



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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Crevice garden – more from Inverewe



Last week I reported on the talks, workshops and the building of the crevice garden at Inverewe, this week I want to explore a bit beyond Inverewe garden to put the rock garden we created into context. On the Sunday with the construction work behind us, Paul Spriggs and I, on my now weary legs, took a walk towards Loch Kernsary and Beinn Airigh Charr which at

791m is described in Scotland as a Corbett - higher mountains in Scotland with a height over 3,000 feet (914.4 m) are defined as Munros.



When I was younger I was dropped from the Munro hill walking group because I was too slow, rarely having time to achieve the summit. The reason for my tardiness was not as it is now, my fitness, but my curiosity and fascination with nature especially in the plants, the geology and the relationship between them that is still the same today.



Both rocks and plants are interesting to me but when they are combined they become even more fascinating and most of my inspiration for our garden comes directly from observations I have made in nature. This magnificent exposed weathered and fissured chunk of bedrock, bearing the scars of glaciation, is a natural rock garden full of crevices and cracks where the first pioneers are the lichens, then mosses and eventually humus builds up in the cracks and crevices allowing plants to grow.

It is not just the exposed bedrock that can become a natural rock garden or provide us with inspiration and ideas that we can interpret and mimic in our gardens.

Here it is an exposed boulder dumped by a retreating glacier that over time has become split and sufficiently cracked to allow plants such as *Calluna vulgaris* and *Alchemilla alpina* to grow.



These beautiful silvery white lichen-painted boulders stand out against the dark peaty water forming an interesting water garden that could easily be interpreted into a garden feature with a pond, marginal area rising up to a rock garden bed.





A simple 'V' shaped cleft left by a fracture sometime in the history of this rock is all that it takes for some debris to collect allowing nature and plants to take over. This rock has split into two parts and again if the only type of rocks that are available to you are rounded boulders than you could copy this idea and split them by drilling holes then driving in wedges. Interestingly the presence of Paul Spriggs' boot in the top of this picture forms a strong link and if my memory serves

me well it was David Sellars from Vancouver that has used this very method to create a rock garden by splitting such large boulders to form planting crevices in his garden.



Both around and within Inverewe Garden you will discover a wide range of habitats and garden types such as the walled kitchen garden facing south on the shores of Loch Ewe that has been fertilised by seaweed hauled up from the shore since it was first built in the nineteenth century, using soil brought in by boat to supplement the rocky land.



Walking round the garden you find yourself moving through many different habitats and plantings, some quite surprising such as this area around a pond planted with Sarracenia.

I suspect that this feature was aimed at attracting children visiting the garden – it certainly attracted this one.



I was fascinated by this thriving planting of insectivorous plants including the Sarracenia.



Also growing very well in this moist bed is the Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*).

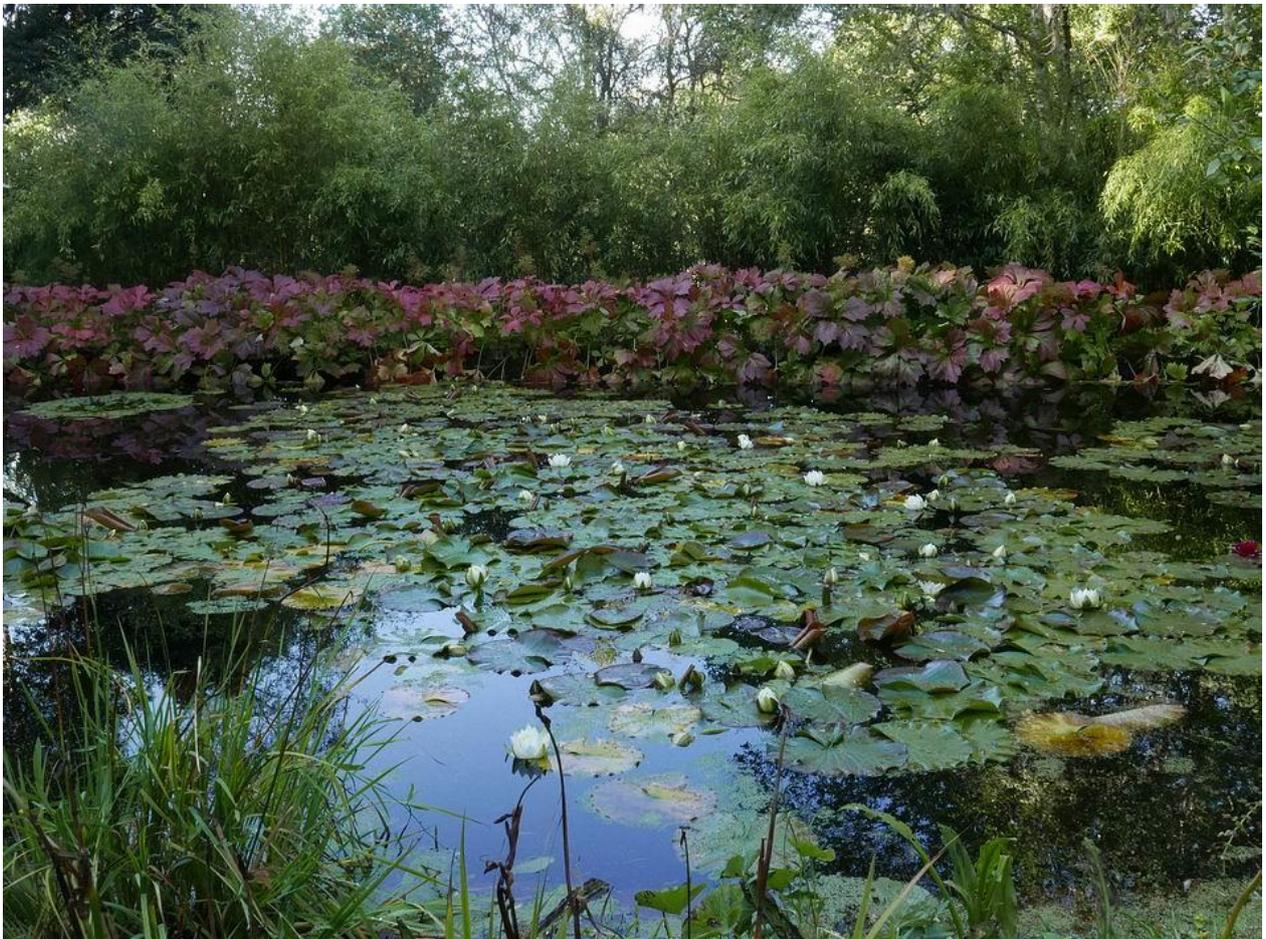


I think that this is a form of *Cordyline australis* one of many New Zealand plants which are a feature throughout the garden – I am prepared to be corrected by anyone with more knowledge of these.



Nymphaea alba

I am more used to seeing this scene in the spring before the waterlilies make their annual appearance and when the Magnolia are in flower.





Tree stump



Despite its small stature the rotted, hollowed out trunk of this *Salix lanata* reveals its great age.



This is the view before me as I walk along the foreshore and salt marsh towards the Inverewe peninsula.



The superb propagation glasshouses at Inverewe have a magnificent view across the loch to the mountains beyond.



Low tide reveals the seaweeds which when used as a mulch provide a rich source of humus and nutrients.





The whole rocky peninsula of Inverewe provides many natural rock outcrops and here, by the main visitor path, the gardeners are slowly clearing some of the overgrowth revealing the rocks and opening up planting opportunities for some of the smaller plants.



It is away from the public paths down on the shore that I find the most fascinating rock formations, many forming beautiful natural rock gardens which relate directly to the crevice bed we built last week.



From the shore the land rises steeply up to the garden but for the next sequence of pictures I stay on the loch level.



You can see our crevice work sitting above these natural rock gardens (to the left).



Words are not necessary with these images please enjoy and take inspiration from the natural beauty of the rocks and plants.



Armeria maritima



Armeria maritima and lichens



I love this transition from seaweed garden through salt marsh, rock garden rising up to the woodland.



A stunning sequence of rock formations provide a home to many wild plants.



Armeria maritima has a root hold in the cracks of the rocks with *Cochlearia danica* growing among the scattered rocks.

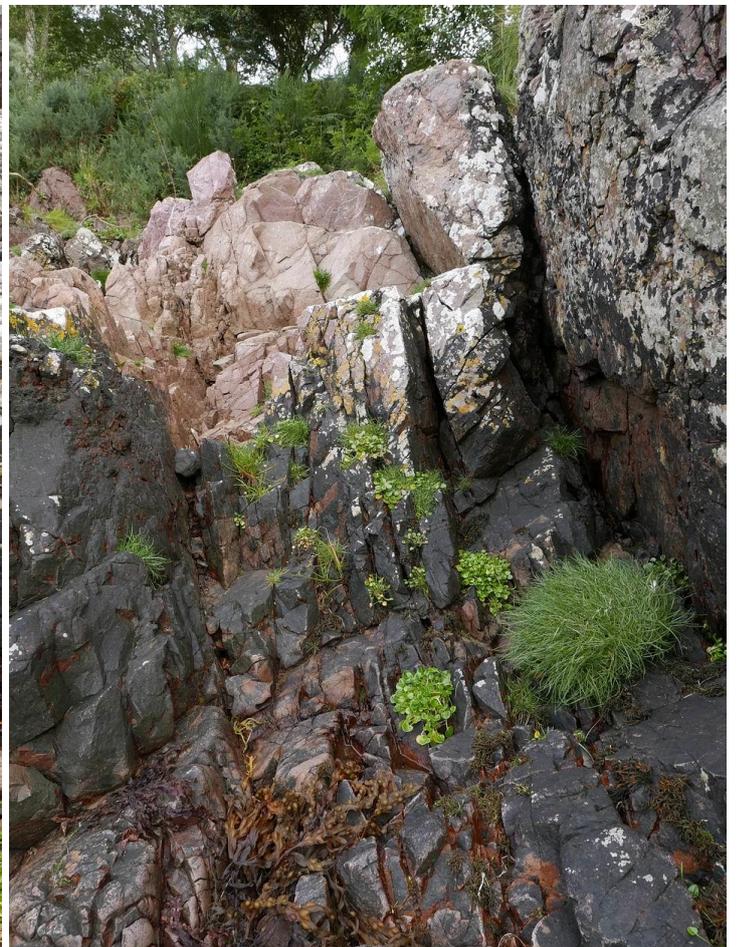


Seaweed, salt marsh and rocks.





Here is the natural crevice garden shown on the front cover.



Armeria maritima and *Cochlearia danica* growing in the narrow crevices.



The dynamic nature of this section of sandstone can be seen both by the scattering of sharp fractured fragments lying around the base as well as by the colour which has not been disguised by the growth of lichens unable to gain a hold on the constantly changing surface.





This image shows the link between our crevice garden creation sitting above the natural rock outcrops rising from the shore line.



The inspiration for this type of garden lies in natural crevice gardens such as this one with *Armeria maritima* and *Cochlearia danica* among the plants: compare that with our newly completed version below where I hope in time the plants will grow and settle in and more will join them so that it matures to have an almost natural look.





Newly planted crevice garden.





That is all from Inverewe for now although I do hope to bring updates when I return in the spring plus there is the possibility of us returning to do further projects perhaps next year.....