



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 47.....29th November 2017





The final wave of autumn colour brings a lovely golden yellow glow to the garden some two months since I showed the first of the autumn leaf fall and colour in the Bulb Log. Only now are the last of my seed-raised *Acer palmatum*'s leaves turning colour and, as I am writing, they are being blown in the wind past the window like a shower of golden snow.

This variation and extension to the seasonal interest of any type of plant will be increased when you raise and grow different clones from seed. We are familiar with leaves and flowers of seedlings exhibiting variations in colour and form - in addition the seasonal timing of growths will also vary giving an extension to the

period of peak interest. Seed-raised plants will also have variable tolerance to environmental conditions and by natural selection each subsequent generation of plants you raise from seed collected from your own garden will become more tolerant of these and will grow better in your garden. Many of you will be receiving and sowing seed through January and February from some of the many of the seed exchanges, including that of the SRGC, and my recommendation to you is to grow them on to flower with the aim of collecting and sowing some of your own garden seed and so start the process of 'climate shifting' the plants to the growing conditions of your garden.



Acer palmatum



Smaller seedling Acers in the front garden are also putting on a golden display. The spikey blue green leaves of *Aciphylla glauca* (seed-raised) are ever present providing year round shape form and structure although I do need to be very careful not to be stabbed by their needle sharp tips when I get round to spreading the piles of shreadings.

In some areas I leave the fallen leaves to form a natural mulch, like here underneath a large *Rhododendron bureavii*, where the leaves of a seed-raised *Rogersia* species are also colouring up as the plant shuts down for the winter.





It is not just above our heads that we get the stunning bright colours. *Geranium sanguinum* on the drive, having provided a succession of pink to purple flowers through the summer, has now turned into a dazzling carpet of yellow through orange to red.



Drive way planting



Elsewhere in the garden there is a chaotic, some might say untidy, scene where yet more fallen leaves await being lifted from the gravel and beds of small plants, while the now dried *Allium* stems still cling to some of their seeds.

I think of this as part of the seasonal changes we see in the garden and I am never inclined to 'tidy' the garden too soon preferring to enjoy the autumn decay for a while.



Mounds of *Pernettya*, *Cassiope* among others with *Allium wallichii* stems clinging to their seeds.



The frosts have finally caused the *Cyananthus* tumbling over the edge of the slab bed to retreat for this year and I would normally leave the mat of old foliage there until January.



However this year I have been planting bulbs underneath the mat to provide flowering interest early in the year so I have removed the mat of old growth to allow the bulb growth, some of which has already started, to grow unhindered.



The freezing conditions have also caused the leaves and stems of **Eucomis bicolor** (above) to go all soft and yellow as this plant retreats to an underground tuber - it will not appear above ground again until around July or August next year.

The past seasons leaves on **Primula marginata** turn yellow while the next crop sit in bud until early next year.



Having already spent many working sessions lifting the first phase of leaf fall I will soon have to lift these but as they are small leaves and break down quickly I only need to lift them from the paths and beds where small evergreen cushions and shrubs could be covered and damaged.



In the areas where larger shrubs are under planted with bulbs and herbaceous plants I will leave these small acer leaves to rot down naturally.

While looking to check that the fallen leaves are not covering sensitive plants I discover the first Snowdrop flower buds of this new season.

Galanthus reginae-olgae



Crocus laevigatus is a species that starts flowering in the autumn with different clones flowering all through the winter into early spring - the one above is flowering in the rock garden while the one below enjoys the protection of growing in a bulb house sand bed.





Crocus have been the main flowers appearing in the bulb house sand beds but from now on and all through the winter, we will be able to enjoy many different forms of Narcissus starting with **Narcissus cantabricus foliosus**.



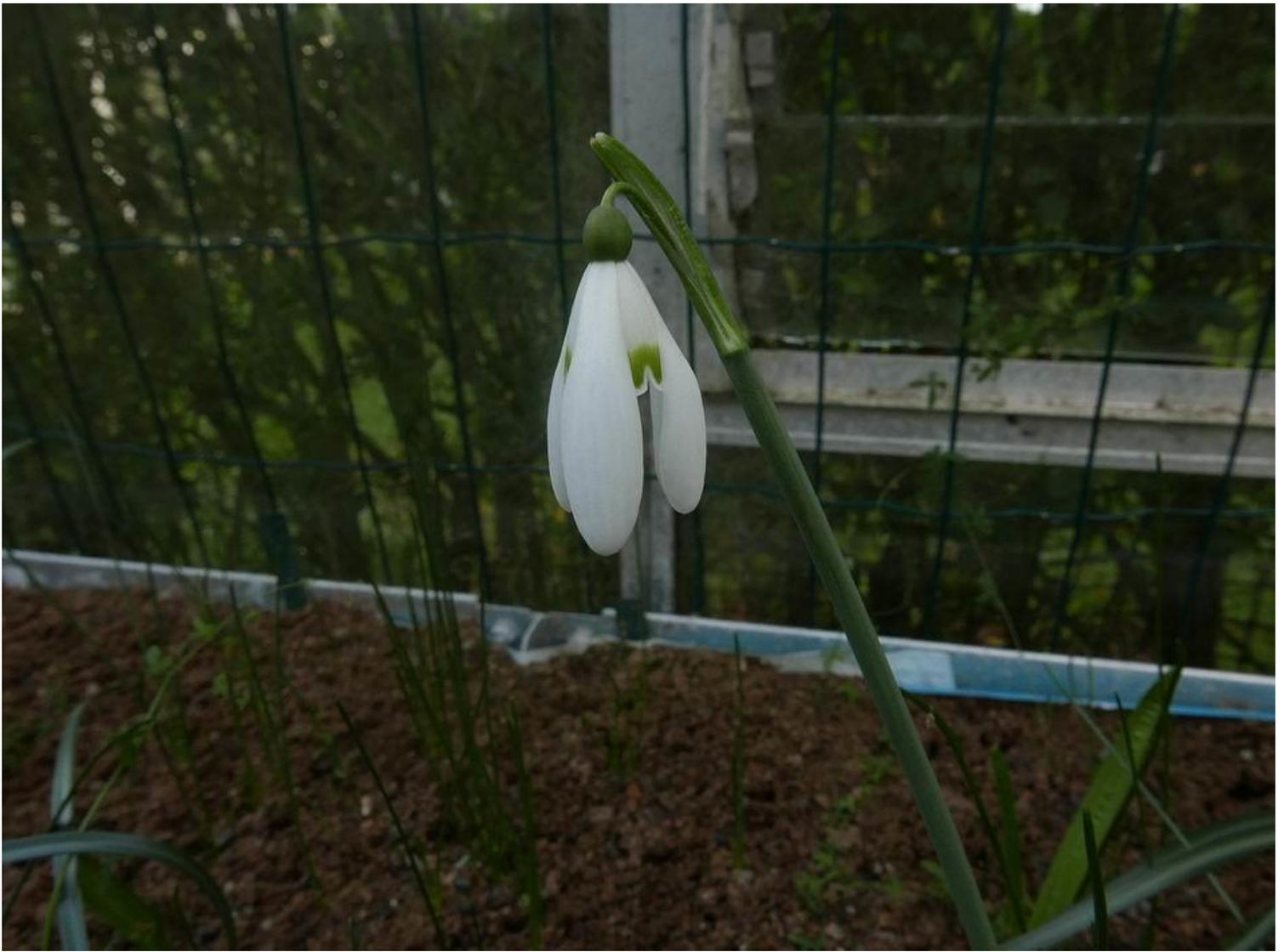
Mostly *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* with some forms and hybrids of *Narcissus romieuxii* now joining them.



The elegant, long funnel shaped corona of **Narcissus cantabricus foliosus**.



Also enjoying the shelter of the bulb houses is this pot of **Galanthus reginae-olgae**.



Galanthus reginae-olgae growing in a sand bed.

Some snowdrops do get the special attention of being grown in pots in the bulb house at least until we have built up sufficient numbers to risk some outside – this includes the lovely **Galanthus ‘E. A. Bowles’** with lots of promising shoots pushing slowly upwards through the surface.

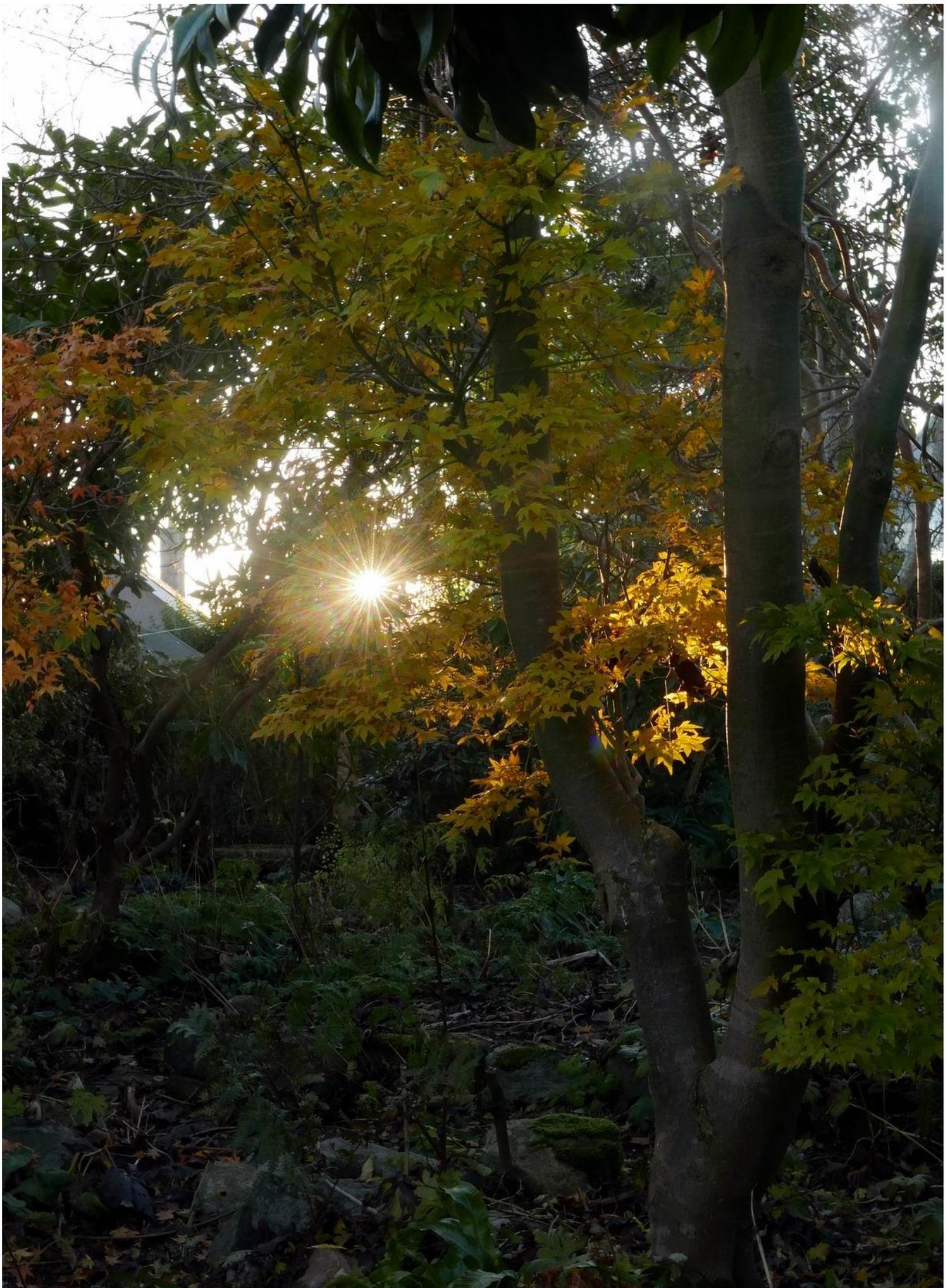




Even the shoots of *Tecophilaea*, which will not flower until April, are appearing. You may notice that I have not top dressed these pots with gravel yet – I find it is easier to gauge when I need to water in the plastic pots if I can see the surface of the potting mix. It is important that they remain moist but not too wet during the winter months when the plants are slow growth after the growth speeds up in the spring I can top dress with gravel if I wish.



The skeins of migratory pink footed geese, here for the winter, which fly back and forth above the garden drawing my attention with their ‘anck-anck’ call are another seasonal pleasure.



This picture, taken at 14.30, shows the sun going down over the winter garden but the tasks, flowers and interests continue every day of the year in the Bulb Log garden