



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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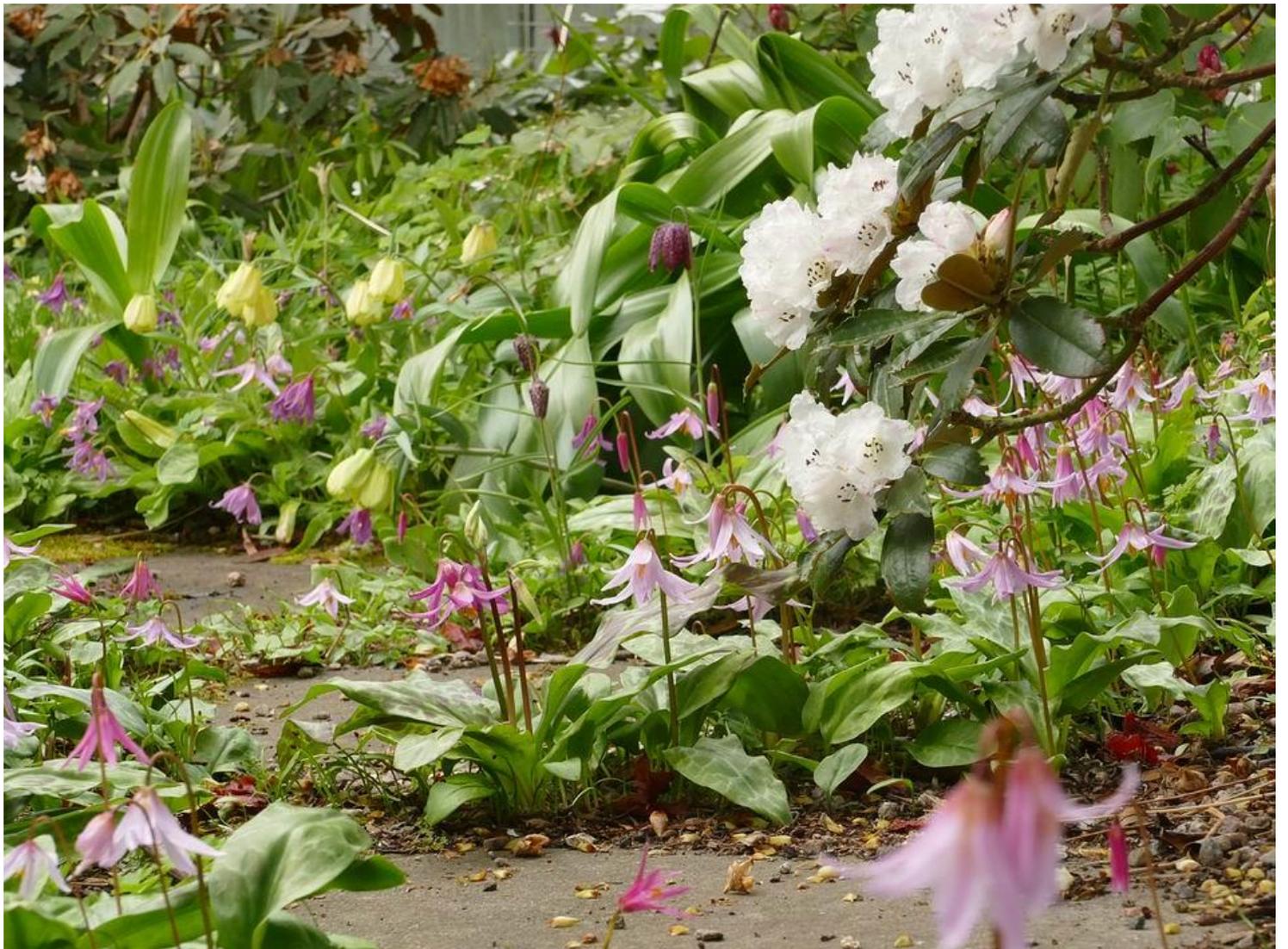


Erythronium revolutum

When we originally laid out the garden, the paths were made of paving slabs, spaced so we could easily walk around the garden by stepping from slab to slab without getting our feet wet. In the very early days the slabs were set into grass but that was replaced by gravel as the grass slowly got lifted - the area surrounding this bed was the last section of grass to go in the 1990's. For a short time the only plants growing in the gravel were some Ericaceous plants and a few dwarf conifers but that did not last long. It quickly became apparent that the gravel paths were the best seed areas we had and when seedlings of a wide range of plants started to appear I followed nature's lead and started to spread seed.



The first generation of this expanding population of *Erythronium revolutum* was growing on the top of the raised wall, then it shed its seeds down into the gravel below and nature took over from there. At *Erythronium* time we now have to step even more carefully from slab to slab – Tip Toe through the *Erythronium* does not scan so well.



Although it is the *Erythronium* that dominate at the moment there are other plants seeding around in this area such as *Trillium*, *Crocus*, *Cyclamen*, *Fritillaria* and *Allium*.



Fritillaria pallidiflora



Once more I originally planted some *Fritillaria pallidiflora* seedlings into the bed, which stops just at the top of this picture, and it self-seeded out into the gravel path along with the *Erythronium* and others. Now there is no sign of the original plants which reinforces my belief that the best way to maintain some plants over the long term is to allow them to seed, producing successive generations of young, vigorous healthy plants. I find letting nature take over exciting because it shifts my role from being just the gardener

who plants everything to the explorer who goes around discovering the many seedlings appearing.



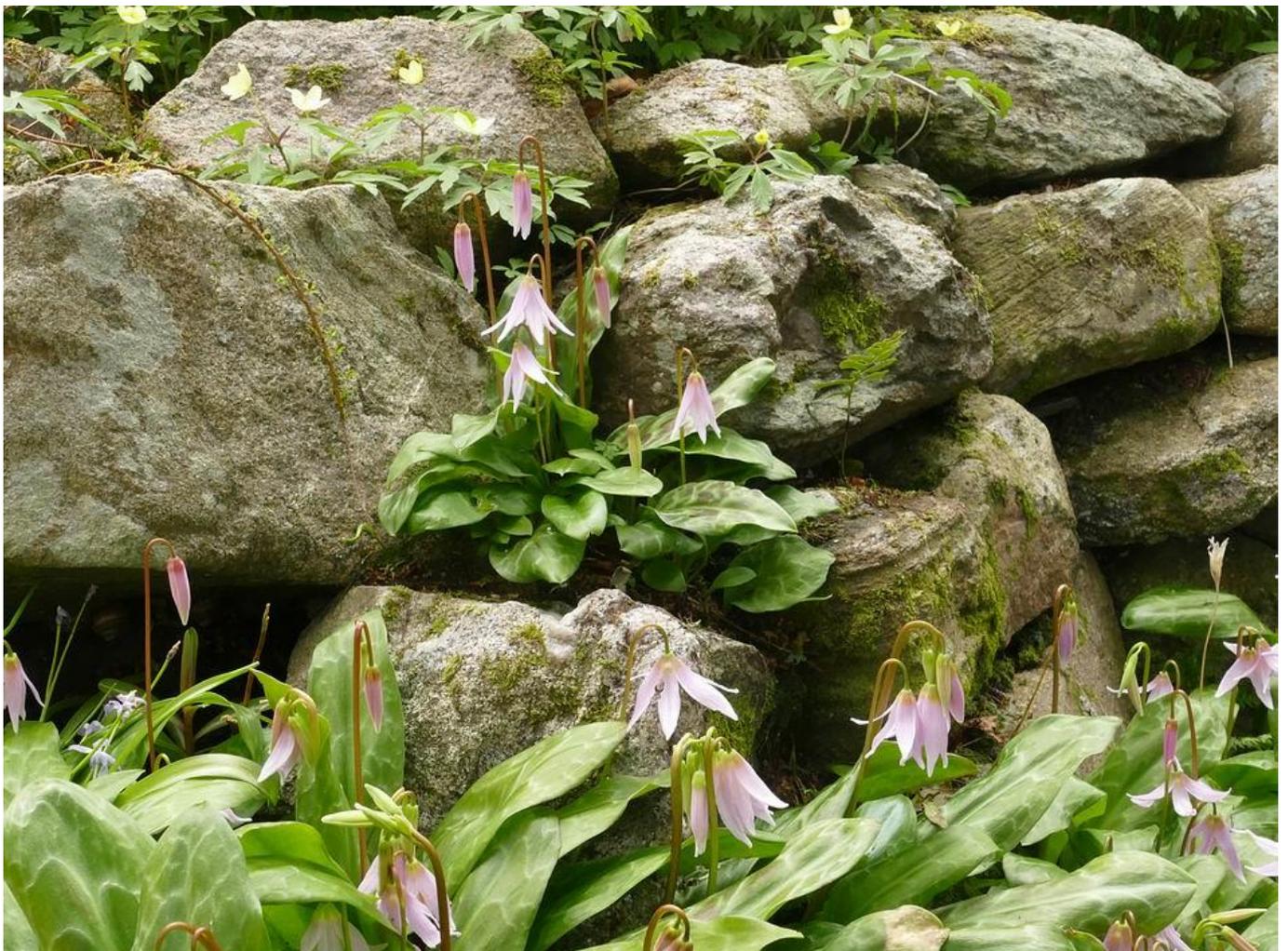
Another colony of *Erythronium revolutum* is escaping from the original plants in this low bed into the gravel path.



The steep sloping walls of the raised beds have turned into woody crevice gardens where a wide range of plants can grow between the rocks, often seeding into the moss which grows on them.



Above is a Crevice growing *Erythronium revolutum* surrounded by seedlings of different ages and below a mature flowering group rises proudly from the rocky landscape it selected.





While most areas of the garden are mature there are occasions when we get the chance to completely replant an area such as at the south end of the garden where we cut back some old shrubby growth, that had passed its best and taken over too much ground which we could put to more interesting and decorative use. We apply the lessons we have learned over the years such as to plant for foliage interest where I aim to get good ground cover quickly. Here I am using plants with a range of foliage types most of which also flower – in addition there are bulbous plants that will rise up and flower through the green tapestry at different times of the year.



I have also come to conclude that there are no such things as problem areas these are just habitats that offer different challenges which we need to resolve.

There is a high wall/fence at the far south end of the garden where we have encouraged the growth of ivy, largely to benefit wild life, there are also a number of large trees and shrubs both evergreen and deciduous, so this area is in both dry and in heavy shade most of the time. Our compost heaps take up one section and my challenge is to find plants that will grow right up to the bottom of the wall.

Trillium grandiflorum grows very well in our garden and will tolerate some degree of dry shade so I keep trying to grow it deeper in towards the base of the wall.



I also have a range of plants that I am trying to grow ever closer to the wall such as in this area under the large birch tree where spring bulbs grow well but it is not so easy to find plants that bring interest as the year progresses. Some ferns and grasses tolerate the dry shaded conditions but it is not so easy to find flowering plants that will grow well without any direct light.



Moving on I pass a group of **(Pseudo)Trillium rivale** growing on the wall under a small pine tree and in front of **Rhododendron dendrocharis** which in the wild can be seen growing on trees hence its specific name.



View down the raised wall.



Walking around the raised wall brings new views and different plants, one of which is *Erythronium americanum* seen here with its flowers still tightly closed because of the cold weather so they are only showing the brownish exterior and I fear it is not going to be warm enough for them to reveal their yellow interiors at all this year.



The beautiful display of *Jeffersonia dubia* in full flower has also been disrupted by the heavy frosts and wind that scorched the emerging foliage and flower buds.



**Jeffersonia
dubia**

The plants are recovering and some of the later flowers have escaped the damage but now they are hidden by the expanding leaves.



Rhododendron dendrocharis just coming into flower.



Another bed brings a different range of plants such as **Fritillaria aurea**.



(Pseudo)Trillium rivale, Fritillaria aurea, Erythronium sibiricum complex and Dicentra cucullaria.



The smaller Trilliums peak out through the low ground covering Corydalis foliage.



(Pseudo)Trillium rivale seedlings look and perform differently; it is good that the attractive one with the spotted pink flowers is also increasing quite quickly.



In the winter this path wound its way through almost bare ground now it leads us through a wonderful sea of greens in many shades and shapes which form a naturalistic undercover for Trilliums and other plants to grow through.



A number of plants can be found rising through the ocean of green such as this *Trillium erectum* seedling.



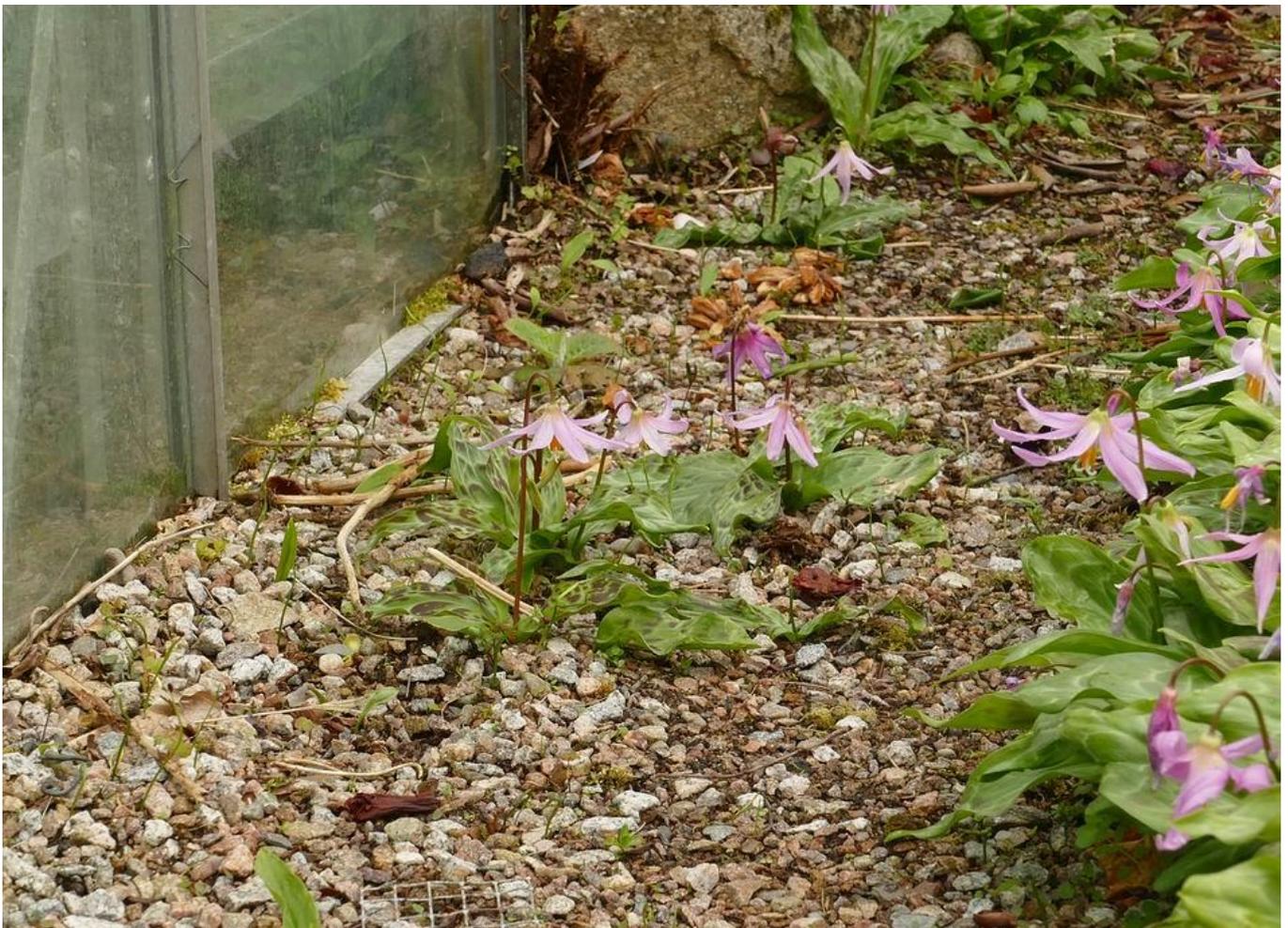
Trillium grandiflorum, Trillium albidum and Erythronium revolutum.



Trillium erectum hybrid



Returning to paths in an attempt to keep this narrow gravel path clear I have lifted a number of *Erythronium*s but I increasingly realise that in a plantsman's garden, paths are for plants - people have to find another way round.



Erythronium revolutum growing in the path.



We do work to keep the gaps between the paving slabs near the house clear but there are some plants that we cannot bring ourselves to 'weed' out such as this autumn flowering Crocus seedling that has been increasing for several years.



It is incredible how many plants try to grow in what could be considered as an extreme crevice- some have been allowed to stay such as our 'strawberry patch' where during the summer we get a steady supply of the small but very tasty fruits of **Fragaria vesca**.



I could not talk about paths without mentioning the front driveway – like the rest of the garden the early flowering of Crocus etc was badly battered by the blizzards but now it is starting to recover.

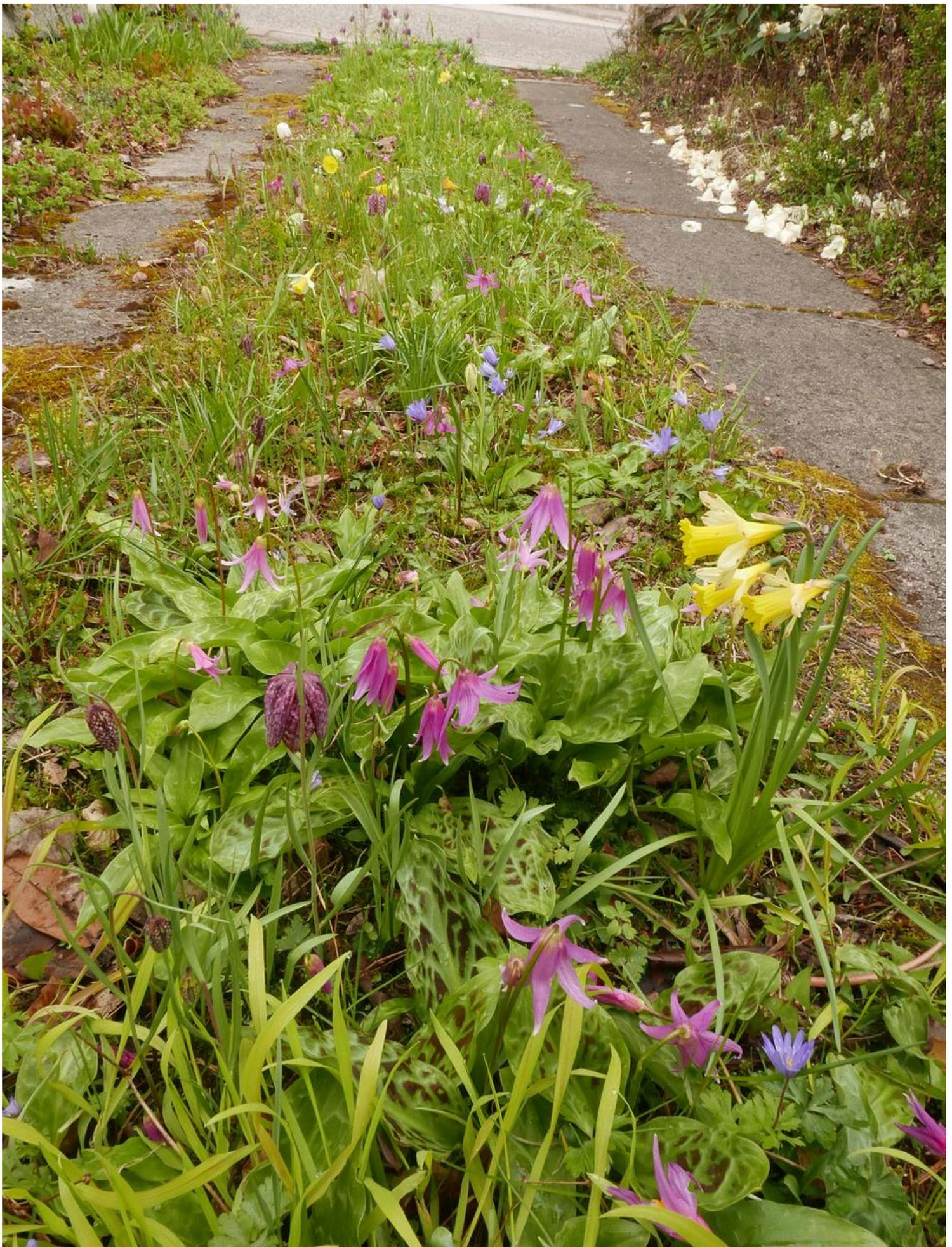


Towards the road end is an ever expanding population of **Fritillara meleagris** and I have been gradually helping the spread by scattering the seeds further along towards the house.



My vision was to mimic the effect of an alpine meadow which after many years and to my eyes at least I think we are getting close.





A cold spring day on the front drive.

If you want to see more of the garden this week click on the link for the most recent [Bulb Log Video Diary](#).