



BULB LOG 24.....15<sup>th</sup> June 2011



It is an interesting observation that gardens do not always look their best when a particular plant or group of plants are at their peak of flowering. The opening picture proves this as many of the flowers are well past their best and others just coming out. – The distant *Aquilegia* plants are well past their best having just a few flowers left but it is the overlap of the last of their colour with the emerging *Dactylorhiza* that helps build the bigger picture.



### Weeds

I am sure that every gardener knows that while the vagaries of the weather can be detrimental to our chosen plants the weeds always seem to thrive and rarely stop growing. The gravel surfaces we rock gardeners favour are ideal



*Fuschia procumbens*

seed grounds for the weeds as well as all the other plants in our garden. So only hand weeding is allowed in our garden. You have to identify the plant as a weed before you pull it up.

I like hand weeding – there is something therapeutic about getting down low, preferably on a nice day, seeing your garden close up and in detail. It is then you will spot things that you might otherwise miss if you are just walking around using a hoe or weed killer ; two things that are banned here.

It was during one of these weeding sessions that I saw that our *Fuschia procumbens*, often described as not hardy, has survived despite the severity of last winter



**Rhododendron seedling**

Another discovery was this tiny *Rhododendron* seedling growing on a moss covered rock. I have to think of moving this if I want it to survive – or will I see how it can develop in these conditions not dissimilar to how they might grow in the wild? Similarly the *Arisaema* seedlings below came up as I pulled a grass weed – a good chance to observe their early development. Careful handling means that they can be slipped in somewhere else to grow on.



**Arisaema seedlings**



## **Arisaema ciliatum forest**

This forest of *Arisaema ciliatum* has built up both by seeding and by the stolons that are produced. If you have noticed the blurry line across the picture it was caused by a tiny hair that had become trapped in the small metal blades that close to protect the shutter when it is switched off – it was my Canon SX 210s. I noticed it and removed it but did not realise until later how it had left its mark on the image.



## ***Corydalis pseudobarbisepala* with seed pods**

It is good to see the seedpods developing on *Corydalis pseudobarbisepala* again this year. My previous experience is that each pod only contains a single seed and to date I have not had any germination in the seed pots I sowed neither have I noticed any seedlings appearing around the plant from the seed that was shed before I got to collect it. Not such good news with the seed pods on *Corydalis mucronipetala* that I showed developing in bulb log 22 -

below you can see that they contain no viable seeds. This is the first time I can remember seedpods developing on a *Corydalis* and not having any seeds in – they normally just wither and fall off if not successfully fertilized.



***Corydalis mucronipetala* seed pods**



### **Pollinator**

To get good seed we need a successful pollinator and here you can see a bee doing the job on a typical ericaceous flower.

Often bumble bees break into flowers by cutting a hole to access the nectar as they do with *Corydalis* but they are obviously very familiar with the native heathers and know the way into these types of flowers.



### **Gaultheria schallon**

Found in North West America and introduced by David Douglas in 1826 this plants has a reputation as a bit of a thug – early writings recommend it as providing ‘good cover for game’ but the form we have was given to us as the



‘compact form’ and it has lived up to that description

It has taken over twenty five years to reach the size you can see on the left.

I love the way the flowers trusses hang in rows all the way up the bush making it a very decorative addition to any shrub garden.

The bees also appreciate it when it is in flower as every time we go past it is covered with them – especially when it is warmed by the early morning sun.



### **Slab bed?**

Normally when I talk of our slab beds I mean the raised beds made from paving slabs but here is a mini garden that has sprung up along the edge of the slab between the bulb houses. The fern and the *Dactylorhiza* have self seeded and all the trilliums are a result of a pot of seed I carelessly knocked over a few years ago spilling the contents down the narrow gap. Despite my efforts to retrieve the seeds I obviously missed quite a number. Having watched them grow for a few years now is the time to lift this slab and get these plants into a more appropriate spot in the garden



### **Dactylorhiza**

The camera and the bulb log are valuable tools to remind me of jobs that need doing later in the season – like splitting up this clump of *Dactylorhiza* before it become so congested that it starts to have a detrimental effect on the individual tubers.



**Dactylorhiza**

After five years these clumps should be split and for optimum increase you should think of splitting them every second year. This is a group that I split last year, see bulb log 3110, and as a result you can see the stems nicely spaced out.



**Erantis bed**

The large area of withered foliage is where some Erantis are and now they have gone back underground it leaves a large gap. Last year I tried a couple of Dactylorhiza here to see if they would be compatible and they seem fine so when I split up some of the clumps I will plant some more to fill this gap in the season. Again the camera will aid my memory



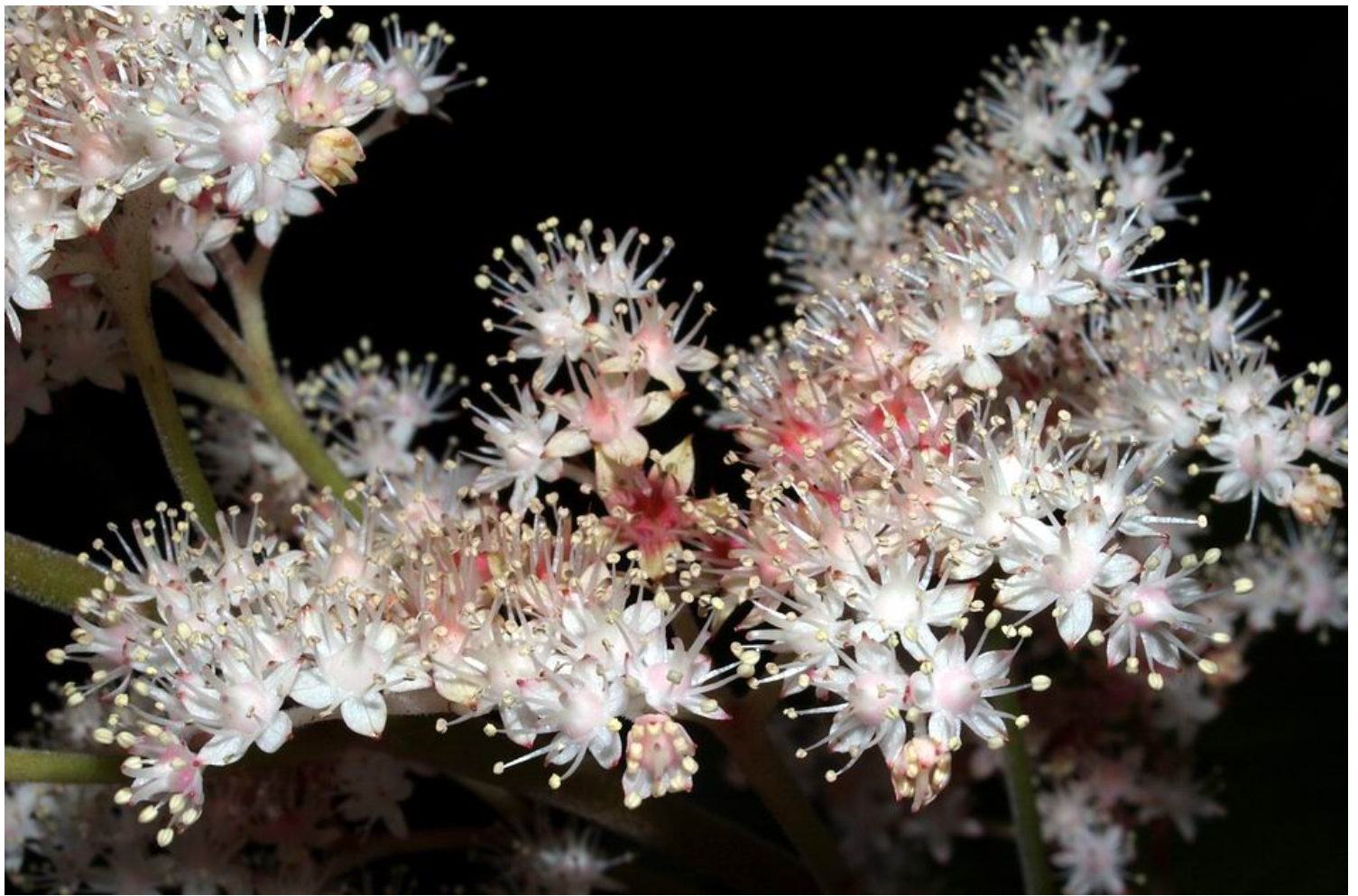


### **Trillium bed**

Again the trillium bed has no strong flowering interest just now and could also do with some more *Dactylorhiza*.



There are no such gaps in this bulb bed which is well filled and with plenty of flowers illustrating a good 'time share planting'.



**Guess the genus?**

Lovely clusters of flowers on this high altitude plant can you identify it?



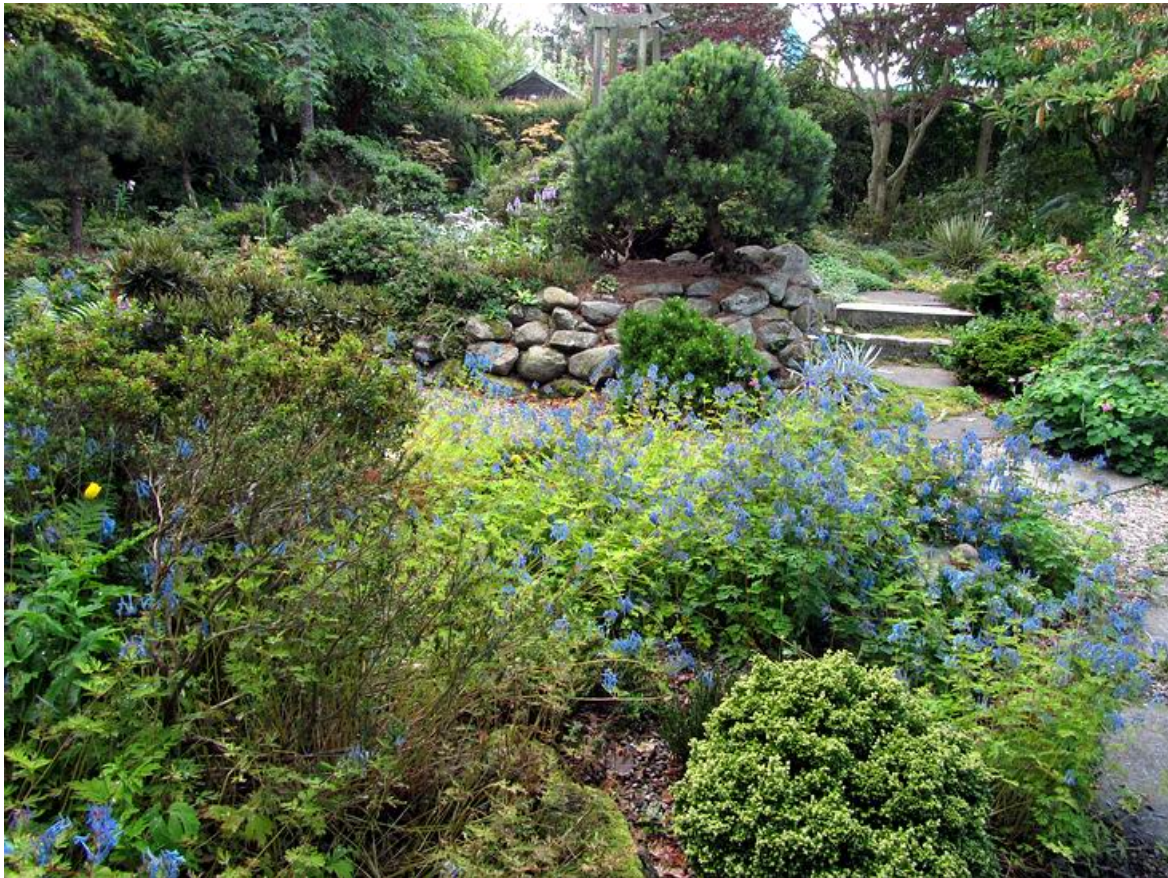
**Corydalis bed**

The clue to the above flower is in the back of this bed – it is a *Rodgersia* species raised from ACE seed collected in China quite a few years ago now. It just shows that not all high altitude plants are small and compact.



**Sculpture bed**

Since I cut back some of the shrubs in this bed which had become too leggy we get a better view of the sculpture again. Back in the 1970's and early 1980's I was exhibiting quite a lot of large scale metal sculpture. I installed this smaller work here when it returned from a travelling exhibition around 1980.



**Garden view**

As an artist I work in many media such as sculpture, painting, printmaking and gardening. Gardening is perhaps the most challenging as you have less control and you can never say that your work is complete.

Photography is another tool for the artist and with an eye to the composition look at the similar view below but this time it is framed through a tree to bring

the foreground right up to the viewer and giving the picture the feeling of greater depth.



**Garden view**



To end this week here is a view across the slab beds towards the garden; this time using a telephoto lens to foreshorten the perspective.