



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 39.....27th September 2017

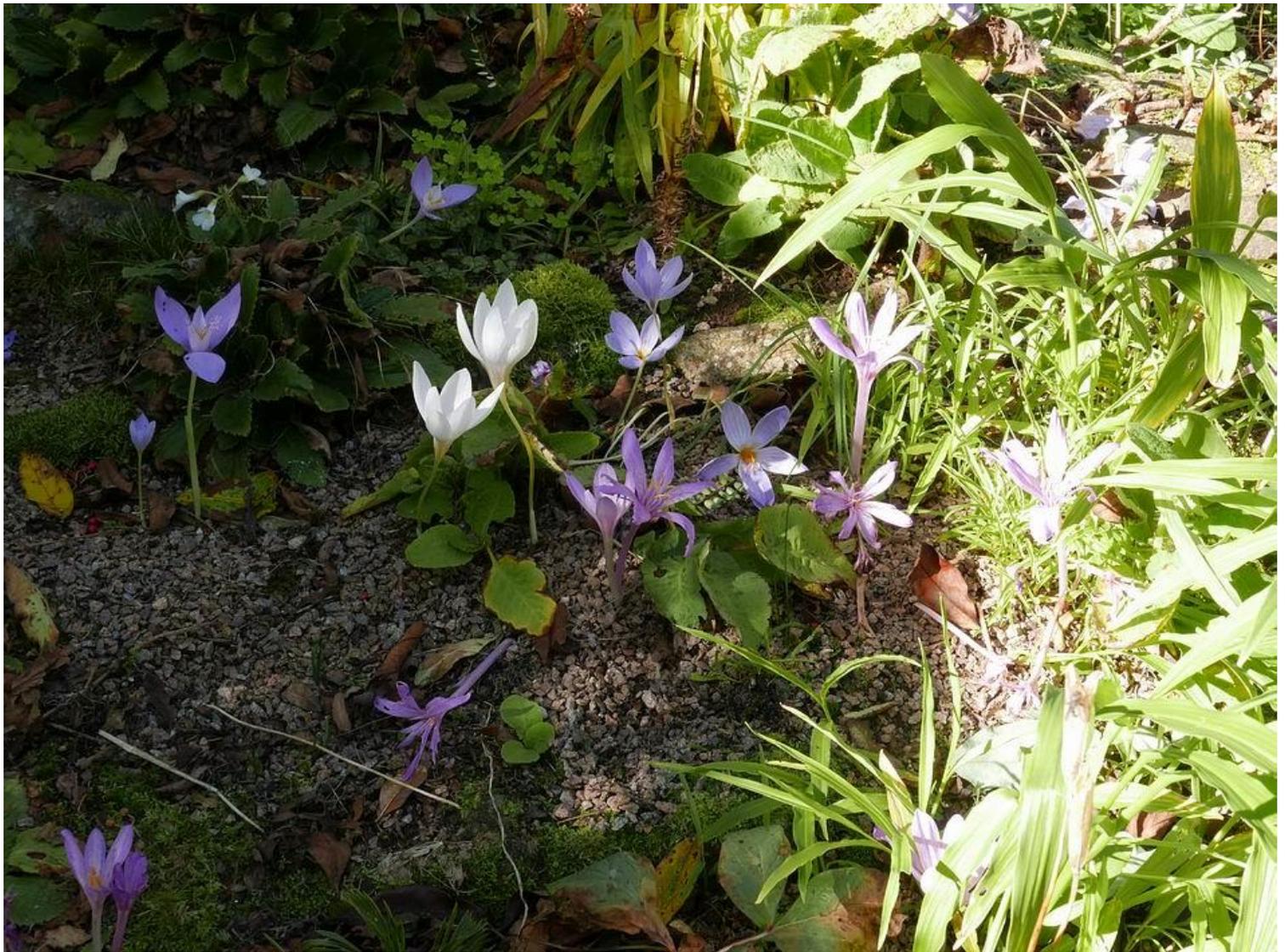




Colchicum agrippinum



On first glance the garden looks a mess with the growth of the herbaceous plants dying back and leaves falling from the trees but to those who take time to look carefully there is so much of interest. The colours that typify autumn are especially noticeable when the shafts of sunlight create highlights picking out the Crocus and Colchicum flowers among the yellowing foliage.



Colchicum and Crocus in the Rock Garden bed.

While I enjoy and take great delight from a nice clump of flowers rising from the bulbs I get even more satisfaction from mixed groups where different Colchicum and Crocus flowers group together and revel in the brief moments that they get in the sunshine.





Crocus banaticus



A group of Crocus banaticus with their exuberant much divided stigma branches and the inner three floral segments being so much shorter that the outer three, make this one of the most distinct and easily recognised of the genus. Held against my hand you can see the size of this flower.



Crocus banaticus

This species likes the cool moist growing conditions of our garden and providing we get enough sunshine for it to open its flowers to the pollinating insects it seeds itself around.



These flowers are our home grown **Crocus speciosus** hybrids which are fully fertile allowing them to seed around – this is just as well with the number of flowering corms that we have lost to predation by mice in recent years. Fortunately the mice do not go for the small seedling corms also if cormlets form around the mature corm these also get left to grow on to maturity. The



weather always takes its toll with the wind and heavy rain often causing the floral tube to collapse but we can still enjoy the flowers which continue to open and close even when they collapse or get chewed off by a slug or snail.



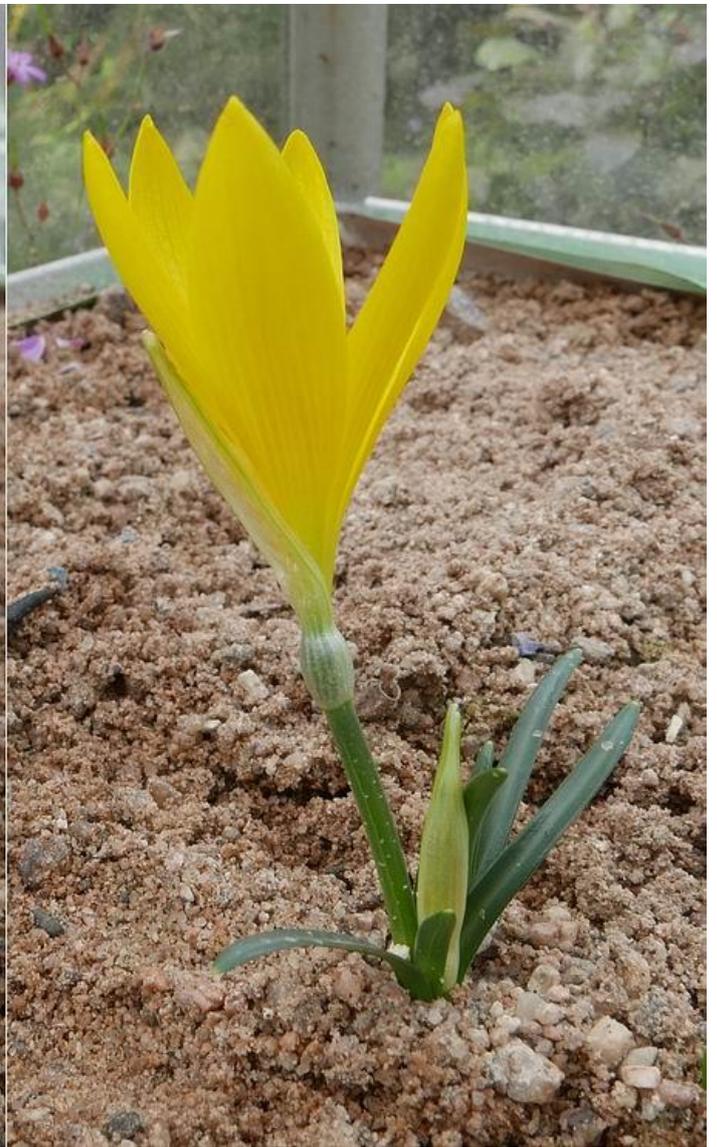
This Crocus flower seems to be clasping itself shut in response to our wet weather!!



Crocus karduchorum



Crocus karduchorum also has a crazy tangled mass of white stigma branches topping the flower like a spun sugar decoration – here it is growing in one of the sand beds in the former fritillaria house.



Sternbergia sicula

Also flowering in the same sand bed are these forms of *Sternbergia sicula*, some with starry strap like floral segments while others have full overlapping segments making more of a goblet shaped flower. They seem to be settling in and growing very well in just sharp sand in these beds – certainly the early signs are that they are flowering better here than they did in pots.



Crocus vallicola

I have brought a few pots of *Crocus vallicola* that were not eaten by mice into the protection of the bulb house where the added warmth will assist a successful fertilisation to give us a good seed set to help us recover the numbers we recently lost. Fortunately there are a lot of self-sown seedlings of this species growing in the adjacent pots of other bulbs in the frame.



The beautiful wispy tips to the floral segments are characteristic of this *Crocus vallicola* which along with the nice markings, make it another of my favourites.



One of a number of Hoverflies that like me enjoy the Crocus and Colchicum flowers and also help with the pollination.



Cyclamen hederifolium white form.

Colchicum and Crocus flowers are a big feature of the autumn garden and the third of the important 'C's' is Cyclamen which in common with the other two genus have autumn and spring flowering species. Cyclamen bring the additional decorative feature of attractive leaves that emerge in the late summer lasting all through the winter before dying off next summer.



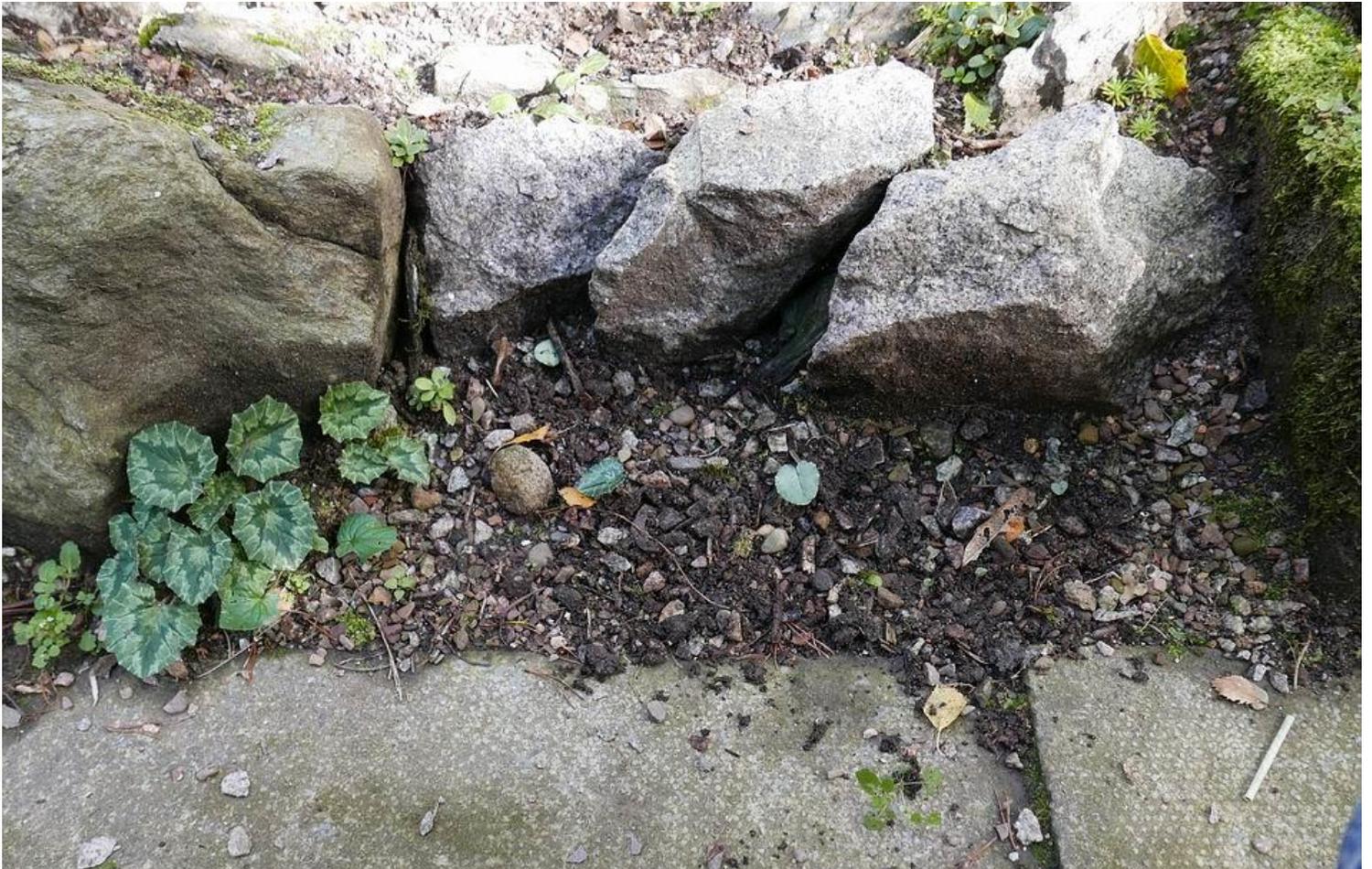
In addition to allowing plants to self-seed around the garden I do still collect and sow seed in containers here are a quantity of mixed Cyclamen seedlings growing in nothing but sharp sand in a rather battered old fish box trough.



In among the various other volunteer seedlings you can see Cyclamen seedlings that are now in their second year of growth alongside others that are only just germinating after lying dormant for over a year.



I decided to lift a few to plant next to the new bed opposite the pond so I can share this image that shows two tiny plants just germinated along with some that are now starting their second year of growth.



I planted the seedlings out between the path and the rocks forming the edge of the bed alongside some more mature plants that were already growing in this area.



In time the Cyclamen foliage should form a green matt to soften the edge between path and bed with the added attraction of seasonal flowers.



I am well used to seeing saxifrages and other rock garden plants growing and shaping themselves against the rocks but to my delight I have found (below) another type of plant that can adapt to the shape of a rock.



The fruiting bodies of this fungi shape themselves around the rock at the back of a bed below Rhododendrons and ferns.



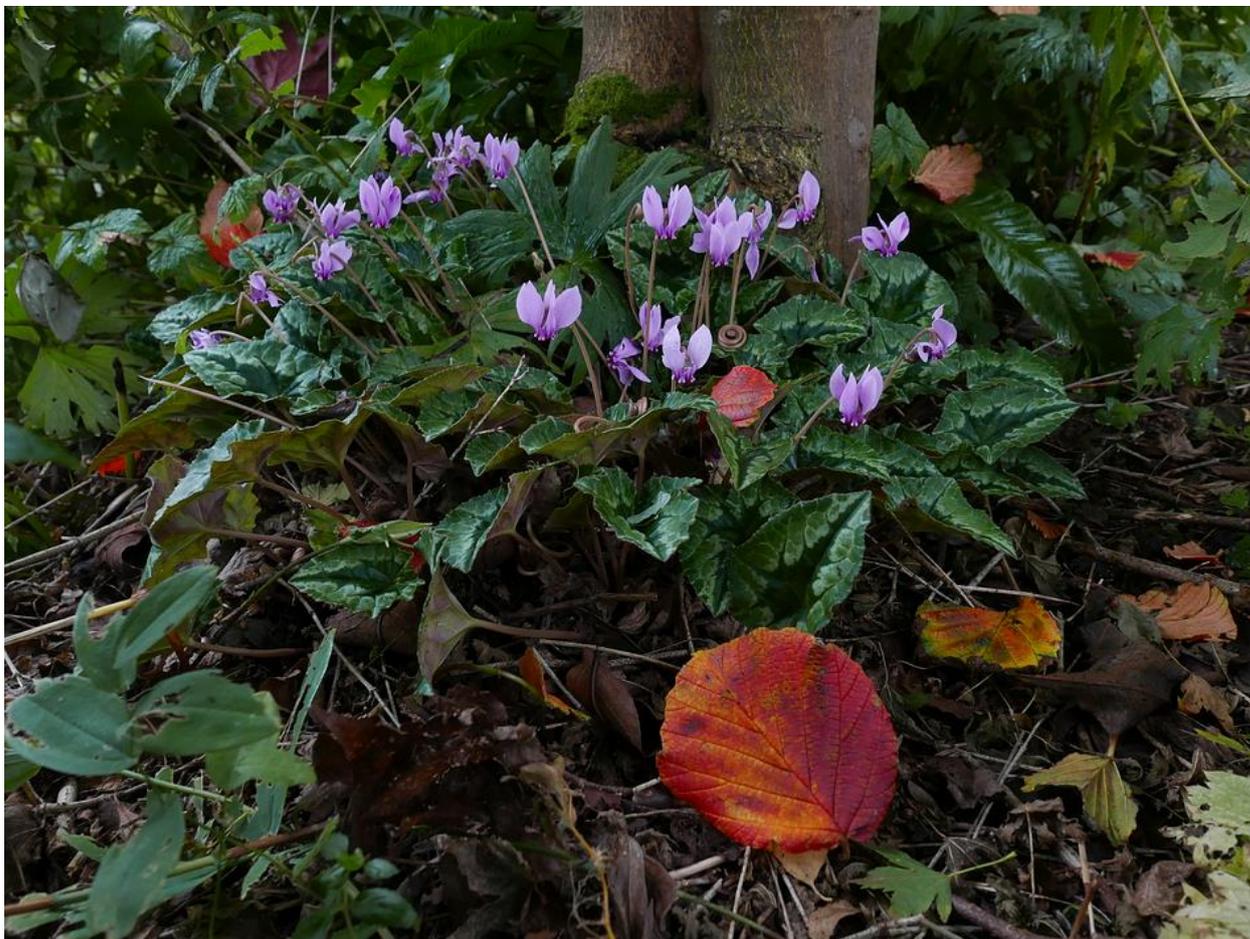


There are a number of fungi appearing in our moist humus rich soil including this fine group of Shaggy parasols.



***Cyclamen hederifolium* silver leaf forms.**





**Cyclamen
hederifolium**

Nearby the silver leaved forms is a form with well marked green leaves, all these are growing under heavy shade below *Acer palmatum* trees and other shrubs - you can make them out in the picture below.



The *Hamamelis* leaves always turn such vibrant colours which contrast well when they fall beside the *Cyclamen*.

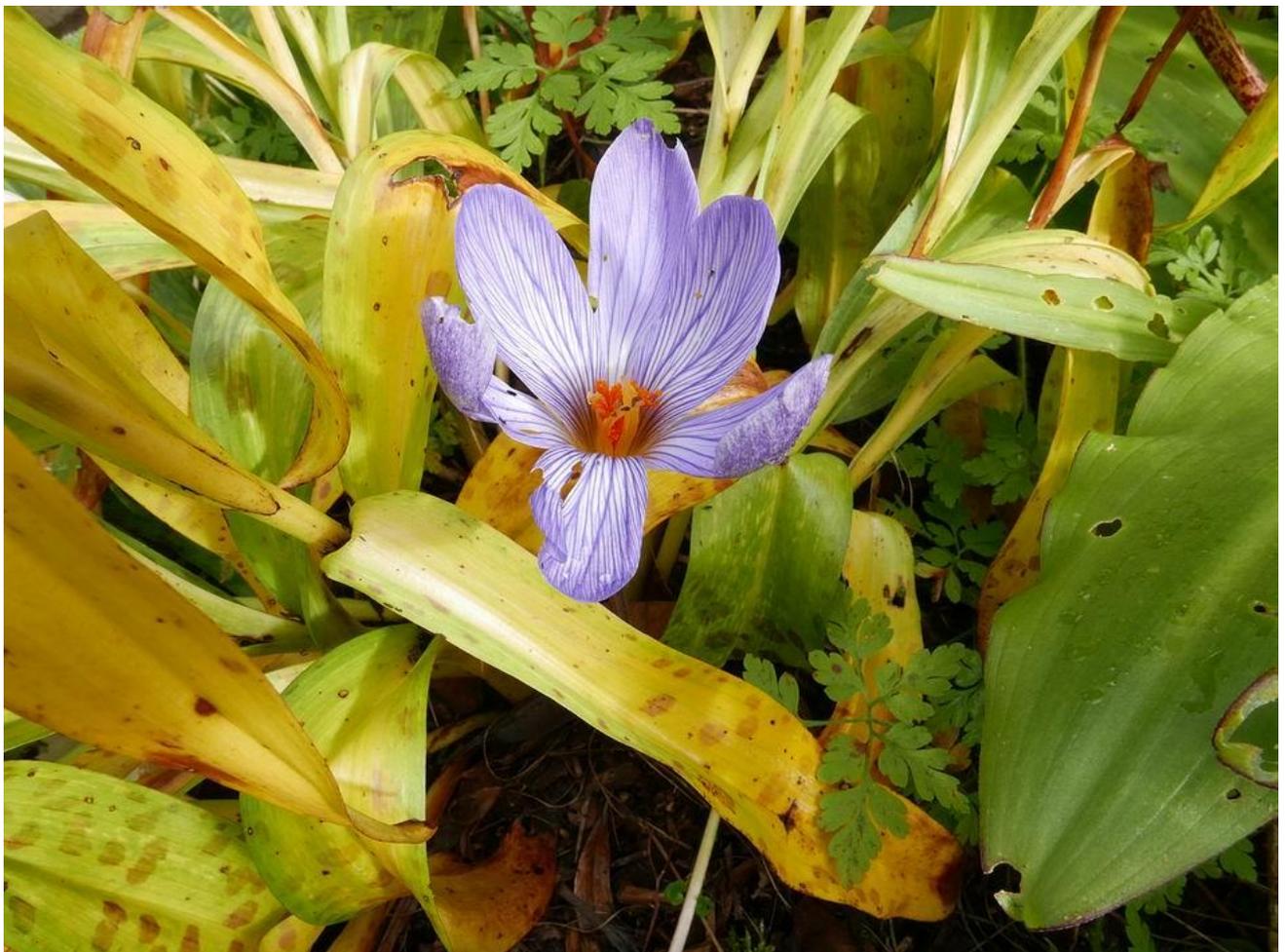


Growing happily in the shade of a small pine a group of **Crocus nudiflorus** flowers appear through a decorative carpet of red pine needles.





The dark flowers of this **Crocus speciosus** are further enhanced by the bright yellow retreating foliage of a *Dactylorhiza* –that some of the flowers have fallen over and are slightly chewed does detract from the scene!



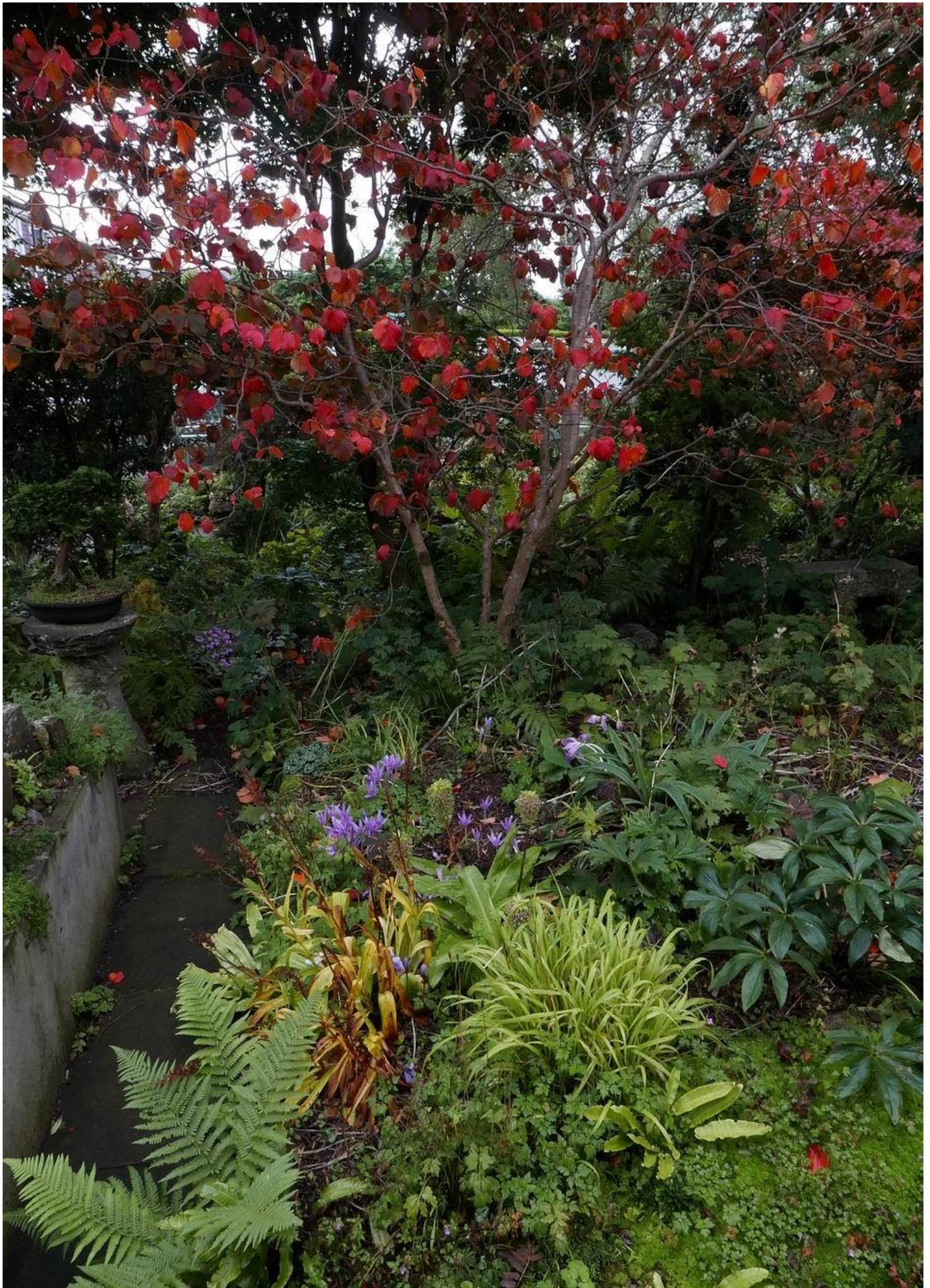


Just as the bright colours of a firework display often bring a great event to a close the autumn flowers herald the end of a growing season except these are not the late flowers, as they are often described, these are the early risers. The flowers of most bulbs are formed at the end of the spring before the bulbs went into their summer rest so it is the spring flowers that are the late risers – the autumn flowers are the colourful display that announces the

start of the bulb year.



Eucomis bicolor stands majestically providing a backdrop to the Colchicum and Crocus flowers which brings me back to the spot where I composed the cover image.



I will leave you this week with this picture looking back in the opposite direction from the cover picture giving the front and back view.....