



BULB LOG 30.....26<sup>th</sup> July 2017





**Lilium lankongense**

*Lilium lankongense* is not the showiest of the genus but it is among my favourites. It is an elegant plant with relatively small flowers which in a well-stocked garden you could easily walk past without noticing – I thought they should be flowering around now so I went in search of them and there they were.



**Lilium lankongense**

They have great elegance and I am fascinated by the way the stem emerges from the bulb traveling underground for some distance, producing small bulbils along the length, before deciding to turn upwards to break the ground and flower.

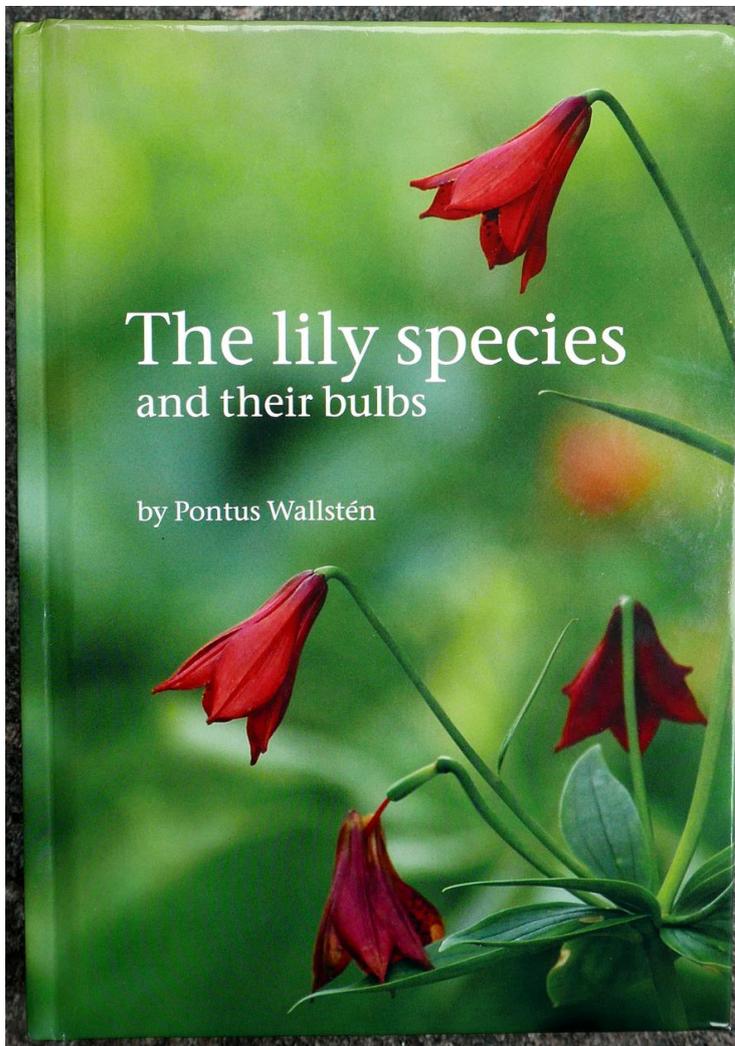


When you think about it this is an ingenious strategy - most new bulbs grow in the same position year after year which must lead to a reduction in the local nutrients- however *Lilium lankongense* with its stolon puts its new bulbs in a fresh position annually. We used to grow a lot more species of lily than we currently do and this is partly due to the fact that many of the bulbs are not long lived so you need to be continually raising and propagating to maintain them. The other factor is that as a garden matures the habitat and growing conditions change. In the early days of our garden we were constantly digging up grass to create new beds and in those days

we had masses of lilies, primulas and gentians all of which thrive in freshly dug newly created beds where the soil is open and full of humus – I refer to this as vegetable garden conditions. Over the years our trees and shrubs have grown to create a mini woodland type garden where the soil is full of roots and almost never dug over – we replenish the ground with an annual mulch of compost but rarely ever dig down so the plants that we grow tend towards those that can cope in this habitat.



**Lilium lankongense**



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THE LILY SPECIES AND THEIR BULBS 1

We were delighted to receive a new book **The LILY SPECIES AND THEIR BULBS** by Pontus Wallstén

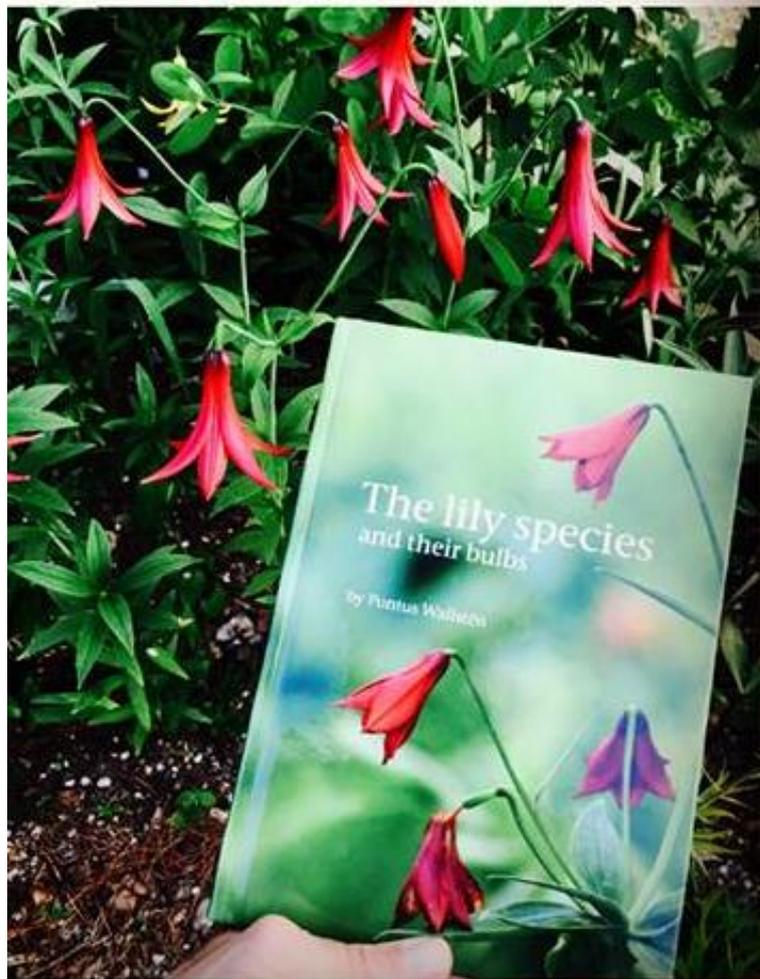


The first thing to impress me as I flicked through this book was the number and the quality of the pictures of both flowers and bulbs. Each of the 58 species of lily that the gardener is most likely to have access to has a double page spread with pictures of the flowers and importantly also the bulb - which I am very pleased to see. I also like that these species pages are listed alphabetically making them very easy to look up. The information provided about the plant does not go into great botanical descriptions; this book was never intended for that, but

more usefully it provides information about the plants' origin, key features of the flower and bulb and an extremely useful guide to its cultivation – everything most gardeners would want to know.



Chapter three which is similarly well illustrated and laid out covers lilies that are not commonly in cultivation and/or difficult to grow and there are some really tantalising beauties there, while those species that have not been in cultivation are covered in chapter four. Further chapters cover the author's experience of seeing lilies in the wild and those that he has grown plus a series of interviews with other experienced lily growers of many ages from across the world.

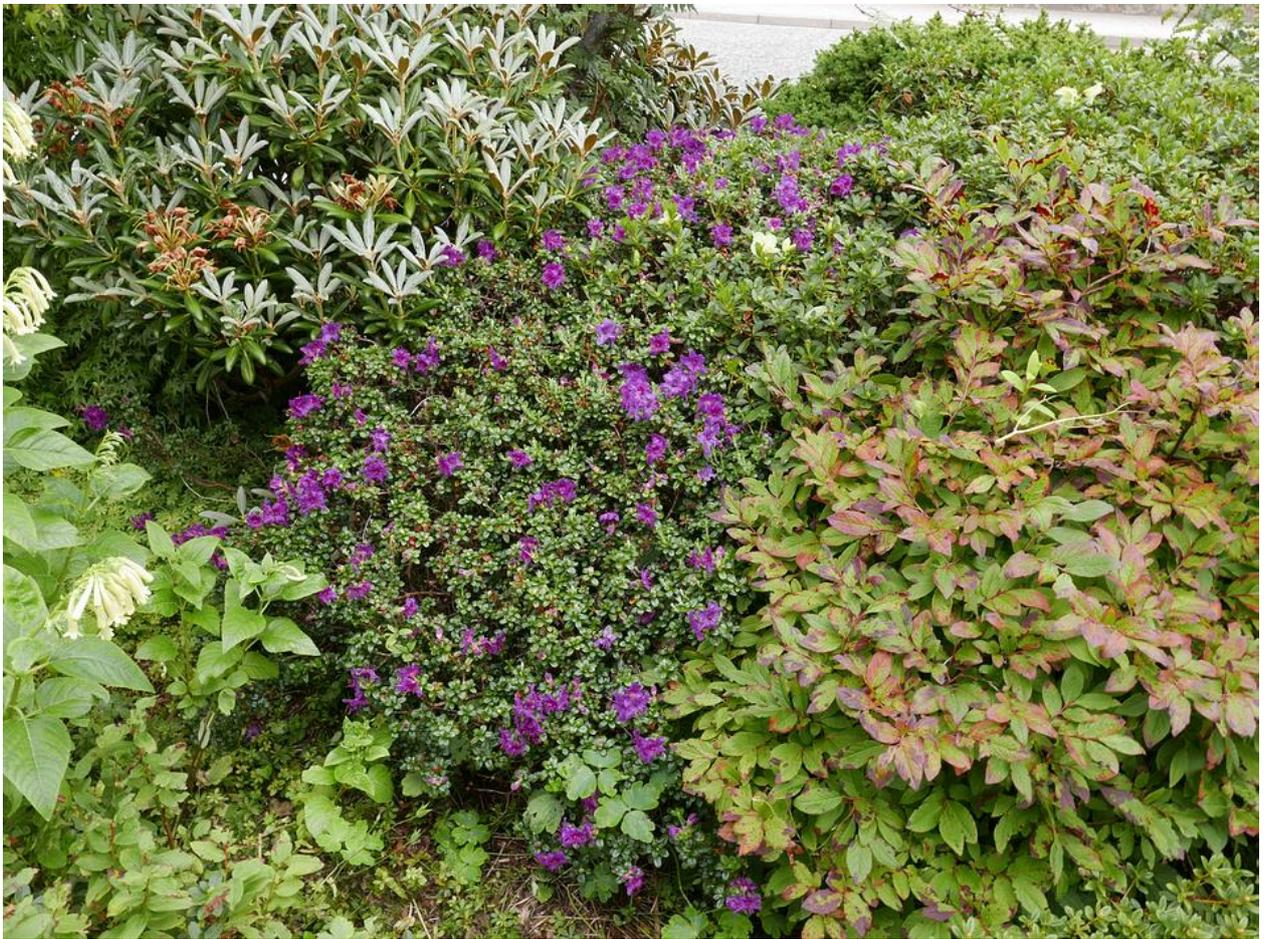


I find this an excellent book that would well serve and enlighten both beginners and expert growers alike; the author has many years of experience in growing lilies which he generously shares in a very readable and understandable way.

Gathering and recording the views and memories of other lily growers is a brilliant idea bringing together these wonderful plants and the fascinating people who have sought to tame them in cultivation. The pictures open at the double page spread alongside the flowering species were taken by the author and reflect the planning and attention to detail found throughout this book.

I congratulate Pontus Wallstén for writing and publishing this book and recommend it to you at a price of 45CHF (around £37).

For ordering copies and details of worldwide postal costs please email <mailto:pontus.wallsten@bluewin.ch> Check out [Pontus Wallstén Plants](http://PontusWallstenPlants.com) : his nursery specialises in rare and unusual bulbs and plants from all around the world.



**Rhododendron saluense**



Through the years you will find that I regularly feature this thirty year old **Rhododendron saluense**. Every year it produces flowers in both spring and again in summer – look carefully and you will see new foliage growth, seedpods and flowers all from the same branch of this small shrub.



**Primula florindae**



Primula florindae is another plant that features regularly and is one of the primulas that has stayed with us. It has the ability to adapt to a number of habitats – it thrives in wet conditions where it will grow large and lush while it also self-seeds into drier ground where it grows and flowers at a more moderate size. The flowers range from yellow through orange to red all having a dusting of farina.



***Primula florindae***



**An orange *Primula florindae* flowering in front of *Aciphylla glauca*.**



While the earliest **Dactylorhiza** to flower are now past others are still in their full glory.



I am juggling various garden tasks at the moment some of which are interconnected – when the weather permits I am working my way through repotting the *Erythronium* plunge baskets.



This task is long overdue, ideally I would like to replant them every two years but due to two excessively wet summers the baskets have not been touched for four years evidenced by the large tree and shrub roots that have grown in to rob the *Erythroniums* of the feeding.



***Erythronium sibiricum***



**Erythronium sibiricum**

Repotting the Erythroniums interconnects with the new bed I have been creating - because as there has been a good increase in the number of bulbs I am able to both replant the basket with the original quantity plus have a good number of Erythronium sibiricum bulbs to plant out in the new bed.

I raised the original bulbs from seed and the increase has come from the bulbs producing offsets.





### **Erythronium sibiricum**

I have a number of baskets containing seed raised Erythronium sibiricum bulbs some of these bulbs increase at a better rate producing many offsets. Along the top I placed a number of corms of Crocus nudiflorus albus which had migrated through the plunge into this basket –they are in an advanced stage of growth with shoots and stolons.



Remembering that this is four years' growth, this single bulb, you can spot it in the tray above with the sibling seedlings, has produced the best rate of increase. Like the previous one this basket was replanted and the surplus bulbs also went to my new bed.



**Trillium hibbersonii**

I have emptied a basket of *Trillium hibbersonii* seedlings and I am transferring all these plants to the new bed.



Here again you will see the evidence of the new white roots emerging from the bud containing next spring's flower. These roots are essential for normal growth next year and if they are damaged extensively that growth will be interrupted. The darker roots of previous years will stay active keeping the rhizome alive but are not what drives the flower for next year. I would prefer to have lifted these plants just as the flowers faded, which is when the new roots extend but as we use a very open mixture I can still handle the plants carefully without damaging the roots.



While sifting the contents of the basket I discovered some tiny seedlings showing different phases of early growth after germination. I suspect they are *Trillium hibbersonii* but they could equally be *Trillium rivale* seeded in from an adjacent basket.



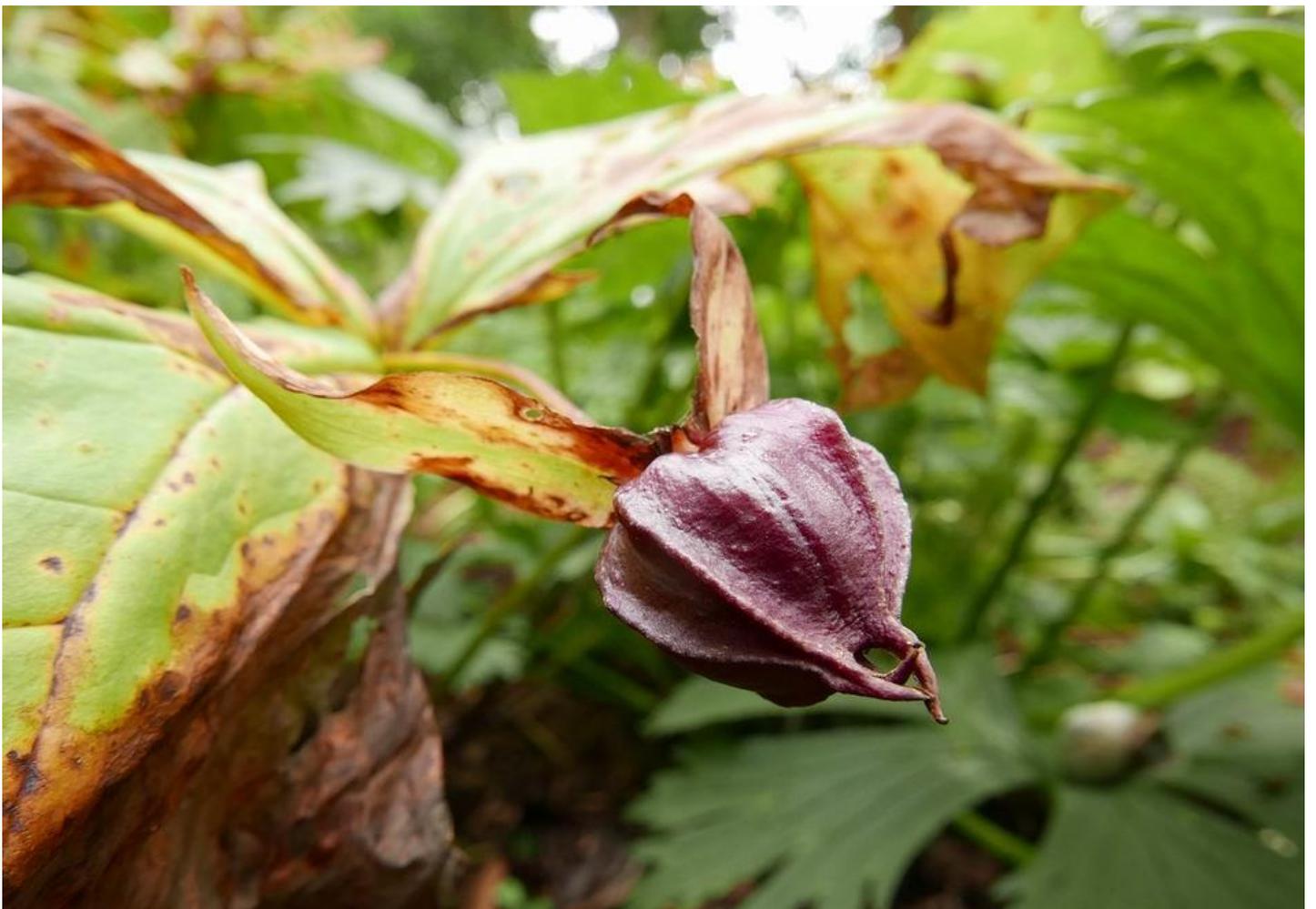
Trillium seed pods are ripening around the and many will produce garden hybrids these are on plants raised from *Trillium erectum* which I suspect are themselves hybrids.



I find my eye drawn to the ripening pods surrounded by the yellowing chewed leaves.



**Trillium grandiflorum**



**Trillium flexipes hybrid**



Something, probably a snail, has chewed the pod allowing me to see the fabric of the pod protecting the now exposed seed. It will be some weeks before the capsules shed their precious contents but these seeds are viable and could be harvested and sown now. Eagle eyed readers will also spot the adult Froghopper or Spittlebug whose nymphal form covers itself in a spit-like froth on plants in the summer.



Decay and renewal as the yellowing leaves mark the end of the season for some plants - **Cyclamen purpurascens** starts theirs with flowers and new leaves appearing.



I raised this plant from seed as **Corydalis temulifolia**? however the foliage does not quite match that typical of the species – I don't know if it can be variable or as the parent plants were in cultivation if these seedlings are hybrids. Either way I am happy to have them and will transfer them from the seed pot to the garden when growth dies back.



While I was photographing it I noticed some fat seed pods, seen on the right of this picture, but as I was adjusting the foliage to get close access for a picture of the seed pods they exploded scattering the seed across the seed frame.

I am very fond of these woodland Corydalis that flower in the summer so I will be watching for signs of the escaped seeds germinating.



I did manage to capture a few **Corydalis temulifolia** pods in my hand seed before they also exploded – you can see how the sides of the capsule recoil like a spring to fling the seed out.



**Corydalis temulifolia** (two to the left) and **Corydalis chaerophylla** foliage



**Corydalis chaerophylla**



**Corydalis chaerophylla foliage**

I first raised *Corydalis chaerophylla* from a seed collection by Alastair McKelvie, who sadly passed away recently; it was listed as *Corydalis* sp.

Many small yellow flowers are grouped on each flowering stem but I think the attractive feature of this plant is its fern-like foliage. Another good feature is that this plant looks after itself - it has seeded around since we planted out the first few seedlings.



**Corydalis davidii.**



Corydalis davidii is growing below the taller Corydalis chaerophylla – it is also a yellow flowered Himalayan species which grows well for us but has not yet started to spread by seed.

There are signs that a few seeds may be setting this year and indeed it is possible with our dense planting that there are some small seedlings around which we have not spotted yet and will find when they start to flower.



**Pseudofumaria lutea**



**Pseudofumaria alba**

Two colour forms of Pseudofumaria formally called Corydalis – they may have had their name changed but the plants remain the same - they provide a great display over a very long time and are excellent and common self – seeders to have in your garden.....