



BULB LOG 45.....10th November 2010



Photographed at the end of last week these **Acer leaves** glow in the low autumn sunlight as they hang on to the tree with the weakest of grips – now they have been ripped off by the recent gales.



Bright red **Arisaema** fruits give seasonal colour to the frost covered leaves after they have fallen.



Colchicum agrippinum

Some *Colchicum agrippinum* flowers are still appearing and remain relatively unscathed by the battering handed out by our recent stormy weather. If you are put off *Colchicums* by their 'big leaves' then I can recommend *agrippinum* because compared to many it has relatively compact leaves and the most lovely tessellated flowers which as you can see are reasonably weather proof. I must add that I am not at all put off by the *Colchicum* leaves. As long as you are aware of them and place the plants accordingly they can be a most attractive feature. I cannot tell you how often I have listened to people saying they would not grow *Colchicums* in their garden because of these leaves while at the same time they have clumps of *Hosta* and *Iris sibericum* both of which have both big leaves- and in my view even worse- big hungry root systems that make companion planting difficult.



**Narcissus
'Cedric Morris'**

The leaves and buds on *Narcissus* 'Cedric Morris' are well advanced and on schedule to be in flower long before the turn of the year.

As is so often the case the bulbs in the garden are more advanced than those in pots in the bulb house. The reason for this is simply that in the garden they have an earlier and more consistent supply of moisture.



Crocus in the Bulb House

Since my return from Vancouver I have enjoyed the display of Crocus flowers in the bulb house on the few brief sunny spells. It is interesting to observe that some species react very quickly, opening their flowers to the slightest hint of sunshine and resulting slight rise in temperature while others require a longer more intense period of the sun before they respond.



Crocus caspius



Crocus goulimyi

Even though it is perfect perfectly hardy in the garden *Crocus goulimyi* flowers are very susceptible to being flattened by heavy rain or wind both of which we get in abundance so for that reason I always like to enjoy a pot or two under the protection of the glasshouse.



Crocus laevigatus

I did warn you that you are going to see quite a lot of the wonderful *Crocus laevigatus* in coming bulb logs as different forms flower over such a long period linking the autumn, winter and early spring. Hopefully you will be like me and could never tire of seeing this beautiful very variable small species with its exquisitely marked flowers



Crocus laevigatus

They are just as attractive looking down into the flowers with the much divided orange style and white pollen.



Crocus kotschyanus

Crocus kotschyanus is another species that we grow both in the garden and under glass where we can enjoy the flowers and their wonderful scent under conditions that are more favourable to both the plant and to me.



Crocus longiflorus

I have not tried *Crocus longiflorus* in the open garden. While I am sure the plant would be perfectly hardy and survive I do not think that flowers extended on their long floral tube would survive the physical battering dished out by our November weather.



Crocus niveus

If you compare the floral tube of *Crocus niveus* you will see how much more robust it is when compared to that of *C. longiflorus* above, making it a better subject for the open garden.

We do have *Crocus niveus* in the open garden where it can withstand a fair amount of wind and rain before it is knocked over. In fact the biggest problem with this species, as it is with all the crocus, is having the flowers felled by slugs that eat through the tube at ground level.



Crocus sativus

I have often written on the problems of getting *Crocus sativus* to flower every year as the corms tend to break down. Heavy feeding and planting the corm as deeply as you can are the way to get this beauty to flower. I missed the flower in perfect condition when I was away but at least I managed to see it before it faded completely. The corms that I planted very deeply in the sand bed have shown no signs of flowering yet – in fact they do not show any great signs of vigour even in the leaf growth.



Crocus speciosus hybrid

There is beauty even as the flowers fade and collapse.



Crocus michelsonii

Even before the autumn species have finished their display the early spring or should that be late winter flowering species, such as this pot of *Crocus michelsonii*, are looking through the gravel top dressing.



Galanthus peshmenii

With my grateful thanks to many generous friends we are now gathering a small collection of autumn flowering snow drops like the diminutive and perfect *Galanthus peshmenii* above. This species flowers well before the appearance of the leaves.



Galanthus reginae olgae

Two more gifts show variation in the species *Galanthus reginae olgae* which I have long tried to establish in the garden without success – they have just not proved hardy in our garden. I am now going to grow them in pots where they will hopefully increase providing me with some surplus to experiment with in different locations around the garden.



Narcissus cantabricus foliosus

The first flowers on *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* herald the advancing season and the shift in emphasis from Crocus to Narcissus over the coming weeks and months of winter.



With frost on the ground most mornings the trees and herbaceous subjects that have not already retreated are now doing so with some speed and for so many gardeners this is the end of their season until the spring comes around. Not for the bulb growers, this is just the start of another year of interest - with the protection of some cold glass we will enjoy a feast of flowers all through the dark winter months. I do love to go travelling and meet friends old and new but it is always nice to come back home and receive the red carpet treatment.



Red Carpet