



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 22.....30th May 2018





Fritillaria affinis

We are currently enjoying a spell of warm dry weather with temperatures reaching 20C and this has accelerated the retreat of the early flowering bulbs to their underground summer hibernation.

The low level foliage that just a few weeks ago carpeted the ground is turning yellow or in some cases, such as *Corydalis solida*, is already gone but the ground is not left bare as the next wave of leaf growth has now grown sufficiently to provide a multi-form and textured green carpet. Another noticeable difference of this seasonal change is that many of the current bulbous flowers do not have bright colours that grab your attention but are subtle so you have to look to find and enjoy their beauty.

Typical *Fritillaria affinis* flowers are speckled brown and green (left) but there are a range of colour forms that go from almost black to yellow: the yellow one shown on this week's cover image has nine flowers on the stem.

A similar colour range is found in *Fritillaria camschatcensis* and we have a number of these growing around the garden but you do have to look carefully to spot them among the mass foliage, can you spot them in the picture below?



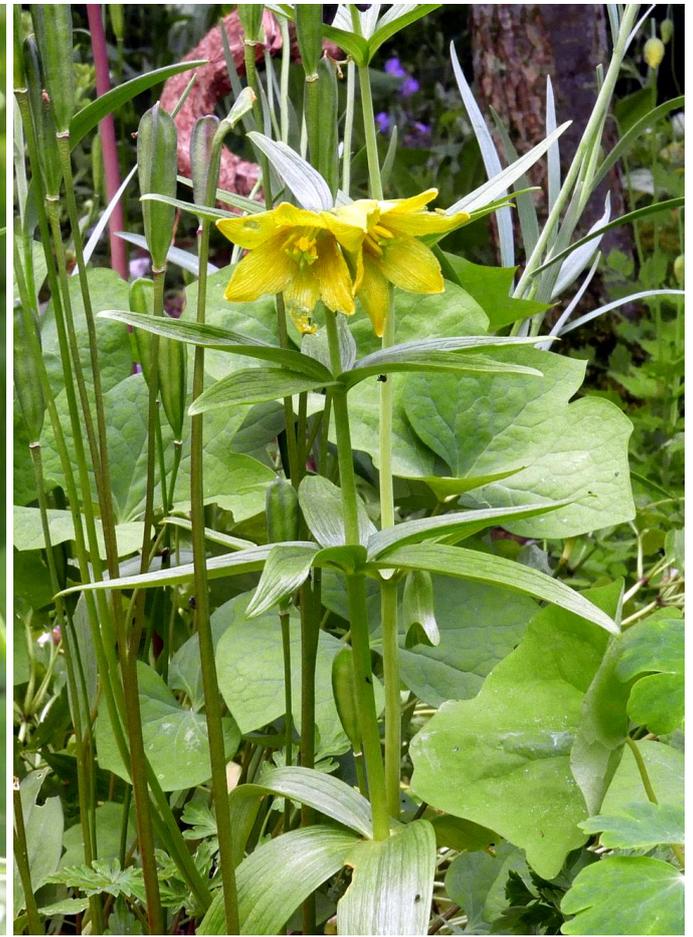


Fritillaria camschatcensis

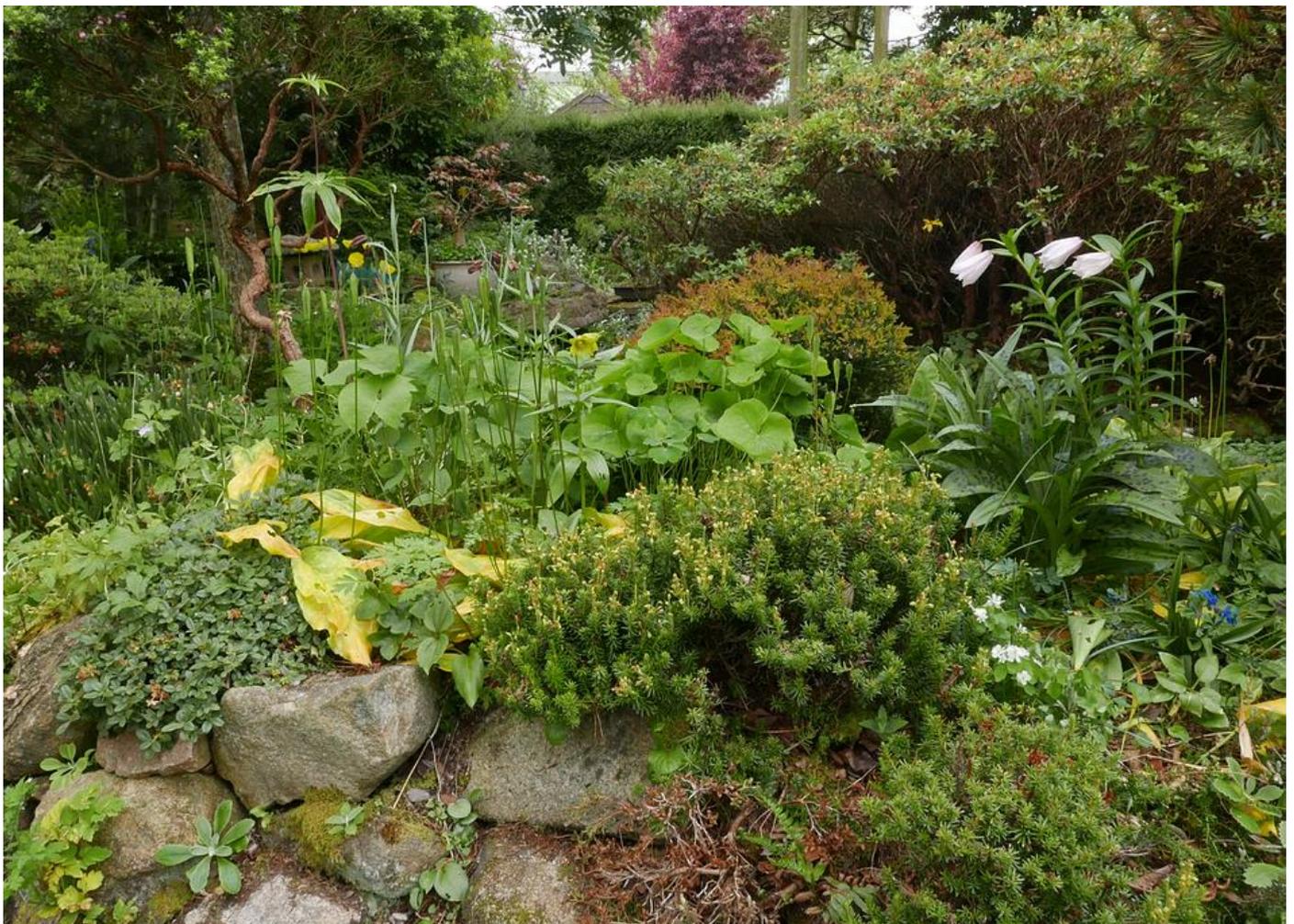
The easier one to spot is the Eurasian form which has flowers that appear black until you look carefully and find they are dark maroon with ridges across the inside of the petals giving them a fascinating texture. Like many *Fritillaria* the scent that is dispersed from these flowers is not pleasant to the human nose but allied with the dark colour makes them irresistible to flies and wasps – there are two flies in the left flower.



This is one of the **Alaskan forms of *Fritillaria camschatcensis*** which are distinct in colour (they are varying degrees of green and brown), flower shape and the bulb.



Fritillaria camtschaticensis Alaskan form and one of the yellow forms we grow which we were told was of Japanese origin and called “**Fritillaria camtschaticensis alpina aurea**”.



The Erythronium foliage yellows as it retreats while the stems with fertile seeds remain green for a number of weeks until the capsules open to release their valuable content. Flowering in this bed are some Paris, “Fritillaria camtschaticensis alpina aurea” and a form of Lilium mackliniae.



Lilium mackliniae.



Paris sp.



Meconopsis grandis

While we have to search to see some of the flowers, carefully camouflaged into the background, others stand out from a distance sending a strong visual signal to any passing pollinators, among those are the first of this year's meconopsis flowers.



Meconopsis grandis* with *Ramonda* and *Jankaemonda



Corydalis flexuosa



Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'



Corydalis 'Craigton Purple'



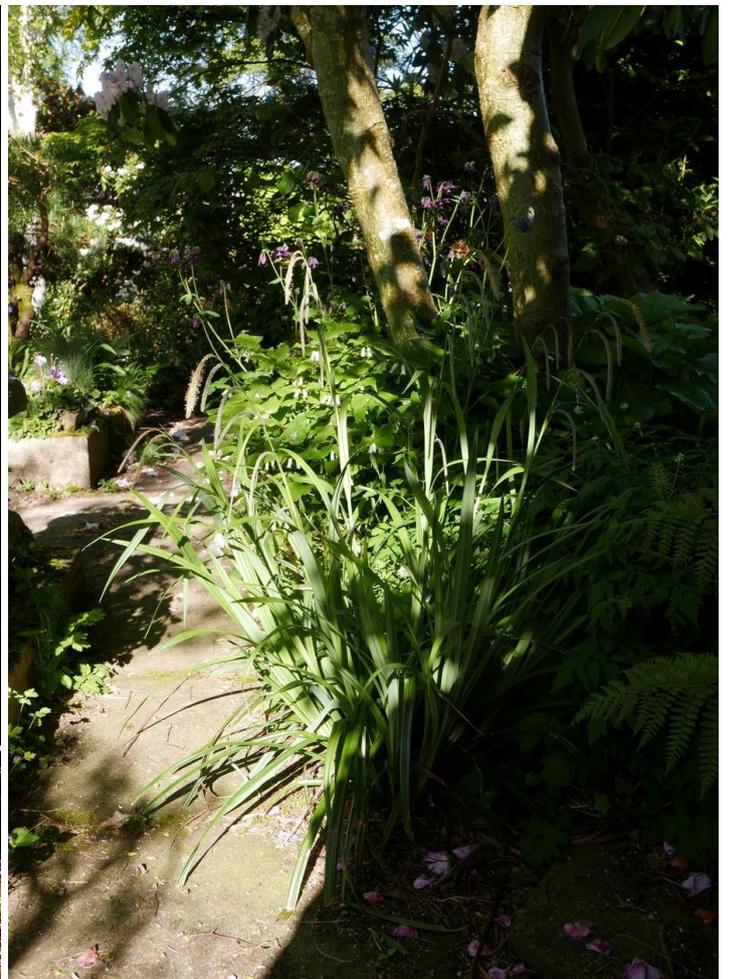
The yellow *Fritillaria affinis* and *Corydalis* 'Craigton Purple' can both be seen in this view.



I have a fondness for and grow a number of dwarf willows which are covered in both male and female flowers just now – as they are wind pollinated they do not need to attract insects with scent or display.



Salix boydii and **Salix nakamura** var. **yezoalpina**, that I use as a source of cuttings, sharing a trough.



Carex pendula

Carex pendula was a volunteer to our garden, I have watched it grow over a number of years and now I can enjoy the first flowers.



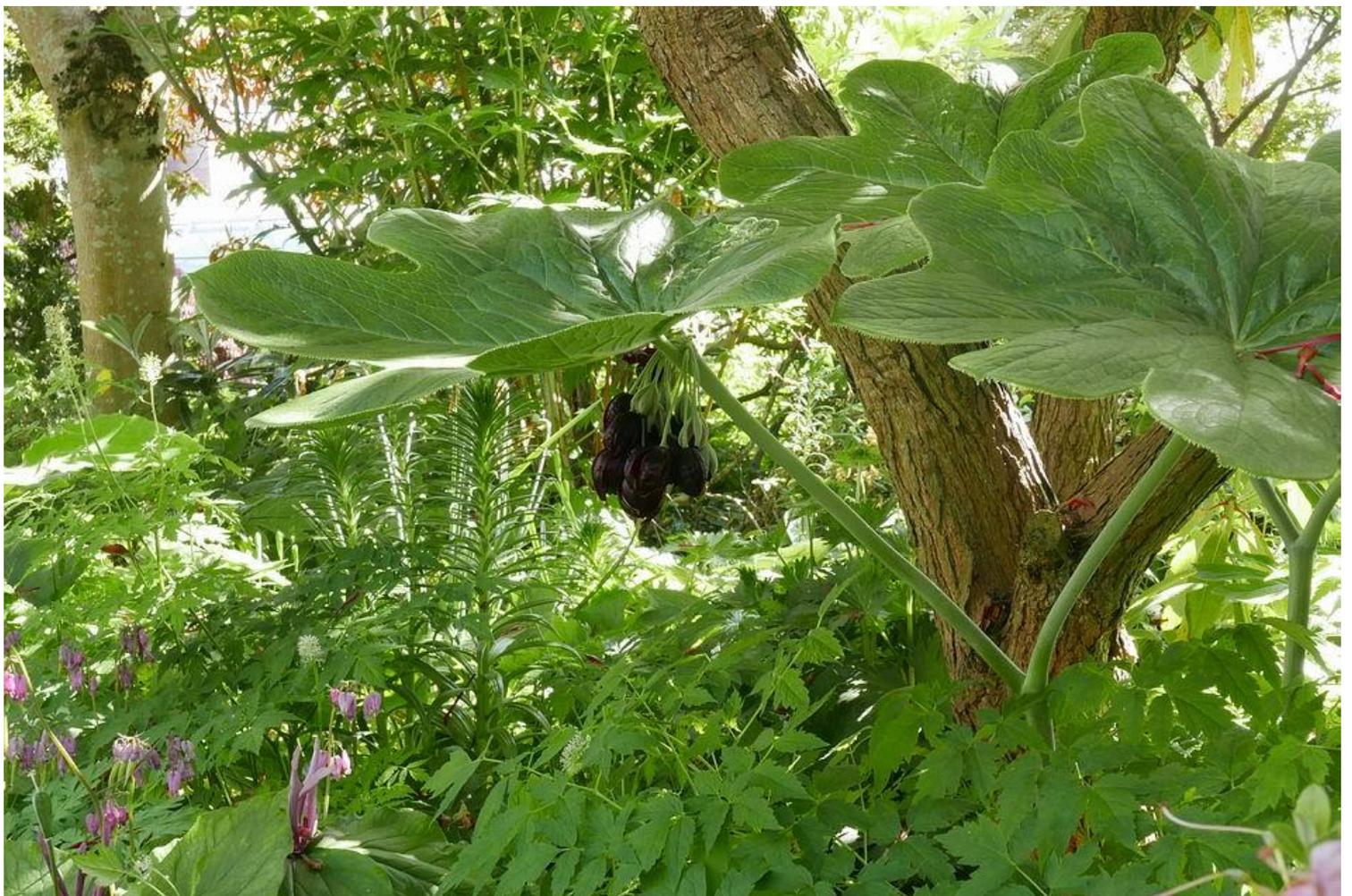
Like willows Carex have male and female flowers with the wind dispersing the pollen between flowers and plants. I did introduce **Carex atrata** to the garden: I collected one small division from the Scottish mountains and for many years grew it in a container - last year I split it up and planted some into the new narrow marginal bed at the edge of the pond.



Even without flowers the variation of foliage provides constant interest changing all the time in the contrasting light and shade.



Podophyllum pleianthum

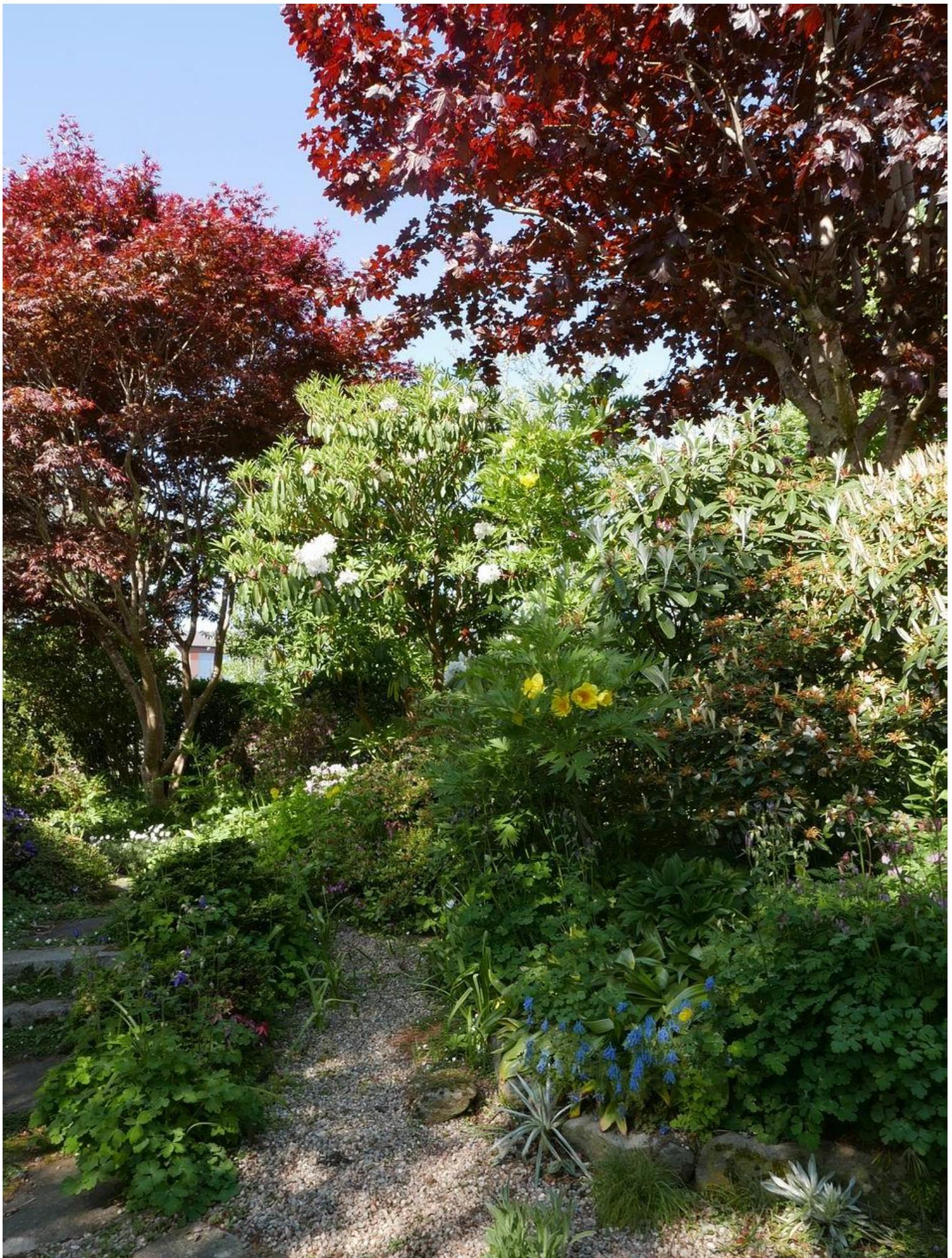




Milium effusum 'Aureum' and **Meconopsis cambrica** are among a number of plants we allow to seed around (in a semi-controlled way) to provide colour through the summer.



Vaccinium nummularia flowers over a number of weeks - the last of the flowers have just opened – these will grow into masses of shiny black berries later in the year.



At this time of year when the tree canopy is complete and the larger plants come into growth it is as if a new garden is born to replace the several waves of colour that we have already enjoyed from the bulbs starting in February with *Galanthus* and *Eranthis* all of which are retreating even more quickly due to the warm dry weather we are having.



Paeonia lutea ludlowii

With the larger plants come larger showy flowers such as the peonies.



Paeonia obovata



Of the jobs to report on is the new growth at the tips of one of the bonsai I root pruned some weeks back indicate that new roots are also growing - at this delicate stage of regrowth and in this hot weather they are watered daily.



My pet dandelion having produced a profusion of flowers for over a month only has a few left now so it is time to cut all the top growth back to ground level.

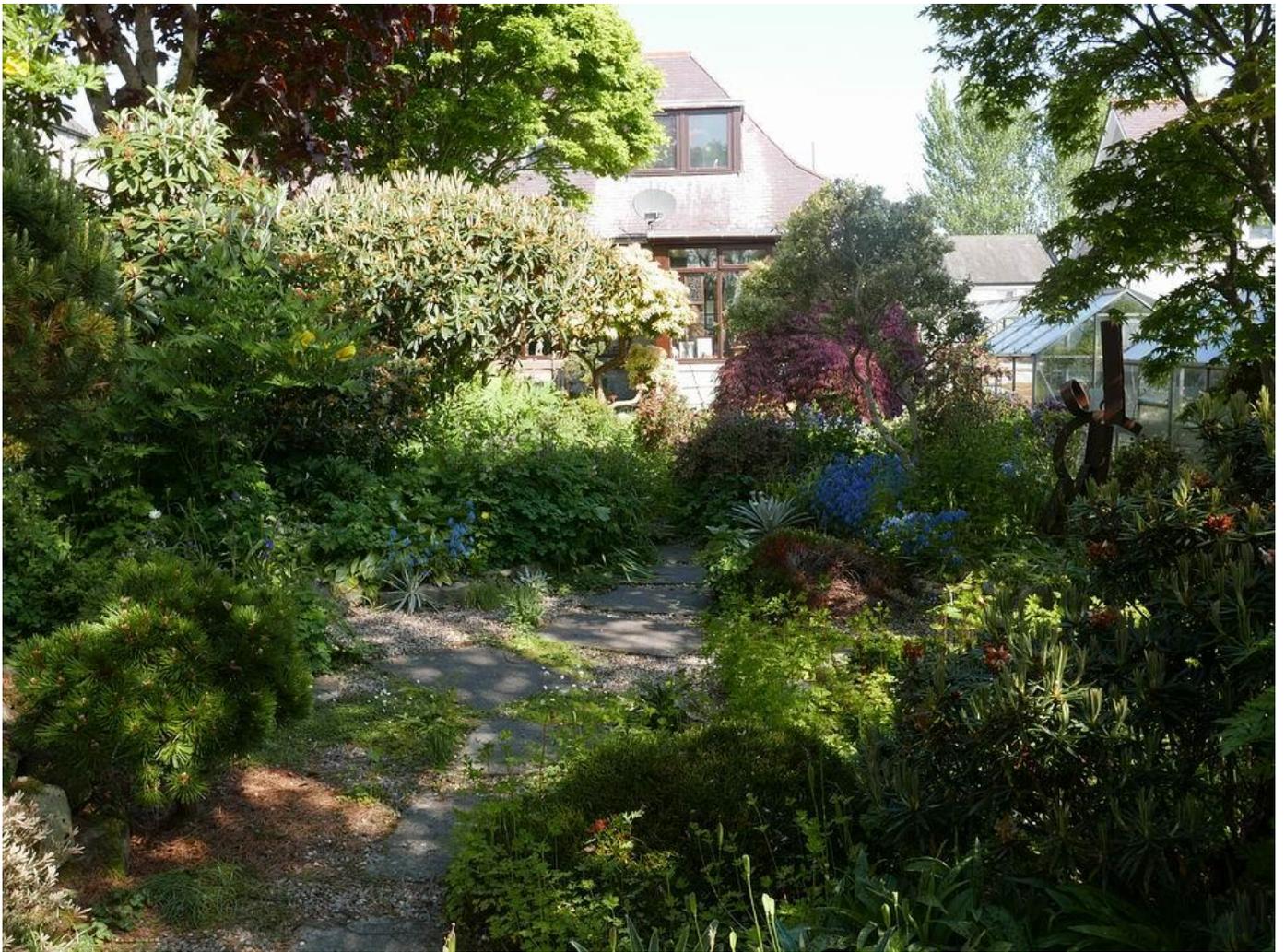
Cutting it back allows space for neighbouring plants to grow and over the next month it will grow a new set of smaller leaves.



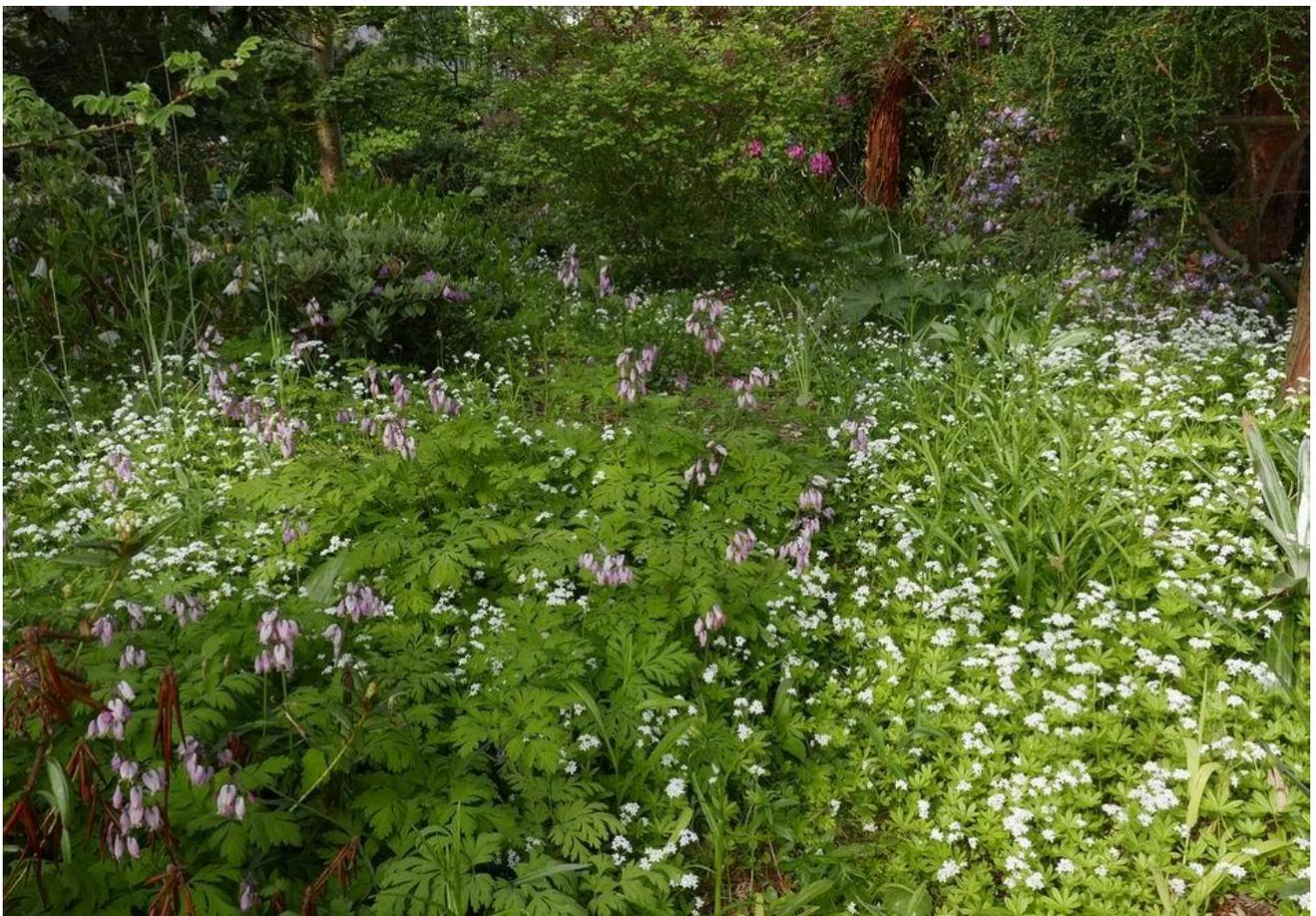
While cutting back the leaves of the dandelion I found a nice crop of *Crocus abantensis* seed pods.



Crocus abantensis seed pods



The atmosphere of the garden changes dramatically when the leaf canopy casts a constantly changing pattern of shade across the garden which is reflected in the air temperature which can be 5 degrees cooler in the shade.



Like our back garden, the front garden also has the look and feel of a woodland garden with a carpet of **Galium odoratum** and **Dicentra formosa**.



I will leave you this week with this view of the front garden from one of the driveways.

You may like to join me in my latest [Bulb Log Video Diary garden walk](#).....