



BULB LOG 27.....3rd July 2013



Sometimes it is best to let the pictures do most of the talking – the colour that Meconopsis bring is unsurpassable.



Getting in close to examine the detail within the flower reveals the most wonderful structure and colour combinations – this could be a masterpiece of abstract art.



The closer you zoom the more abstract the image will become as you lose the familiarity and reference point of the complete image.

It is the peak of flowering for the *Meconopsis* in our garden just now and the best spectacle comes not as soon as the primary flowers open but as the second and third flowers bloom - some stems have nine flowers that both add to and extend the display over a number of weeks.



As well as the individual beauty *Meconopsis* also work well bringing adding highlights as they stunning blues coordinate or contrast with many of the other plants that we grow such as *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'



This is our main area of - and the place in our garden where I first discovered the hybrid - *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'; a cross between *Corydalis omeiana* and *C. flexuosa*. The plant we all originally grew as *C. elata* has now been reclassified as *C. omeiana* with *Corydalis elata* being another species altogether.



I originally called the cross between these two species, (a grex), *Corydalis* x 'Craigton Blue' as a number of seedlings germinated but over time one clone seems to have dominated in circulation. As the cross is fertile I continue to get new seedlings appearing each year and most are very similar to the originals but the one on the left above has obviously crossed with *Corydalis capitata*.



All these plants enjoy similar growing conditions and blend into a delightful visual harmony. The tight cap like flower heads of *Corydalis capitata* extend as the seeds develop and as you can see it sets plenty of seeds.



Lilium mackliniae enters the mix in this bed as it does all over the garden.



All these plants are raised from seed and display some variation in the colour of the flowers from these dark forms to purest white ones as you will see further down these pages.



Each separate plant has its own unique colour combination some deep pink while others are palest pink like below.



The colour of the throat of the flower also varies this one has a contrasting deep blackcurrant centre.



This is the purest white one we have – it has a green throat.



Two seedlings growing side by side share similar petal colour but have very different colours in the throat.



This streaked pink is the colour combination I do not want to see. Like a number of the lilies *L. mackliniae* is very susceptible to harmful virus infections. These first manifest in this discolouration in the petals along with pale streaking in the leaves – these symptoms are followed by distortions of the growth then death of the plant. You should remove any plants that look like this as quickly as possible. If it is your only plant and it is not yet too badly infected, you might want to try and let it set seed as the infection is unlikely to be passed directly into the seed.

Aphids are one of the main vectors that will transfer the virus so if I do want to let an infected plant set seed I will spray it with a systemic insecticide as well as keeping a constant watch for and wiping out any aphids. It is worth remembering that aphids are not the only creature that can transfer the virus – anything that comes into contact with infected sap and transfers it to another plant can spread the disease and that includes slugs and humans.



***Lilium mackliniae* 'Nagaland'**

I do not know how variable this species is in the wild so this compact form introduced from Nagaland could be a variation within the species or it could be something altogether different – as a grower I see both the similarities and the differences. Flowering at a height of around 30 cm it is a very welcome addition to the dwarf lilies in our garden.



Like *Lilium mackliniae* I like to sow seed of the *Nomocharis* every year to keep a healthy stock of these fabulously spotted flowers coming on – in ideal conditions they can flower in three years.

These too are susceptible to virus infection which is fatal to them even faster than in *L. mackliniae*.



The detail in the centre of the flower is fascinating.



I will leave you this week with this image showing a fine stand of *Lilium mackliniae*.....