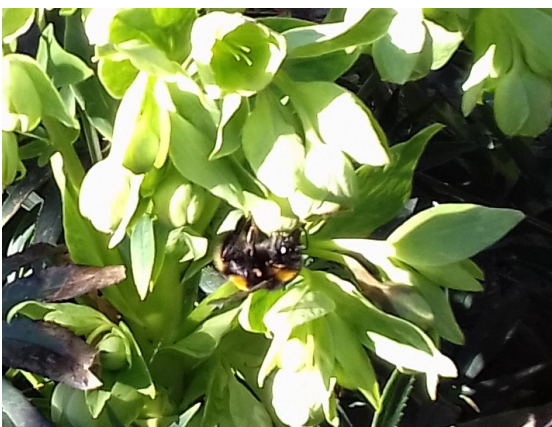


The Garden Awakes



It is good to have as many flowering plants in the garden in the early spring as you can ready for the first insects. On the right is a low growing Symphitum, related to Comfrey, which flowers very early and is very popular with the bees. It is very useful as ground cover in areas of dry shade. The other stars are Hellebores which apart from being so beautiful are also very popular with insects.



I think the very early spring is a wonderful time in the garden. Winter is always rather sombre despite the evergreen shrubs which give colour in their leaves and berries.

Variegated shrubs with some yellow always look good and some even manage to flower in winter. The picture shows Viburnum tinus which is always wonderful as are Winter Jasmine and Viburnum bodnantense which also has a stunning scent.



Bumble Bee queens are the first bees to appear in my garden, I saw this one on a sunny day in mid February. The queen is already fertilised and emerges from hibernation in the ground with a desperate need to feed on pollen and nectar, not just to replenish her body fats but to develop her ovaries. She eventually lays her eggs in a nest on or in the ground with a supply of nectar and near food sources.