



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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Autumn colour



We have had a run of several dark rainy days making it very difficult for me to get outside to take any pictures never mind catch up with all the autumnal jobs such as lifting leaves, however I have managed, when the rain was not so heavy, to grab some images of the garden for the following photo essay. I staged the small group of plants shown on the cover by bringing together three container plants showing autumn colour that I can see from my work table where I sit to write the Bub Log.

I hesitate to call this Larch tree a bonsai because compared to many that I have seen it is no great specimen lacking in the attention required to produce a true masterpiece however it loosely qualifies for that name because it has been grown in a pot for over thirty years. It lay neglected for many of those years in a shallow bonsai pot before a few years ago I took pity on it moving it into this deeper pot where it had some more room for its roots.

Despite my neglect it has proved just how tough a survivor it is by continuing to produce leaves and cones most years and for the last few years I have been paying it a bit more attention trying to build a structure and character that will mimic that of an ancient weather beaten larch tree in the mountains.

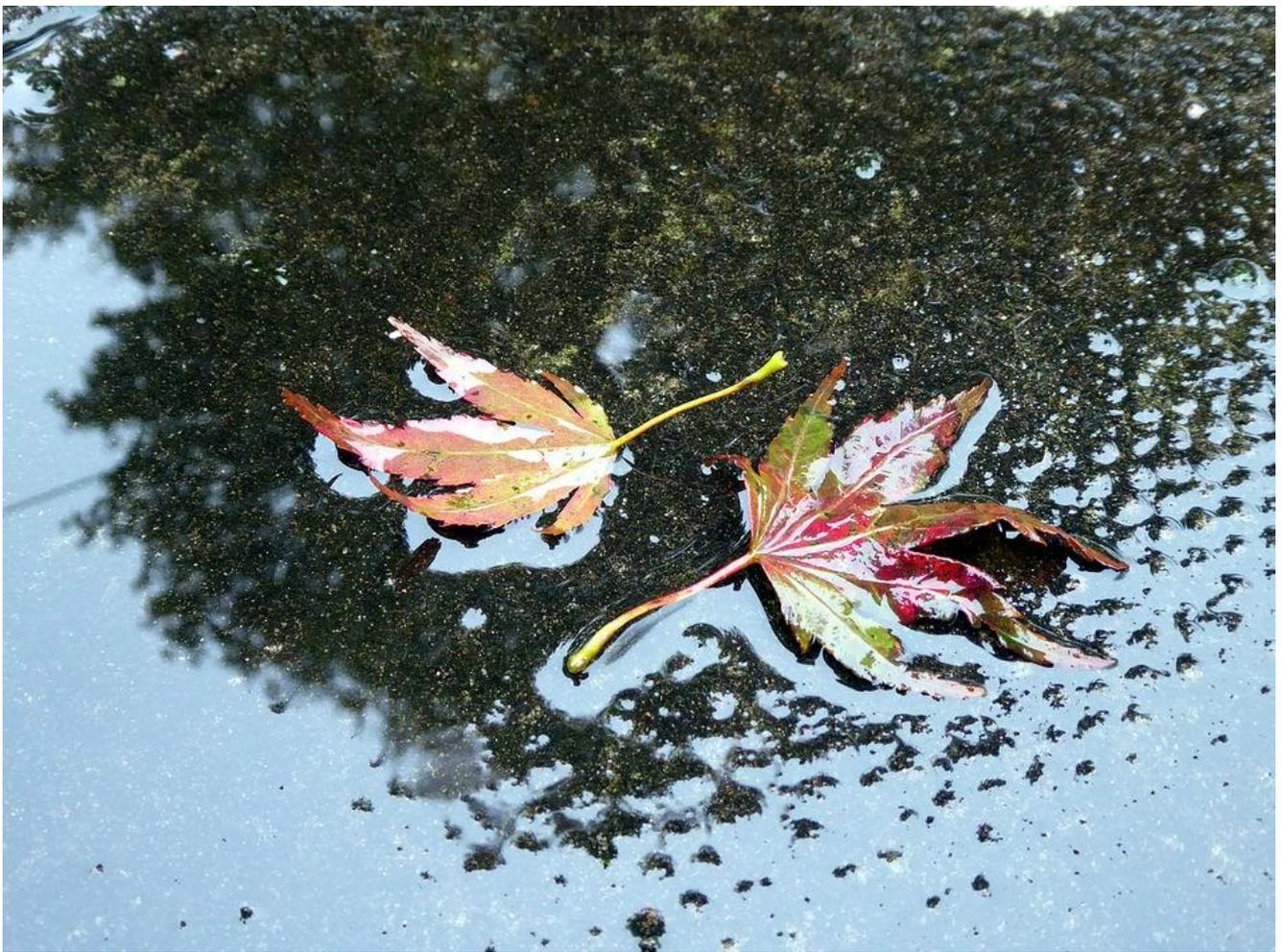




Working in such low light and rain is another test for my new camera as I venture out to record some images starting with the view from the back door step.



Looking up the garden across the slab beds and troughs the paving will show you just how wet it is.



Here I tried to capture the fallen acer leaves with the image of the tree they fell from reflected in the water.



Various dwarf willows, *Salix*, do not want to be left out of the colourful autumn display.



Interesting images can be found everywhere if you look – some *Tanacetum parthenium* flowers produce highlights among the dying foliage of *Paeonia delevayii*.



This mixture of herbaceous and evergreen leaves in one of the bulb beds paints a soggy autumnal image.



Some consider **Geranium robertianum** to be a weed - a term regular readers will know that I prefer not to use - I however see it as a welcome volunteer that adds interest and provides ground cover to the bulb beds while the bulbs



and other plants are resting underground. Geranium robertianum is a plant that will seed around freely but it is also very easily and quickly removed if you do not like where it puts itself.

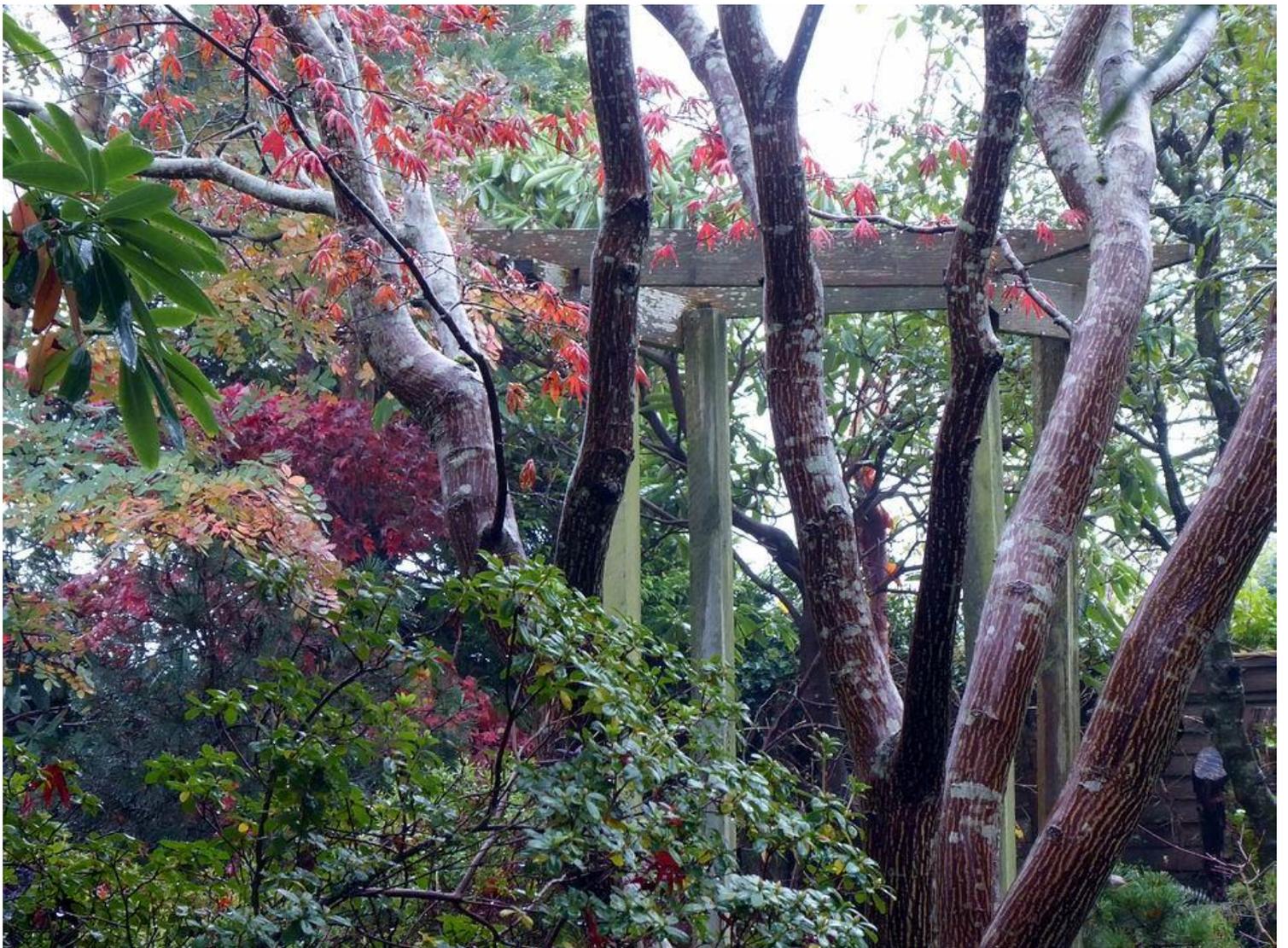
I enjoy the decorative look of the low growth of fresh green leaves among the autumn leaf fall.

Digitalis purpurea, the foxglove, is another plant that seeds freely around but unlike the geranium it can prove to be a problem in many places.

The large leaves of this plant cannot be allowed to remain here as they will hinder the early spring growth of the bulbs and other plants in this bed. Soon I will lift and try to transplant it into a more suitable area under the trees and large shrubs at the south end of the garden – I have successfully moved them before.

To prevent this and other such plants seeding around

too freely I normally cut them back as the flowers fade so preventing them forming and shedding masses of seeds.



The wet conditions makes the Acer trunks shiny highlighting the decorative striations.



These two images show the effect that the small built in flash can have on a subject. Above, I was close on the normal focal length and the flash was a bit too strong burning out the highlights; below, I backed off around a metre zooming in to frame the subject with the effect of reducing the impact of the flash.





The approaching winter has caused ***Paeonia lutea subsp. ludlowii*** to suddenly let go of its leaves, which for a while before they decay, form a colourful decorative pile below the plant.





Paeonia lutea* subsp. *ludlowii



The few remaining leaves with their bright red stems cling on to the top of the stems but they will soon drop.



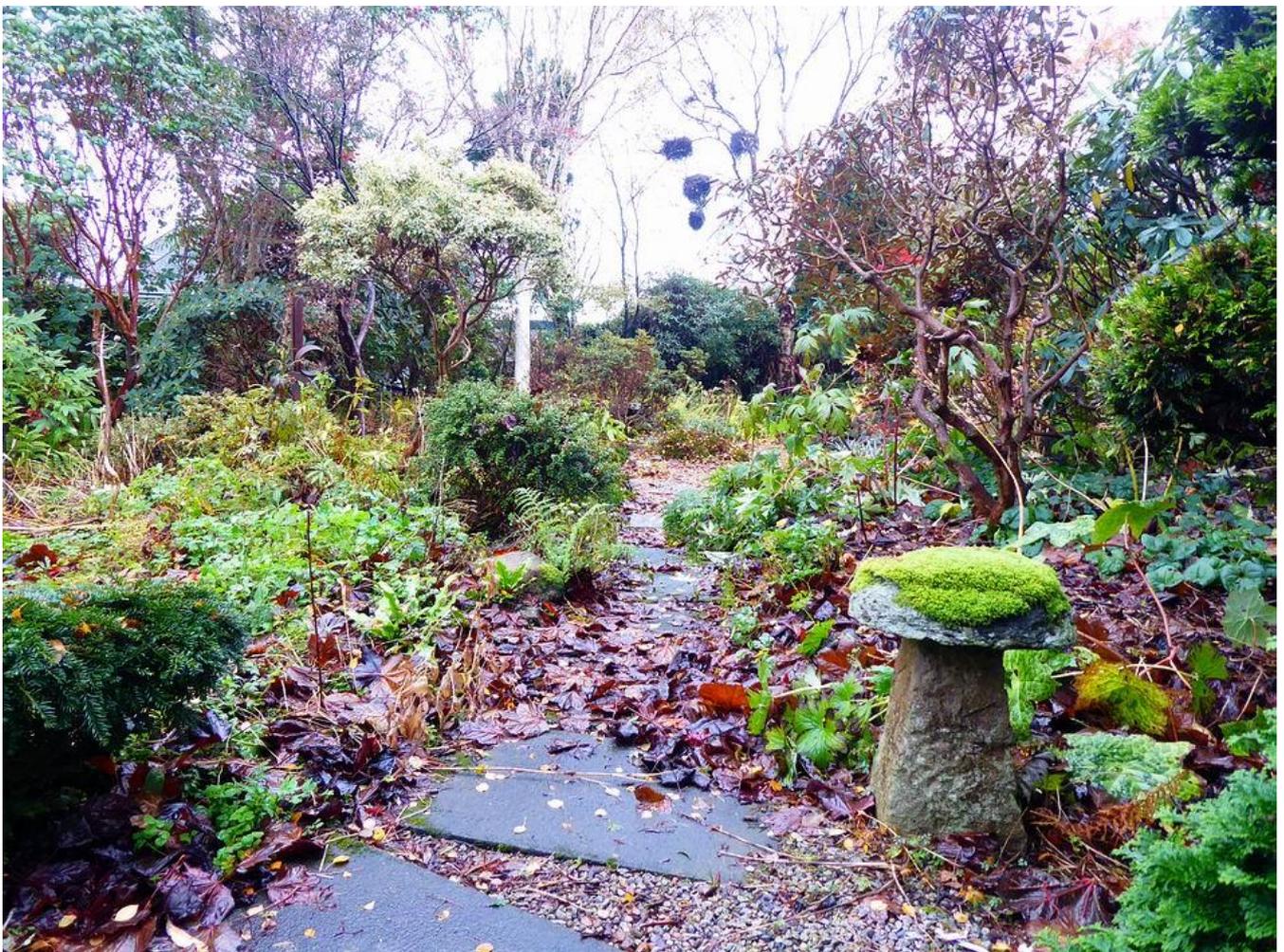
Autumn coloured leaves surround the recently emerged **Cyclamen coum** leaves.



An **Arisaema** seed head brings a sharp contrast to these dull leaves.



View up one of the paths.



As the garden enters its winter state some of the stone features play a more dominant role such as this moss covered staddle stone.



Podophyllum 'Spotty Dotty' still hangs on to its leaves.



Looking west across the garden from the same path other stone features stand out as the annual growth retreats.



Conifers are a critical element of the garden providing structure especially noticeable in the winter garden.



In recent days there were times when the rain cloud was so low that we could not see the end of the garden.



One of my sculptures peeks out from the autumnal misty scene as the rain beats down on me.



Most of the conifers are thirty to forty years old and have been subjected to some degree of clipping or shaping to give them the shape of a small tree rather than allowing them to grow into a large shrubby mass. Regular pruning also keeps them in scale allowing enough light through to the ground level plantings.



On the last dry day before the rain I gave the 'cloud pruned' tree in the front garden its annual clipping to retain its shape these are the before and after pictures.



There are many trees and shrubs in the front garden including the conifer, to the right, that has also had its trim.



Trees are an important environmental and design element and should be included in any garden, no matter what size.

Click the link to walk with me in the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#)