



BULB LOG 31.....29th July 2020



Rhododendron bureavii



This is the view in front of me as I sit at my laptop writing this week's Bulb Log –it is raining and 13 degrees centigrade out there. These cool wet conditions are all too common in a Scottish summer and so have had a big influence on the type of plants we grow – fortunately the plants we like the most enjoy these growing conditions.



The wet summer weather is challenging for a lot of the true alpine species: we have lost more in the summer months than in the cold winters. Even growing them in the well-drained rocky landscapes of the troughs and raised beds many simply rot in the summer wet. Although we are responsible for bringing the plants into the garden in the first instance down the years they

have selected themselves according to their tolerance to our weather.



It is not always raining - we do also get a lot of sunshine as these pictures show, but we never get the searing heat that some of you experience in high summer days. Although we have experienced a few periods of drought in recent years, such as last summer and this spring, we would normally get some rain most weeks. In addition because of the lower top temperatures our evaporation rate is also low so most of the rain gets a chance to reach the plants rather than just evaporating away as it can in hotter regions.



Rhododendron bureavii shown of the front cover is generally considered to be one of the best for the decorative effect of the new foliage which is covered in a dense cinnamon coloured indumentum and looks stunning.

We have two plants one in the front garden and one in the back both are four to five meters tall.



Rhododendron rex fictolacteum is one of the larger leaved species and I have seen it with leaves well in excess of 40cms at Inverewe Gardens on the wetter west coast of Scotland but here in the drier east and on our light soil they are not even half that size.



I am interested to observe that despite the copious amounts of rain we have had through June and July the leaves and new growth on many of the trees and shrubs is not as big as in other years. I put this down to the dry period in the spring stunting the growth and it appears the later rain has not completely countered the early record breaking dryness in the ground.

Rhododendron lepidostylum is one of the smaller species which has the most beautiful grey/green new foliage.



Rhododendron yakushimanum x *tsariense* with *Rhododendron elegantulum* on the right



Flowers have a short season some last only a few days while leaves are with us for much longer, with evergreens holding on to leaves all year round - this is why I always recommend planting for foliage effect. Long live greenery!



Gardening is cyclical activity and one of my annual tasks is to cut the hedges which run along our east and west boundaries. They are mostly Privet, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, with a small section of *Lonicera nitida* and my routine is to cut them once a year. I allow them to grow until July/August by which time the birds have stopped nesting and the growth is very shaggy but then I cut them back very hard so they do not get any bigger. Regular readers will know that I shred and compost all the cuttings before applying them back to the garden as a mulch.



Ornithogalum bulbs

Another of the annual summer tasks is to replot all the pots of bulbs growing in the bulb houses and I have now completed this task.

These Ornithogalum bulbs were the last in growth going dormant just a few weeks ago so were the last of this year's pots to get done.

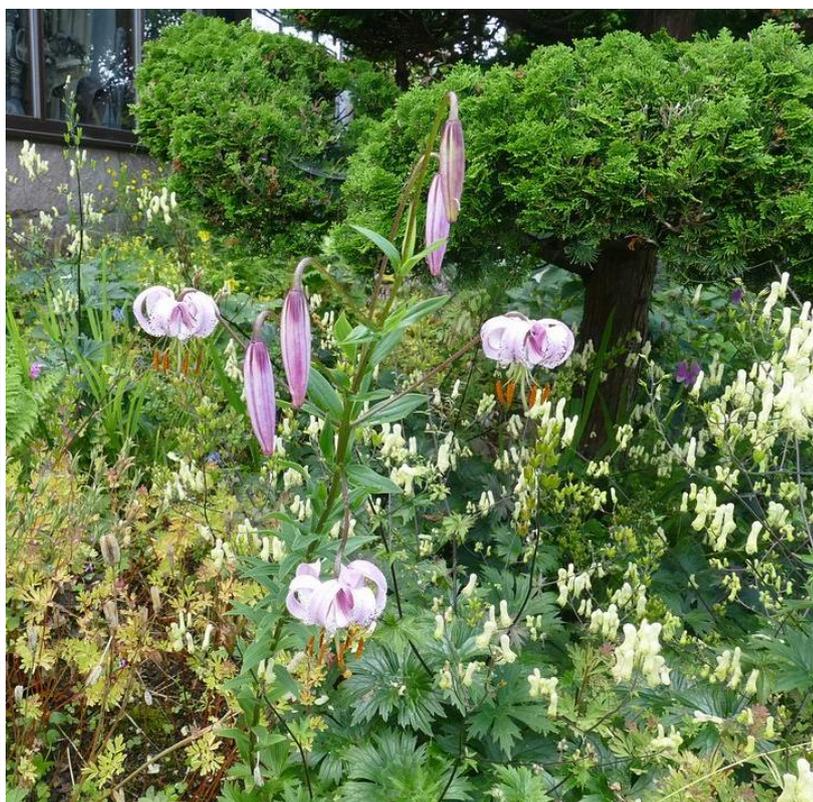


Lilium martagon

This group of *Lilium martagon* is growing up through the stems of a large *Rhodendron elegantulum*.



The lovely whorls of the **Lilium martagon** leaves, some of which are pretty large.



Lilium lankongense

Lilium lankongense is another of the summer flowering lilies; this one enjoys the cool damp conditions of our garden.



This picture was taken in early April and I have framed the new growth of a plant of *Cyananthus lobatus* just emerging, at which stage it looks very like a compact cushion plant.



As the weeks progressed the growths lengthen and now it looks like a lush green cushion.



We also grow **Cyananthus microphyllus** in this slab bed and it comes into growth around the same time.



Now the sprawling mass of stems shows it is a mat forming plant that spreads and trails across the bed and down the sides. Because the flowers form at the ends of the stems it never forms a complete mass of blue flowers but we will get a long progression of flowers that have begun now and keep appearing until the winter frosts arrive and force it to retreat underground again.



Cyananthus lobatus



I forget the specific name of this Spanish *Erodium* which we grew from seed: if any of you can remind me of the name, I would be grateful. It grows on the corner of one of the slab beds and is possibly the plant that has flowers more days of the year than the majority of our other plants equalling the likes of the *Pseudofumaria alba* and *lutea*.



I think these are **Crocus banaticus** seeds being shed in the new bed beside the pond – I have helped the distribution by picking some and spreading them across the bed. The other species growing in this bed that they could be is *Crocus vallicola*.





Primula florindae

Primula florindae is one of the larger species in the genus that we grow. It is very adaptable to growing conditions - here it is growing in the relatively drier part of the front garden so the plants are modest in size - where it is growing in wetter conditions it can get very big.



Primula florindae

Eucomis bicolor is one of the plants that does not appear above the ground until well into the summer. Here I show the recently emerged new leaves with the flower spikes nestled in the centre – it won't be long before the slugs find them.





Roscoea is another of the late risers which has also just appeared. The new growth is timed well to appear just as the Dicentra is dying down.



Roscoea



Arisaema ciliatum has been in growth for many months with the tallest plants reaching a metre.



Arisaema speciosum on the left has only recently emerged and the flowers are only just opening while the flowers of *Arisaema wilsonii*, on the right, appeared in April quickly followed by the leaves.



Arisaema speciosum



Arisaema jacquemontii



Arisaema candidissimum

Arisaema candidissimum also waits until well into July before putting in an appearance.....