



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 20.....13th May 2020

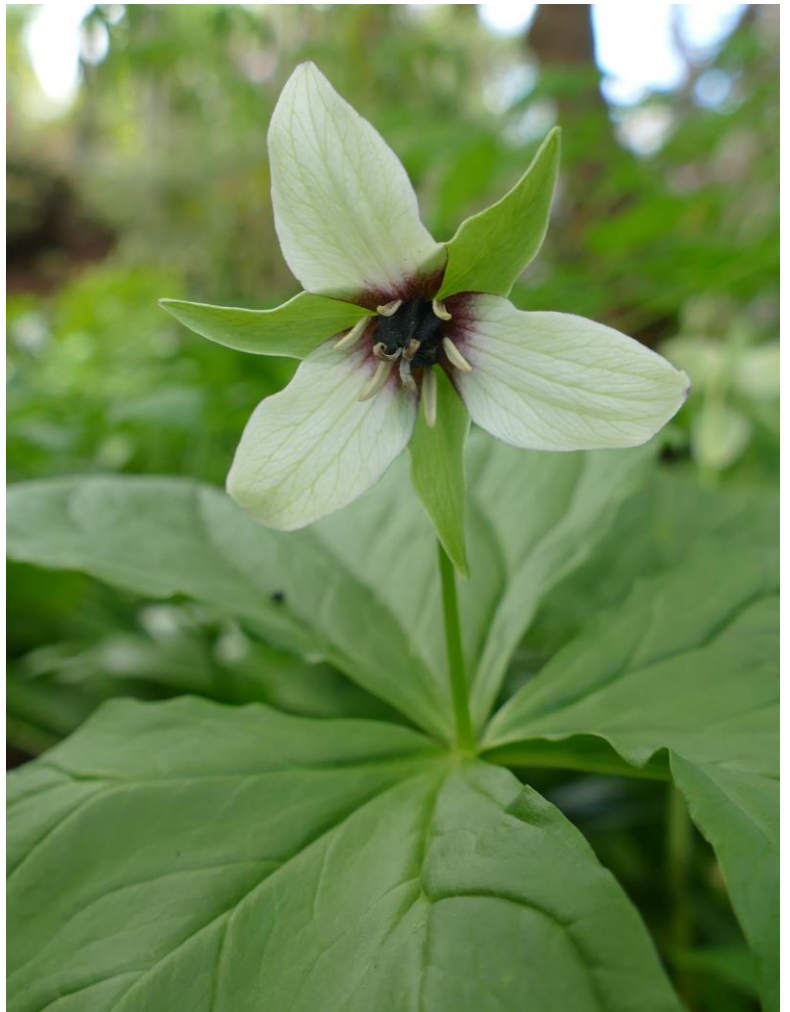


Trillium simile



Trillium simile was so named because it was very similar to and often confused with other species including *Trillium erectum album* and *flexipes* and after many years of raising generations of these plants from our own garden seed their identity gets even more confusing.

I know the identity of some of the species in the garden, where we still have the original plants raised from wild collected seed, but I think that many of the *Trilliums* we grow, along with many that are in general cultivation, are indeed hybrids.



Trillium erectum album on the left, with a seedling on the right and I find it impossible to tell if this is an intermediate form of *Trillium erectum* or a hybrid with some of the other species that we have introduced to the garden. Some species seem reluctant to hybridise while others are very promiscuous within groups of close relatives resulting in many fully fertile hybrids that seed around. Each subsequent generation gets naturally selected to growing in our garden conditions. Because of the variation and hybridisation in the garden I have given up trying to put species names to the seedling I just enjoy them for their own character and beauty.



The type form of **Trillium erectum** is a deep burgundy colour and this is one of the original plants we raised from wild collected seeds in the 1980's which has over time formed a clump growing in quite deep shade.



Because we live in a relatively cool part of Scotland we can grow these plants in full sun or shade. Having evolved in woodland habitats they have adapted large sail-like leaves to capture as much of the light as possible-these could get scorched if exposed to hot sunshine. I often state that for planting purposes 'Scotland is in shade' because we rarely get such strong sunshine however we do need to give

Trilliums and other large leaved woodland plants some shelter from the strong winds that would tear the leaves to shreds or hail storms that punch and rip holes in these large soft leaves.



Trillium erectum is one of the species that hybridises freely, especially with *Trillium flexipes*, producing generations of very fine decorative **Trillium hybrids** which make excellent garden plants.



I never know if this is a form of **Trillium flexipes** with a dark ovary or a hybrid but as you can see in the picture below it forms clumps and seeds around.



Trillium flexipes?



Trillium albidum and Trillium grandiflorum growing through Dicentra cucullaria.



Trillium grandiflorum is one that does not seem to hybridise with any of the others we grow. The form shown (left) readily forms clumps that can be lifted and divided every few years but like many bulbs that increase well by division it seems to have sacrificed the ability to produce seed for this rapid increase from the rhizome.

Lifting and dividing trilliums is best done when they are in active growth, as soon as the flowers fade.



This is a pot of *Trillium kurabayashii* seedlings flowering for the first time after about five years of growth in the seed frames. Now is the ideal time to plant them out.



The first point to note is the good root growth that has come out of the pot into the sand plunge and this should not be damaged if possible.

To understand the best time to handle plants I like to know what type of underground storage structure it has, bulb, corm, tuber, rhizome, etc, – and most importantly its exact growth cycle. Knowing exactly what a plant is doing underground at any time is key to knowing when it is best to handle them.



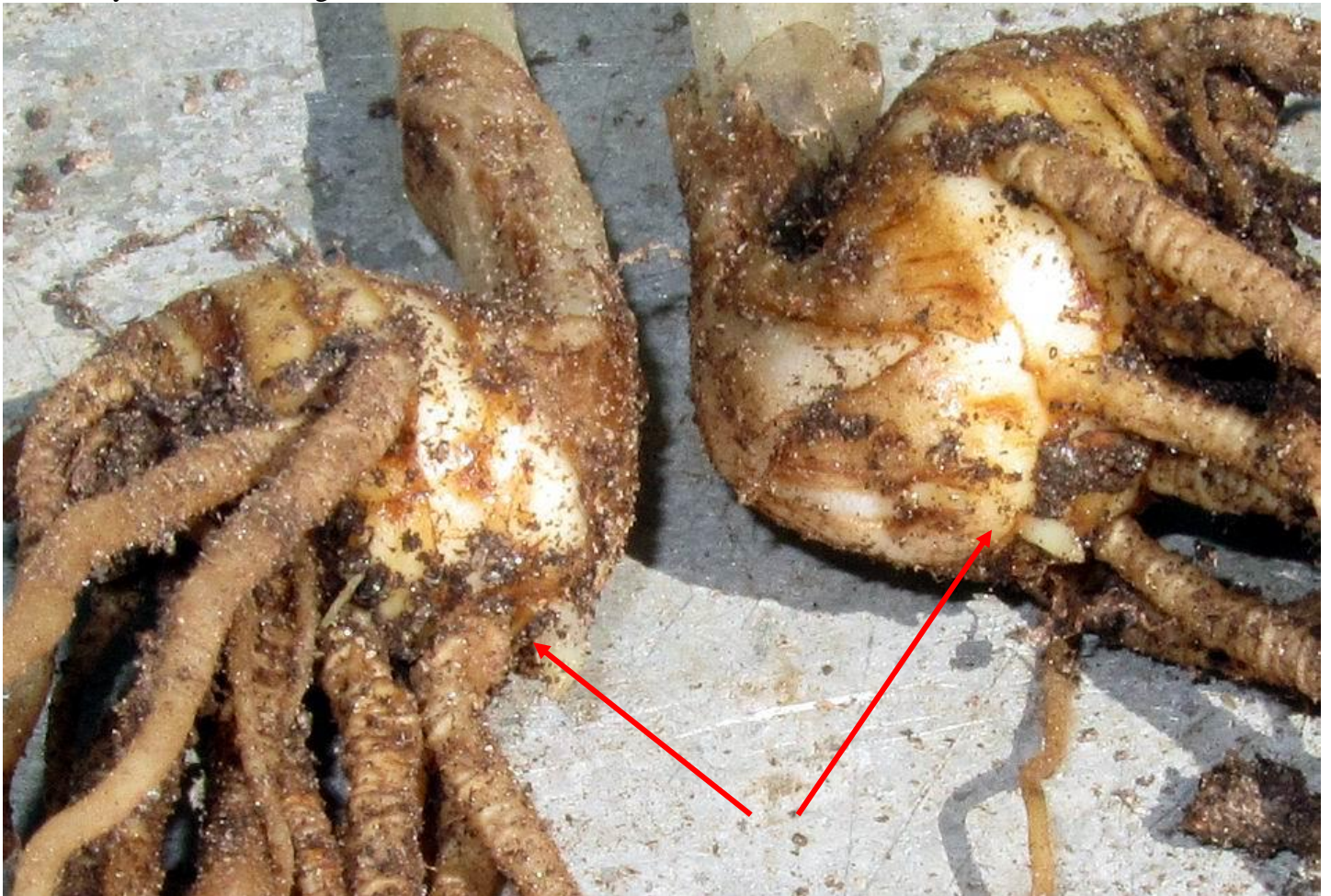
With our open gritty potting compost it is relatively easy to get the plants separated out with negligible damage to the roots.

So why is this the best time to handle Trilliums? The picture below holds the clue – I have pointed out the tip of a new root emerging from the front of the rhizome just as the flowers start to fade and it is these emerging roots that feed and supports next year's growth the bud of which will form at the front of the rhizome just above the root.

If you damage these new roots at all you will harm or stop next years' above ground growth.

Traditionally people have written that you divide your Trilliums either in the autumn as the leaf growth subsides or in the spring just as the plant is coming into growth - these are the wrong times.

If you lift the plants at either of these times you will damage the new roots which is why the plants will not grow on so well the year after dividing.



If you lift and split them carefully as the flowers fade, replanting them immediately and ensuring to water them in well then these emerging roots will grow normally and the plants will establish underground through the summer, autumn and winter before flowering freely next spring. Although they are not the main driver of next seasons growth the previous years' roots persist for a number of year supporting the older sections of the rhizome and so you should ensure they are not damaged excessively or allowed to dry out. When handling the rhizomes I cover them over with a damp towel or spray them regularly with water to keep them always moist until they are replanted. If for any reason the main, dominant, bud is damaged then adventitious buds, sometimes several, can appear along the length of rhizome. If you buy Trilliums as bare 'bulbs' in the autumn then you may receive a rhizome with a shoot but without any roots do not expect to see any growth above the ground the following spring – it will take another year. Effectively you bought a cutting – an un-rooted piece of stem- with good conditions roots should start to form the following spring then plant should make some growth the following year.



As with most plants I like to grow trilliums from seed which gives us a variation of forms such as in this group of **Trillium grandiflorum** where the different plants display subtle differences most noticeable in this group is the size of the flowers of the plant on the right.



Trillium grandiflorum



Trillium grandiflorum

These flowers measuring 16cms across certainly live up to the name *Trillium grandiflorum*



There is a wide variation in the size of the many **Trillium grandiflorum** plants that we have raised this is the largest.



Trillium grandiflorum



Trillium ovatum is the species closest in looks to grandiflorum - it grows on the western side of North America. It does not grow so well in our garden as its eastern relative Trillium grandiflorum, perhaps this is because we have not raised so many plants from seed. The reason for that is the wasps go crazy for the sticky coating on the seeds and most years burrow into the capsule then fly away with all the seeds before I can gather them.



Trillium grandiflorum

The original form of *Trillium grandiflorum* roseum that we received struggled to establish in our garden surviving rather than growing well but when it flowers I have used its pollen to fertilise other forms so we have a range of plants exhibiting varying degrees of pink in the flowers.



Trillium grandiflorum



Trillium grandiflorum 'Gothenburg Pink' is a strain selected at the great Gothenburg Botanic Garden the seedlings of which retain the pink coloured flowers.



Trillium grandiflorum 'Gothenburg Pink Strain'



Our garden philosophy is not to have great clumps of specimen plants but to mimic nature by having individual plants scattered all across the garden growing in mixed plantings.





Molly keeps an eye on me in the garden to make sure that I am doing it properly.



We also have a sequential planting style which delivers several waves of colour through the weeks and months - this is a typical example for this time of year.



Trillium albidum



Trillium chloropetalum?



Trillium kurabayashii



Trillium hybrid



Note in this group of **Trillium kurabayashii** seedlings, planted out together, the flowers on the left came earlier and are going over while those on the right are still fresh.



Trillium seedlings and *Uvularia grandiflora* are taking over from the Cyclamen and Erythronium that were among the plants that flowered earlier in this sequence.



Anemone x seemannii



Anemone x seemannii

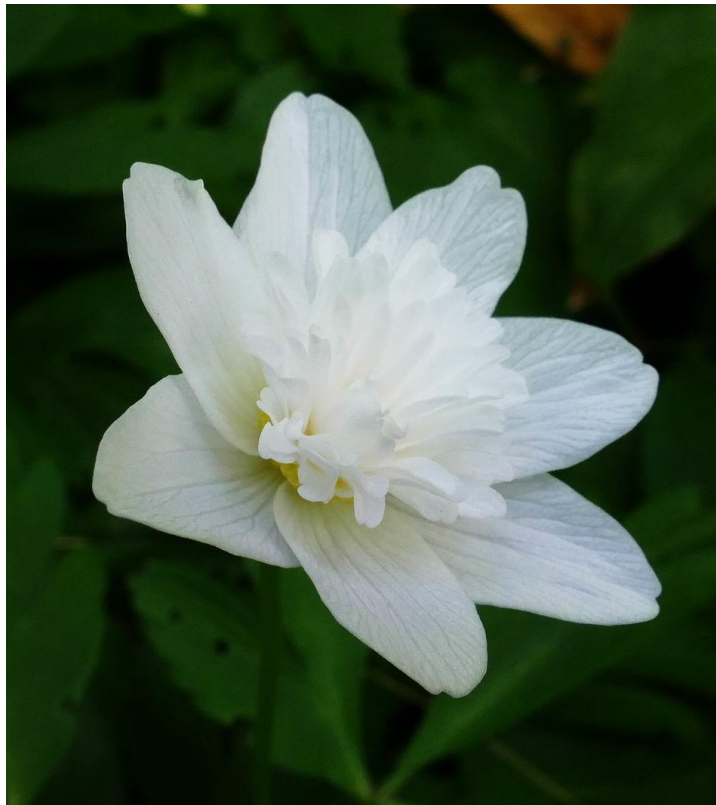
We also use a lot the woodland Anemone such as Anemone ranunculoides, nemorosa and the hybrid between them Anemone x seemannii: they grow from rhizomes that love to creep about in the humus rich upper layer of soil that we have built up in the garden.



Anemone nemorosa



Anemone nemorosa



There are a number of multiplex forms of *Anemone ranunculoides* and *nemorosa*.



Anemone ranunculoides



Looking at this tapestry of foliage you may notice an unusual virescent form of **Anemone ranunculoides** where all the normally yellow floral parts have turned into green leaf like structures.

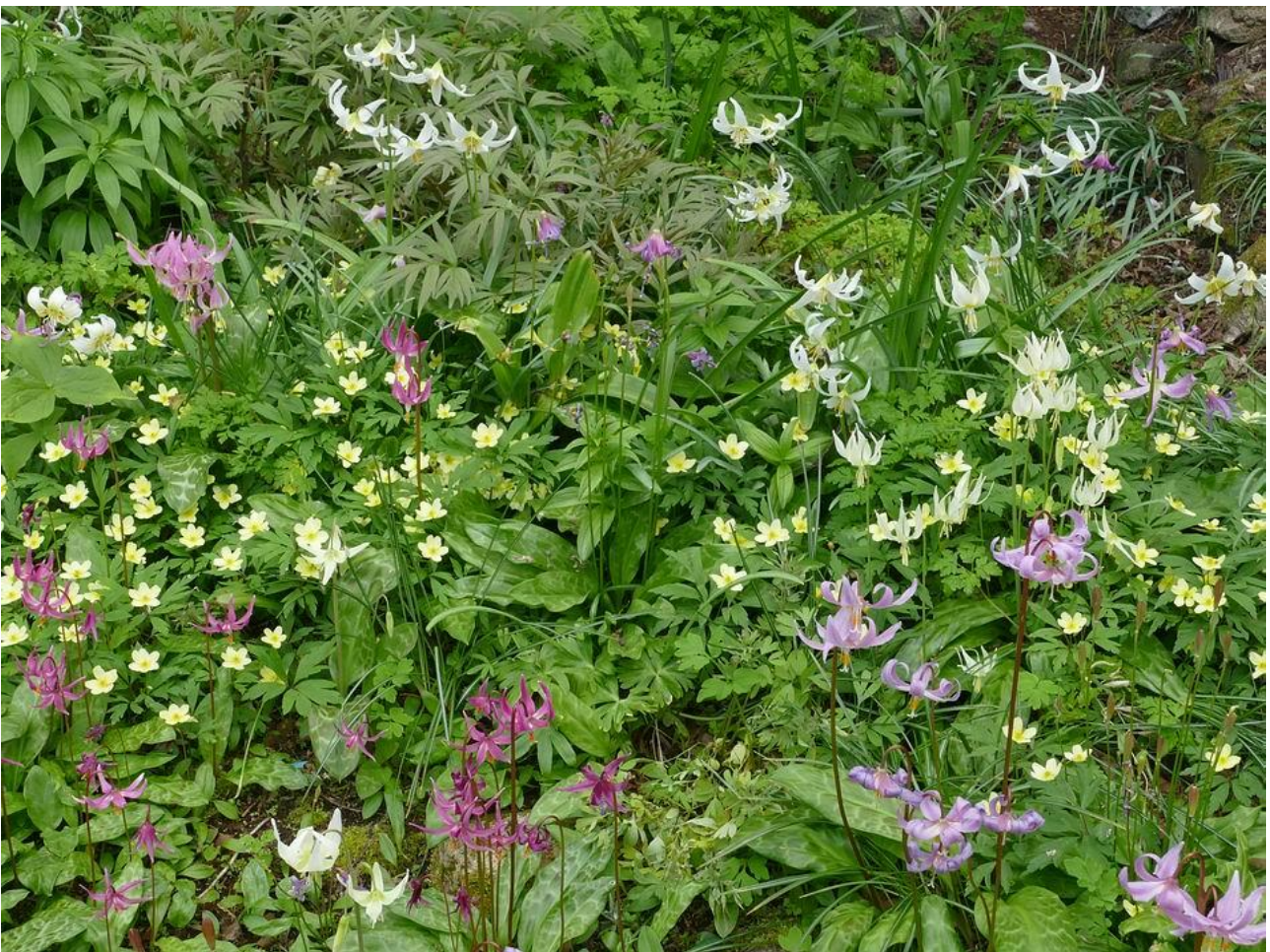




Anemone ranunculoides and *x seemanii*



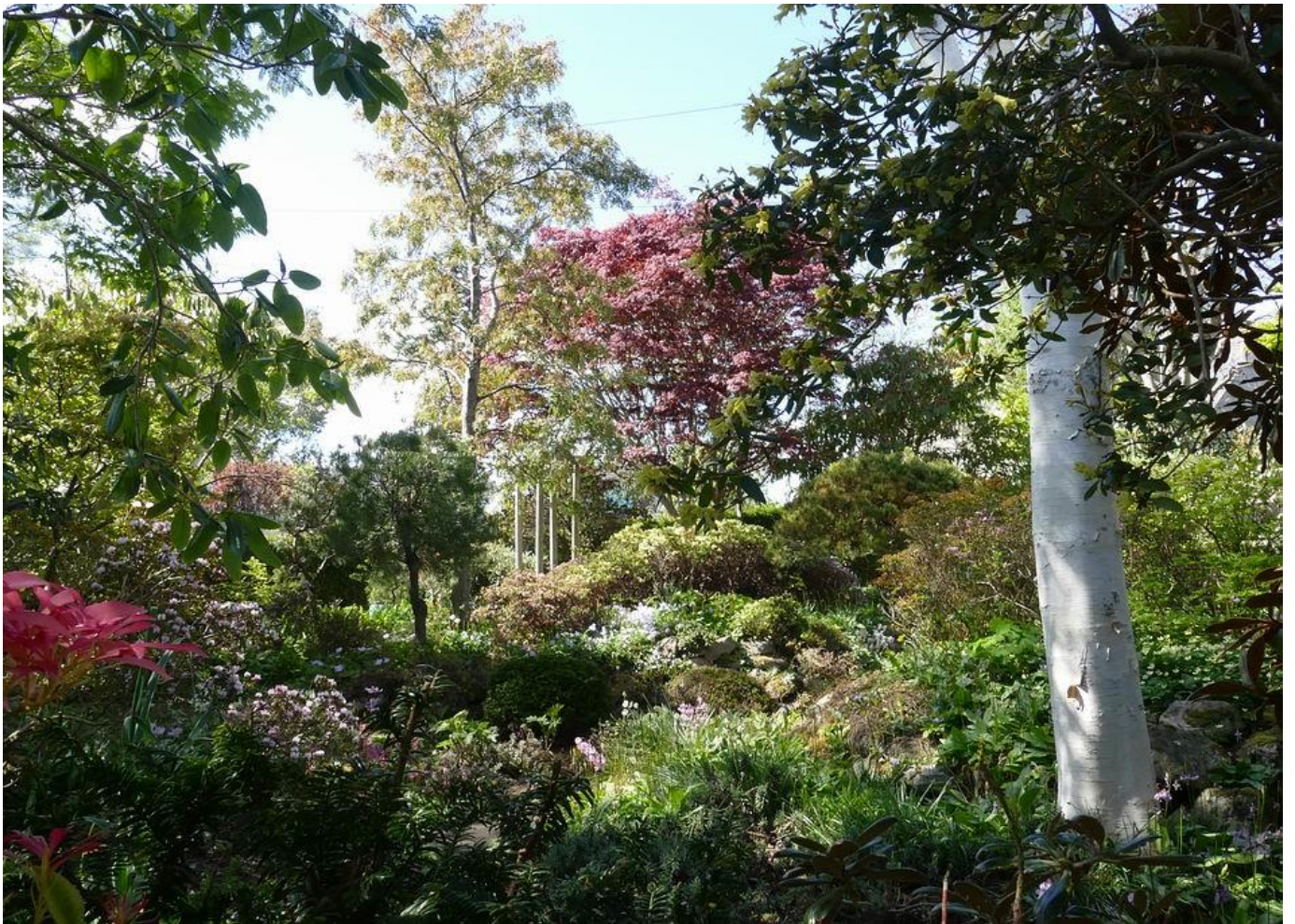
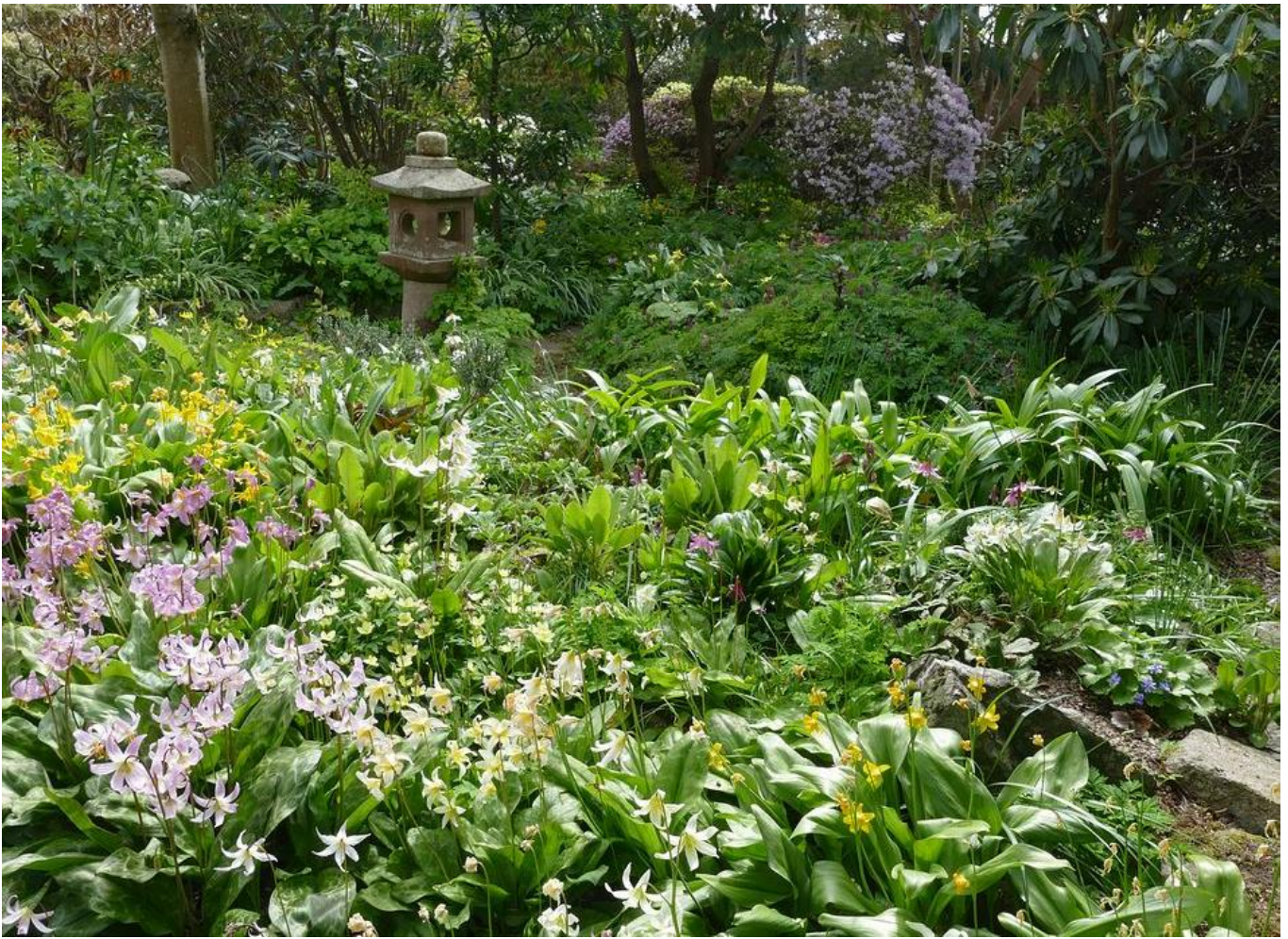
Anemonella thalictroides



Here *Anemone x seemannii* takes over from the *Corydalis* and *Eranthis* to form a colourful carpet planting for the last of this year's erythroniums to flower through.



Here a pale cultivated form of *Ficaria verna* makes a low carpet through which *Erythronium* and *Fritillaria* flowered soon they will be overgrown by the *Glaucidium palmatum album*, *Podophyllum delavayi* and ferns among other subjects.



The last two pictures show the garden as the colourful leaf canopy emerges completely changing the atmosphere in the garden.....