovatum* differs from the type species by having lovely dark markings on the leaves – it is also a smaller growing plant only about half the size of any of the other *Trillium ovatum* we grow.



Trillium ovatum maculosum

The majority of the early growing bulbs have evolved to cope with night time frosts which is just as well as this Trillium is planted in our north facing front garden where the frost lingers longest.



Corydalis solida is also well adapted to withstand frosts – the stems flop to the ground as the plant draws the moisture down to the bulb to protect them from frost damage they quickly stand up again as the frost lifts.



Narcissus x susannae

I have been concentrating on the open garden and not showing so much from the bulb houses recently but I cannot ignore one of my all-time favourite plants so I finish this week with the beautiful *Narcissus x susannae*.....