



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 20.....16th May 2018



Bulb log 800

‘Time always seems to fly past, it is hard to believe that this is Log 20, it does not seem that long since I did the first log in early January, then I look through my picture files and see how many bulbs have flowered since then and I start to get a sense of the time that has passed.’

Little did I realise when I wrote those opening words [for Bulb Log 20 of 2003](#), the first year, that I would be sitting here writing Bulb Log 20 of 2018 which happens to be the 800th edition.



Garden view

I am glad that I could not see into the future – I started the Bulb Log as just a one year project which I doubt I would have undertaken if I knew that I would still be writing it weekly after sixteen years; however in tandem with the garden it has slowly grown and evolved into where we are now. I am a very visual person so recording everything in pictures comes naturally and the discipline of having to produce an online garden diary has ensured that I have a wonderful record of the garden, far in excess of the relatively small number of images I share online each week.

When it started I did concentrate on the cultivation of bulbs which was why I called it the Bulb Log Diary however I cover everything in the garden and we grow a lot of plants from the tiny alpines to way too many trees for our relatively small plot which, paced out, is approximately 1320 square meters. It would be tempting to only share our successes but I think we can learn more from the failures provided we understand the reason behind them and of course it is reassuring to know that all gardens have success and failure – it is sometimes said that an expert is someone who has killed the most plants!

Every year is different in the garden as the seasonal progression varies according to the weather, plus the year on year growth and spread of plants changes the environment and so the garden evolves. Looking back to photographs taken way beyond the start of the Bulb Log it is amazing to see how open and flat the garden was in the early stages of development and yes at one stage there was a plan for the layout of the paths and hard landscaping which has not changed but what has grown and evolved within that framework is very different.

My long term aim was to create a garden that was more of a mini-landscape than a normal garden and while I am happy with what we have achieved I have learned enough to know that gardening is a journey with no destination -

that is to say the growth and evolution cannot be stopped however it can be changed as is evident in recent years where we have been cutting back some of the trees and shrubs to reopen the ground level planting opportunities. An important lesson to learn is that flowers have a short season, some last just a day others, under good conditions, might last a few weeks and some plants will produce a succession of flowers but leaves are around for months so I always have foliage in mind when I am planting.

I have a need for change partly because I like new challenges and I see the garden as a place where I can experiment with environments and habitats. I often call myself a habit manipulator, trying to mimic natural habitats in the garden and we have a wide range of these within what we consider to be our small woodland garden. There are many mini and micro environments including troughs, raised beds, pond, bog garden, etc. all of which bring us great pleasure which is greatly enhanced by the local wild life including a steady stream of birds feeding and nesting within the trees and shrubs.

In case you have not come via the Bulb Log index pages where you can access all 800 Bulb Logs here are direct links:-

[Bulb Logs 2003 – 2008](#) were HTML based and will open in your browser

[2008 Onwards](#) are PDF files.

Also for the last three years I have been recording Bulb Log Video Diary Supplements, another project I started for a temporary period, where you will find, at the moment, 129 videos on my [YouTube Channel](#) .



Left: *Rhododendron primuliflorum* 'Doker-la' , with *Rhododendron pingianum* behind, right: a *Rhododendron lepidotum* hybrid.

What I write in a Bulb Log is whatever is attracting my attention that week in the garden (or beyond) and this week it has to be the Rhododendrons that are the main subject whose flowers are adding so much colour while the plants forming the under-planting play a supporting role.



Rhododendron pingianum KR150 collected on Mount Omei

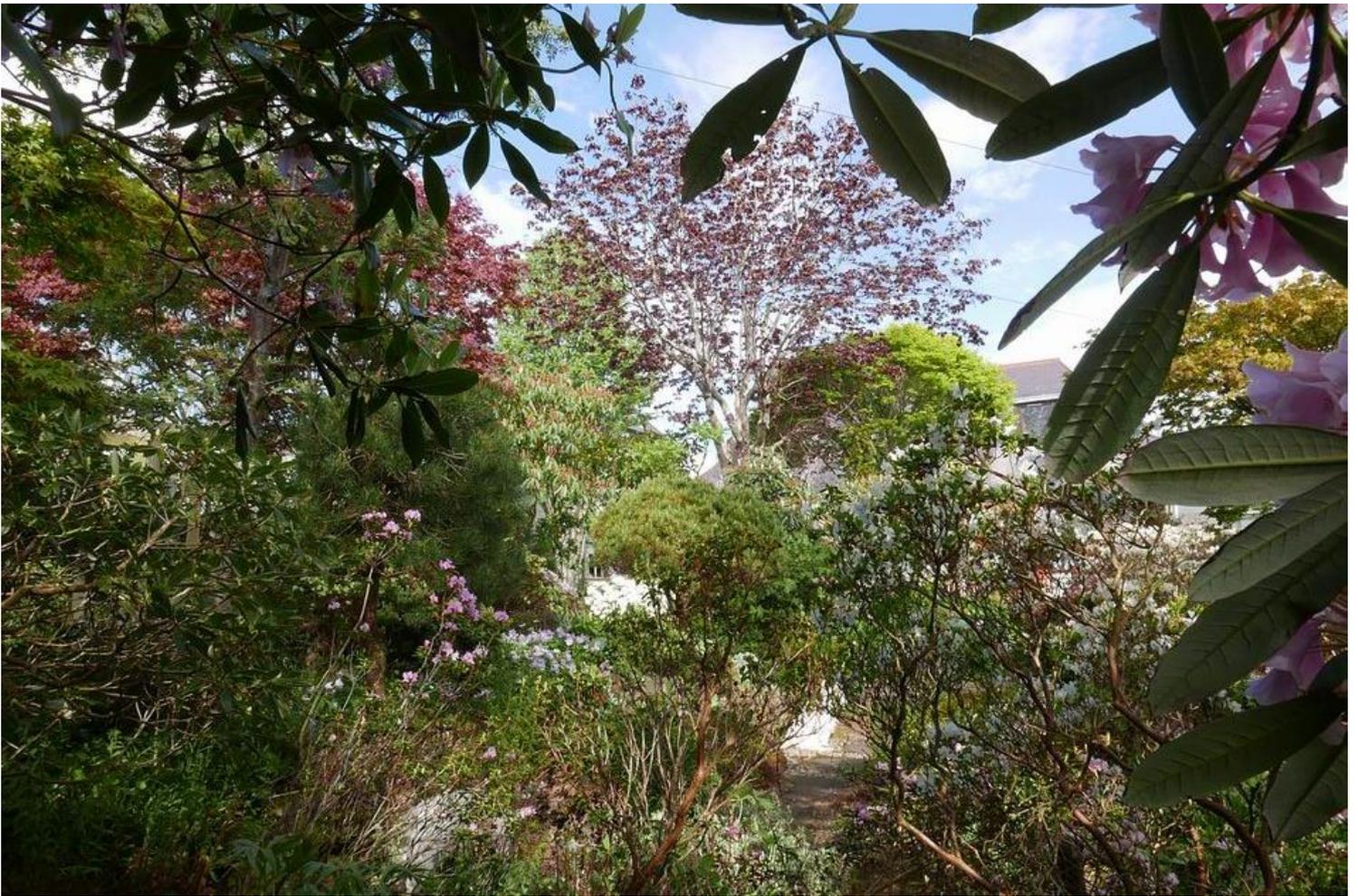




Rhododendron 'Yellowhammer' (sulfureum x flavidum var. flavidum)



I have tried to find some views of the garden that I have not shown before for this 800th edition; this view of Rhododendron 'Mayday' (and a water butt !) is taken from the compost heap.



These views show the extent to which we have planted trees and shrubs to create an open woodland type habitat.



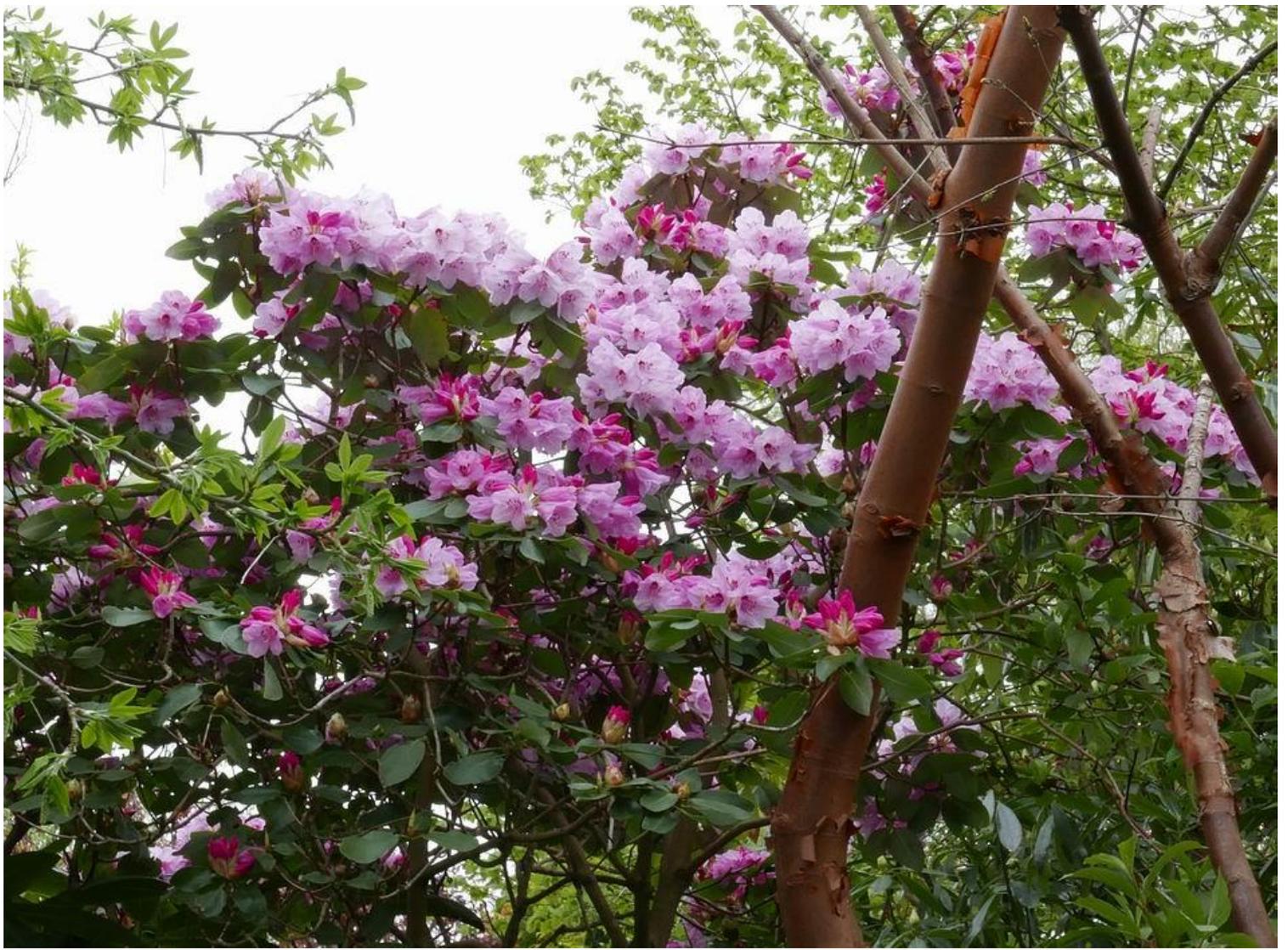


Rhododendron rex subsp. fictolacteum SBEC 0957 is now between 4 and 5 metres tall.





***Rhododendron selense* subsp. *jucundum* SBEC 0315** seen between a *Laburnum x watereri* and *Acer griseum*

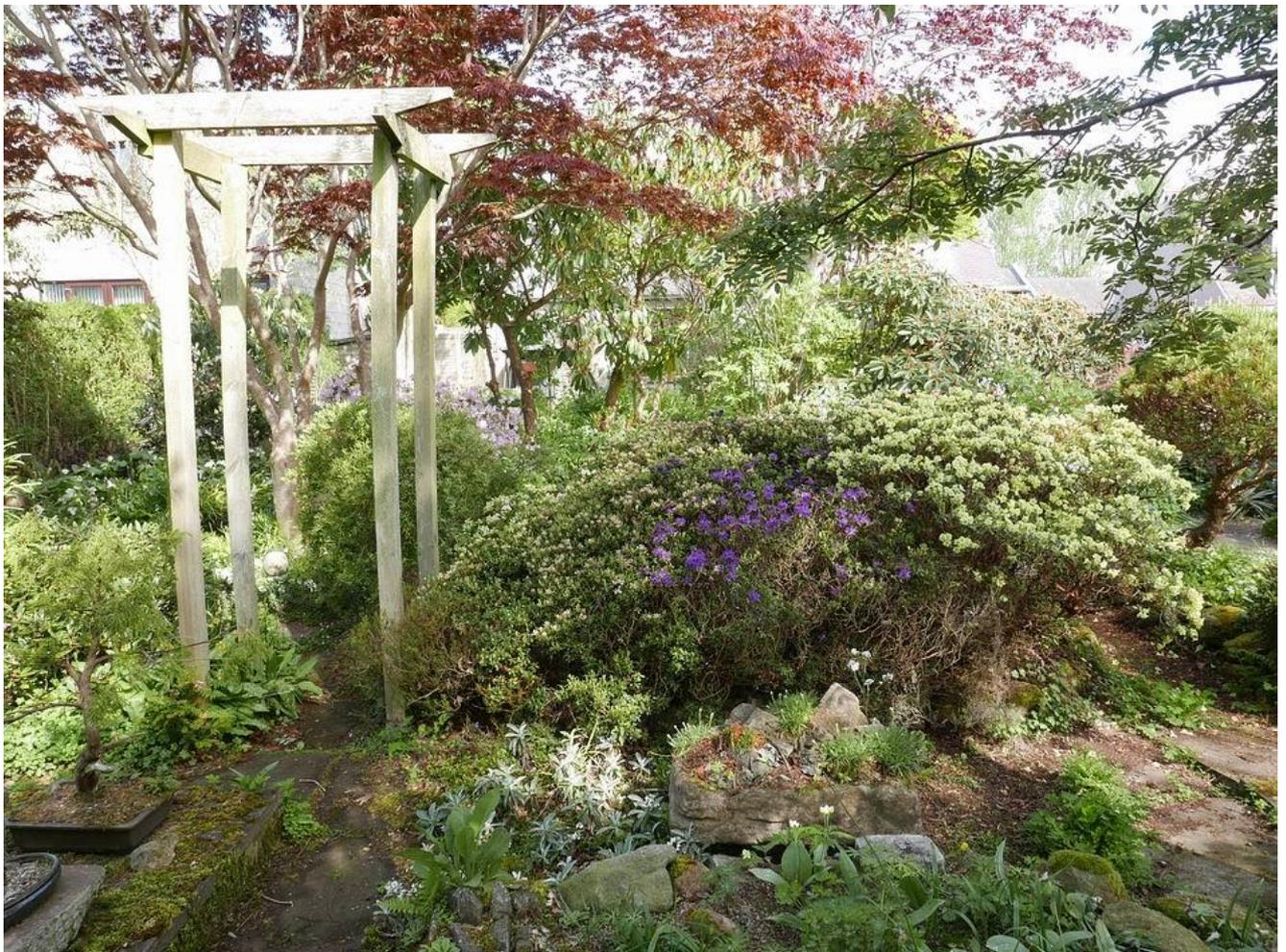


***Rhododendron selense* subsp. *jucundum* SBEC 0315**





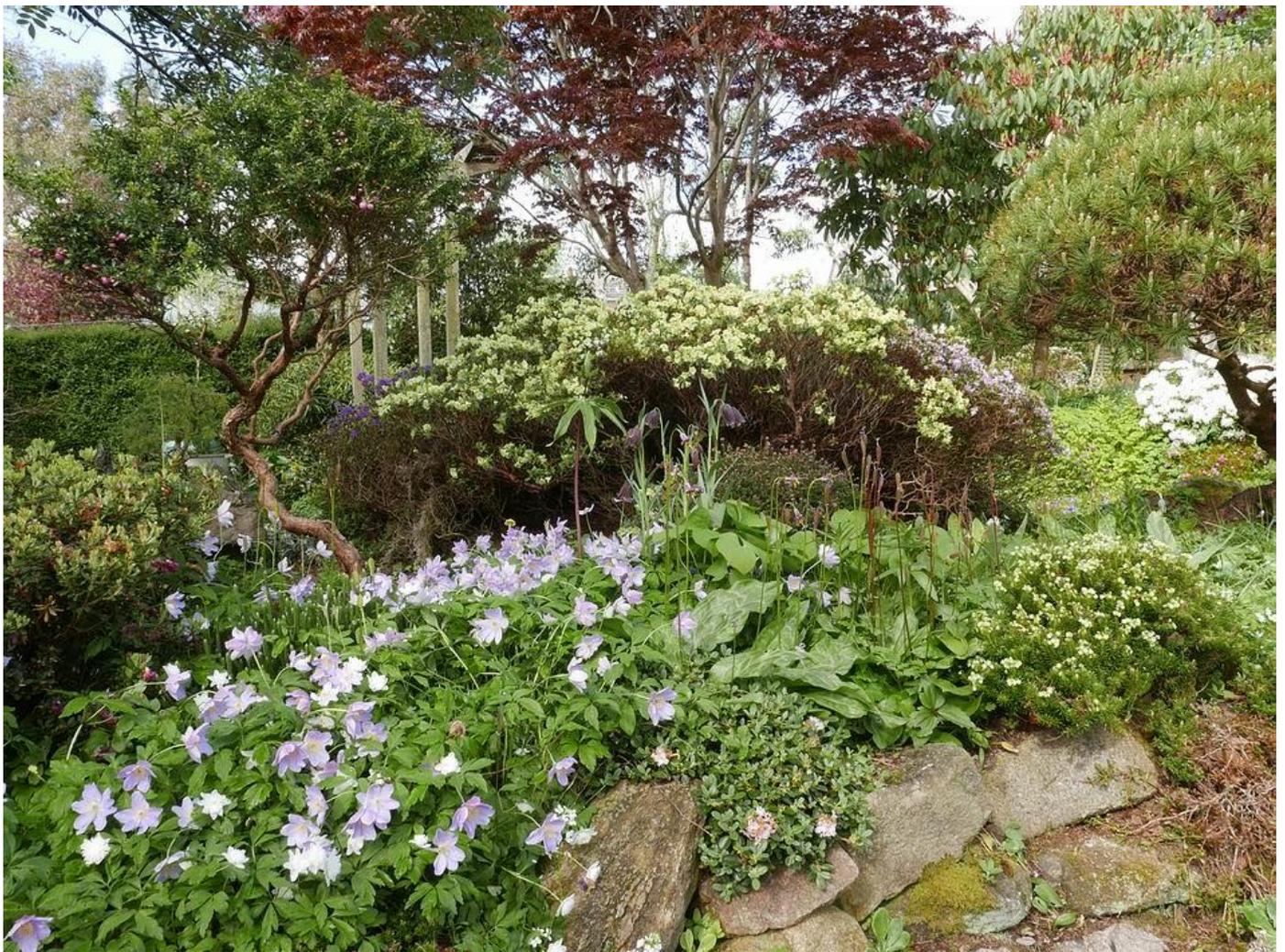
As well as wild life we share the garden with Molly and Megan.





Rhododendron 'Merganser' (campylogynum white form x luteiflorum)





A white hybrid - the name escapes me!



The flowers of **Rhododendron fortunei** can be seen above the pine and acer.



Rhododendron fortunei



Rhododendron fortunei



Rhododendron fortunei flowers have a scent to match their beauty.



A view looking north up the garden.



Rhododendron orbiculare



Rhododendron glaucophyllum



Rhododendron 'Phalarope' (pemakoense x davidsonianum)



Now for some views across the tapestry of foliage that makes up the under-planting.





***Glaucidium palmatum album* with *Matteuccia struthiopteris*.**



Trillium grandiflorum



Trillium grandiflorum plenum



Species and garden hybrid Trilliums.



Erythronium 'Citrinella'



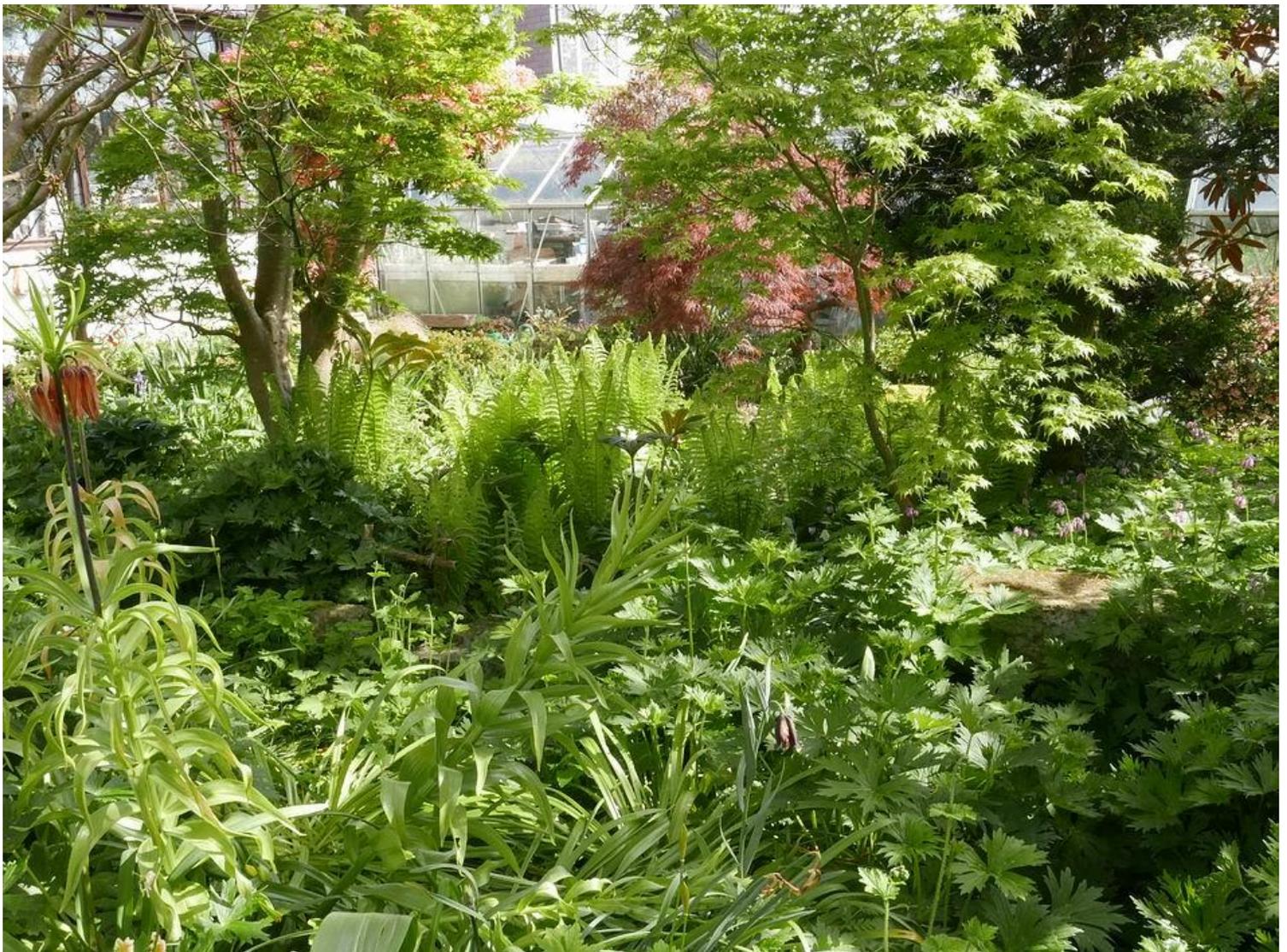
Fritillaria pallidiflora

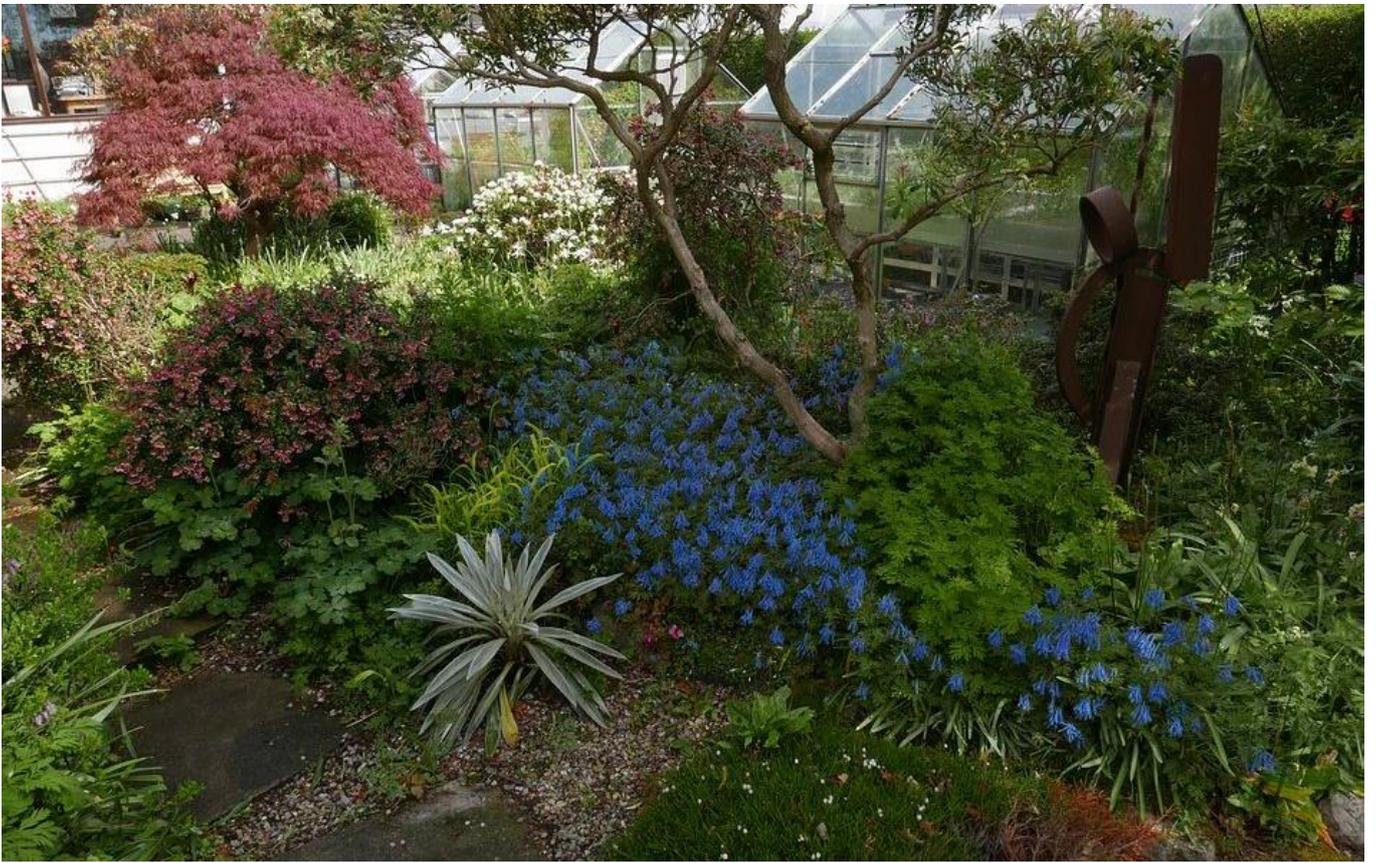


Hylomecon japonicum

Through the years we have lost some plants due to the the spreading growth of shrubs shading them out – we used to have a good clump of Hylomecon japonicum which disappeared under a shrub and last year I found a remnant clinging to life in the deep shade so I rescued it to a frame for intensive care.

As it increases I will reintroduce it to more suitable areas of the garden.

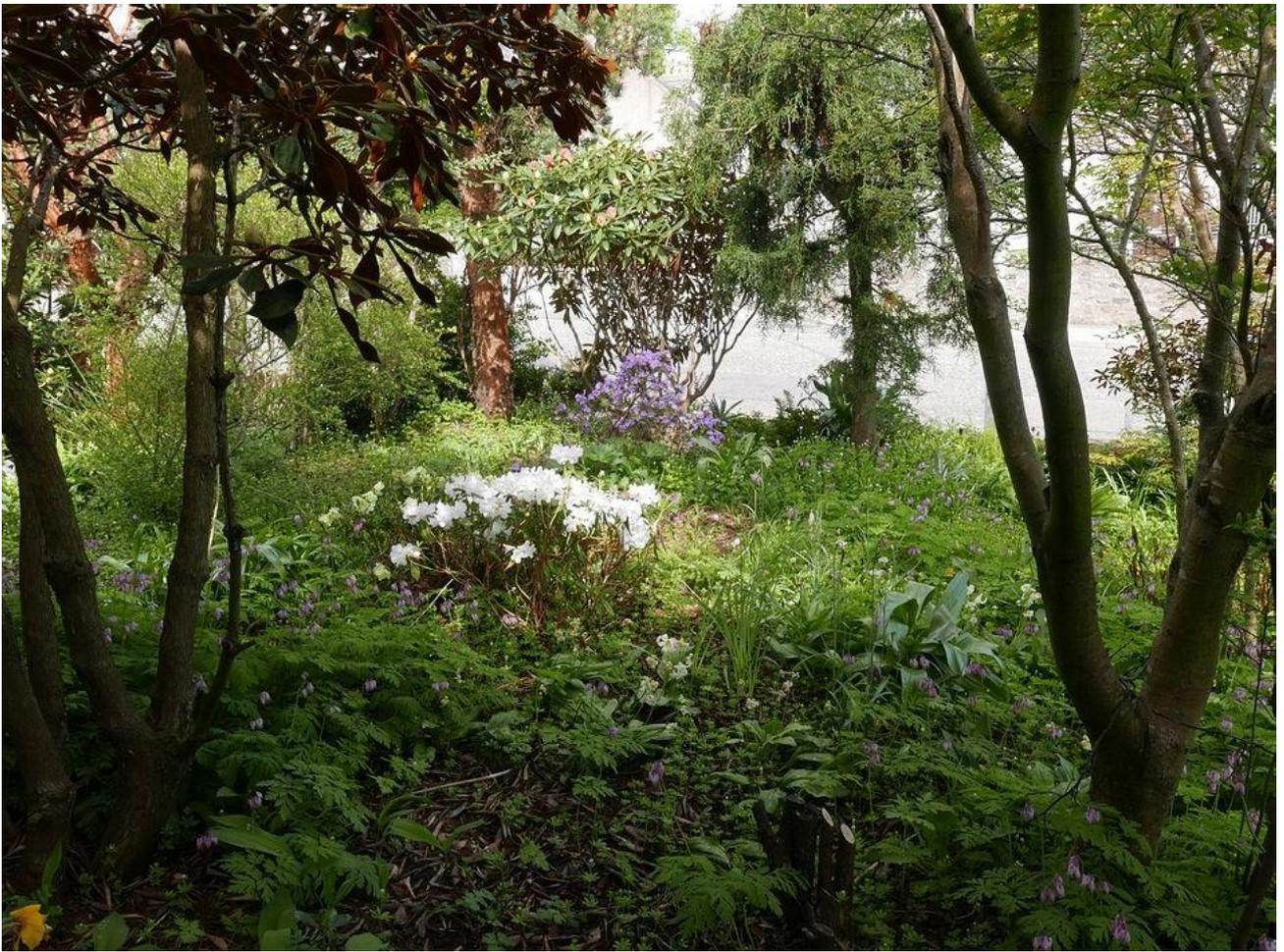




The blue of **Corydalis flexuosa**.

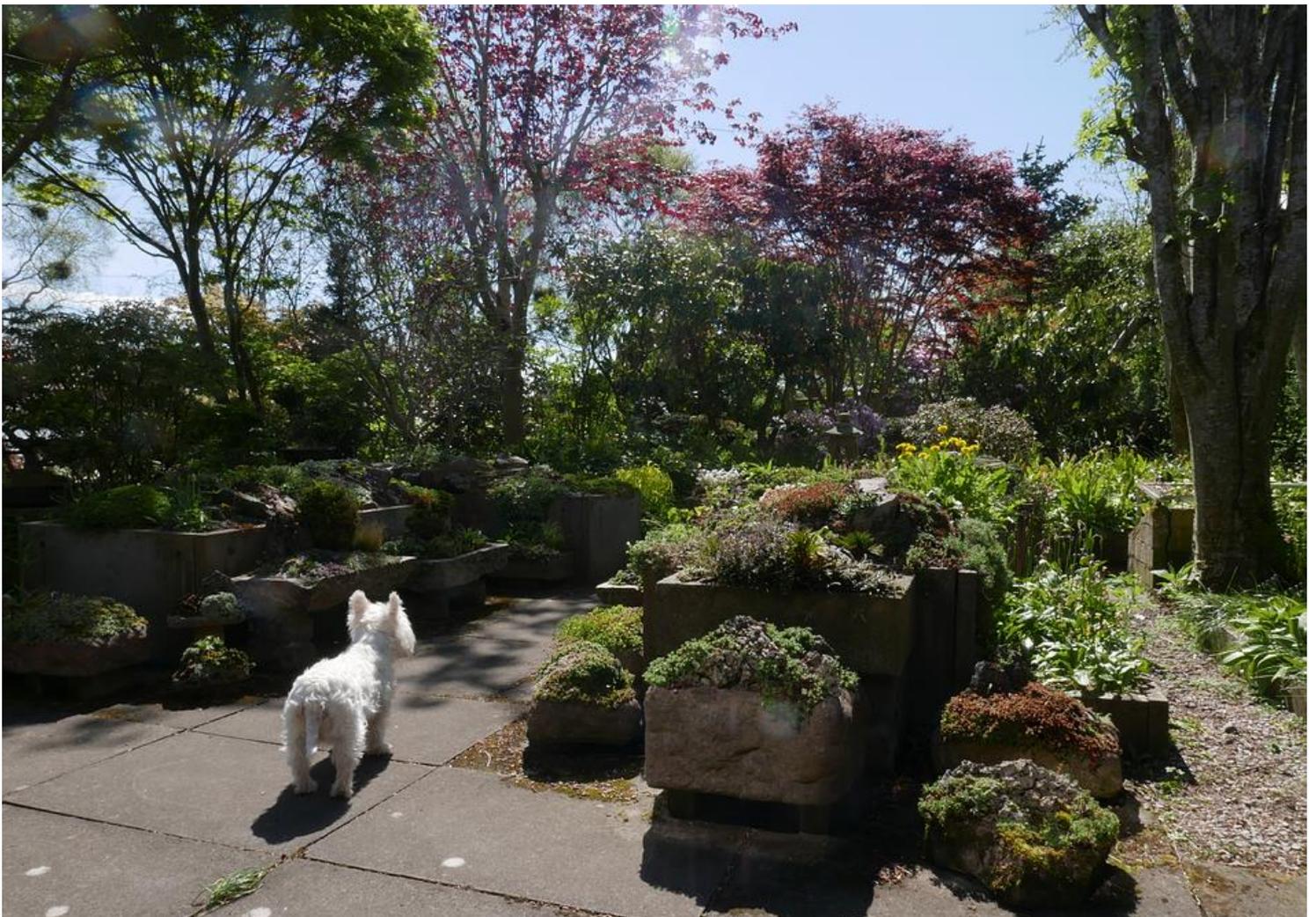


A number of years back we did some serious cutting back in the front garden which had become such a tangled mass of Rhododendrons and other shrubs that we could not get into it: now we still have plenty of trees and shrubs to provide structure and privacy but also an opening in the centre where we can walk among seasonally changing carpets of colour and foliage.



Front garden views.





The view from our swing seat where we sit and contemplate the garden and all things.



I make the commitment to continue the Bulb Log on a yearly basis and the reason it has lasted this long is largely down to you dear readers: your feedback, support and encouragement and the knowledge that it is read by tens of thousands across the world makes my efforts worthwhile – THANK YOU.....