



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 33.....12th August 2020



Cyananthus lobatus



More flowers are now opening on this large plant of *Cyananthus lobatus*. That was the name we got it as although I suspect it is more likely a hybrid. Even though it is still early August I am detecting a distinct sense of autumn in the air with shortening days and lower night time temperatures.

We initially make and plant our gardens but over time they take on a life of their own as nature works its magic. Thirty plus years ago this was a rock garden bed which over the years has gradually changed - not in the layout which remains the same - but in the plants that grow there. Early in the year it is dominated by the smaller bulbs, some which were planted by us as well as self-seeding, just like the *Meconopsis* and *Roscoea*



whose foliage currently dominates the scene are doing. I would not have thought to plant *Meconopsis* in the very gritty well drained soil we used to build this bed but they moved in and have made it very much their own. The *Meconopsis* only come into leaf when the bulbs have almost finished their growing season making them perfect companions.



The edge beside the path was built up with blocks of tufa as a habitat for saxifrages and other smaller alpine plants: look carefully, many are still there, but the habitat we built in combination with our moist weather has created perfect conditions for other plants such as **Asplenium scolopendrium**.



Among the plants surviving from the original planting is **Helichrysum coralloides** - you may know it as *Ozothamnus coralloides*.

Native to New Zealand this is a popular and decorative foliage plant for troughs, raised beds and rock gardens as well as being regularly presented in pots on the show benches.

View across the rock garden bed showing the *Meconopsis* and *Roscoea* now in seed.



We appreciate the huge variation of the foliage in the garden even more at this time of year when the peak for many flowering plants is past.



A range of foliage from *Dicentra*, *Jeffersonia*, *Podophyllum*, *Veratrum* and *Actea rubra*, complete with fruits.



As a result of self-seeding our garden is full of spontaneous plant combinations such as the charming contrast between *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' with the pale flowers of a *Thalictrum* sp. dancing across them.



Garden views





Asarum europaeum provides all year ground cover among the smaller ericaceous shrubs with other plants such as ***Sanguinaria canadensis***.



Allium wallichii is now in bud - growing here in the gravel between the paving slabs which earlier in the season was full of flowering *Erythronium* – some still holding on to the last few seeds in the now dried out pods.



Allium wallichii and the white swollen white calyx of **Gaultheria depressa** var. **novae-zelandiae**



Gaultheria pyroloides, **Empetrum nigrum** and **Gaultheria depressa**



New Zealand provides us with a number of very attractive plants such as **Celmisia lyallii** which has large white daisy flowers but we primarily grow it for the year round spectacular silver foliage.



Celmisia hectori

Celmisia hectori also has decorative silver foliage seen here in front of another NZ native plant **Leucopogon fraseri**.

Celmisia walkeri

The foliage of *Celmisia walkeri* is more green than silver but is none the less a decorative all year round foliage plant with the added attraction of white daisy flowers earlier in the year.



The small green leaved plant shown running around the raised wall also from New Zealand is **Fuchsia procumbens**. It disappears completely underground in the winter with the green leaves and growth rising up from underground stems in late spring and summer. Gradually over the years it has expanded its territory which now spreads along of 3 metres of the wall.



Fuchsia procumbens flowers are small and well camouflaged so you have to look carefully to spot them but once you focus there are plenty of them and they continue to appear until the return of the cold weather. The flowers are followed by relatively large fruits that start green turning bright red as they ripen but ours have usuallys been eaten by birds, slugs or mice before they get to that stage.



This year the **Fuchsia procumbens** has appeared through this **Rhododendron cephalanthum** 3 metres away.



You may have noticed the first few flowers of **Cyclamen purpurascens** at the left hand corner of the previous picture; these are a sure sign that we are heading towards the end of summer and I have been noticing a distinct feel of autumn air in the early mornings.



View towards the raised wall.



My ambition with the bulb house sand beds is to have the longest possible season of flowers and a week ago while a few of these ***Triteleia ixioides*** flowers still had some colour a lone white *Colchicum* species flower appeared.



***Colchicum* sp.** flowering in sand bed.



Linaria purpurea

We are more than happy to share our garden with the wild life and indeed that desire to have as diverse a range of species and habitats that we can is a big driving factor in our gardening - that is why we welcome and encourage



many plants that other may consider weeds such as the *Linaria purpurea*.

Origanum majorana may be more acceptable to more gardeners because it is also a culinary herb and indeed that is how it was first introduced into our garden many years ago and has seeded around at the edge of the slabs and in troughs ever since.



Bees

The individual flowers of both the Linaria and the Origanum are small but are produced in great numbers giving them long flowering periods and I have spent many hours watching at least five different species of bees feeding on these small flowers.

It would seem that the smaller flowers such as these have a greater attraction to the bees than some of the larger flowered species that are also in flower. I have not seen any bees at all on the Cyananthus shown on the front cover.



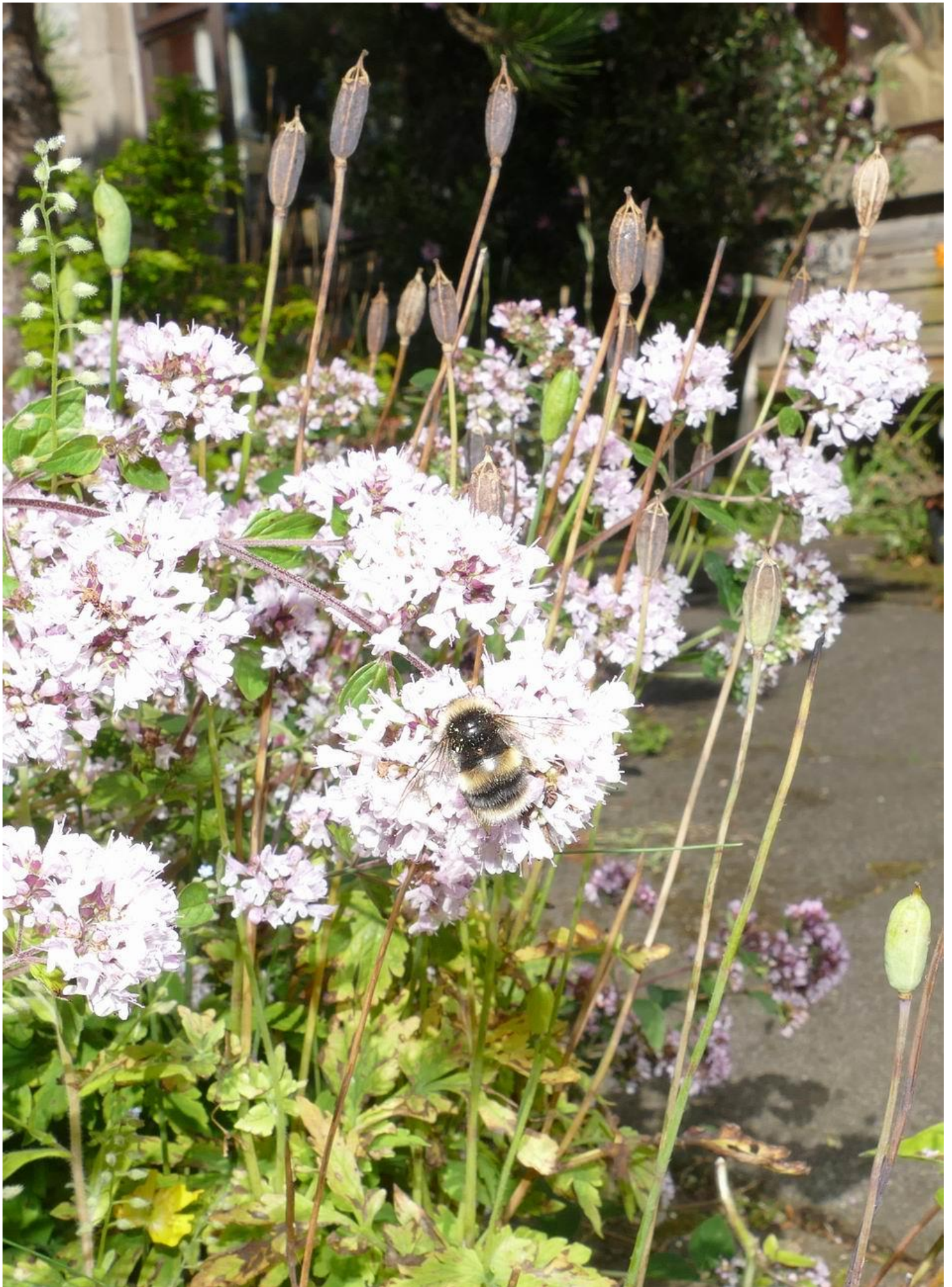
Bees – unfortunately I did not manage to photograph all the kinds I saw.



A sneaky fly imitating a bee also appeared.



Some of the flowers that are attracting the bees: the smallest flowers seeming to have the biggest allure.



I will round off this week with one more bee feeding in the sunshine.....