



BULB LOG 41 ..... 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014



Our fine weather has disappeared to be replaced by heavy rain, cloud and gale force winds making getting photographs for the Bulb Log a real challenge this week. One task that is essential especially in cold damp conditions like we are now experiencing is the removal of flowers as soon as they collapse. In bright sunny conditions the collapsed and dropping flowers will shrivel and dry out and not cause problems but in high humidity they become mushy wet blankets that will quickly become populated by grey moulds that will also damage any of the leaves that they come into contact with. The cover picture shows a mixture of *Crocus* and *Colchicum* flowers; some plucked in the bulb house, others that were felled by the gales or slugs, I collected from the garden. This picture does show that we can continue to enjoy the beauty of the colours long after the flowers have collapsed.



This white ***Crocus speciosus* hybrid** has many flowers: the first to open are now starting to wilt and in these conditions they are attracting the moisture and need to be plucked off. Holding the flower tube below the petals - pulling sharply upwards should remove it cleanly but if the tube breaks try and remove the bit that is left.



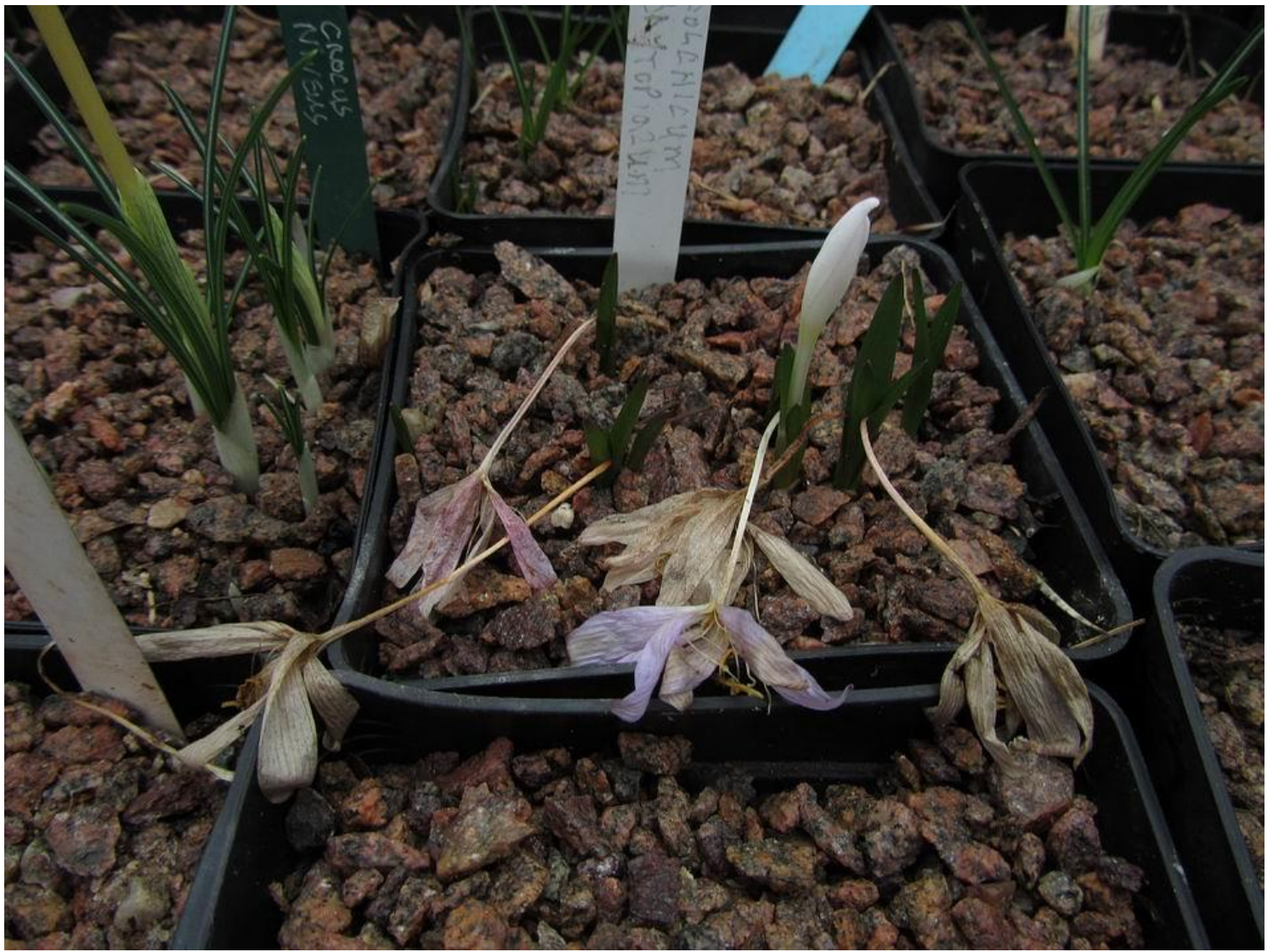
### **Crocus kotschyanus**

The first flowers of this *Crocus kotschyanus* are also starting to wilt. Hopefully they have already served their

purpose and been fertilised in the sunny warm weather last week but now they should be removed. With the weather being so cold and damp there is no chance of the pollen on these wilting flowers being able to fertilise the seeds.



The flowers that have collapsed and are lying on the gravel must also be removed before the leaves appear.



### **Colchicum baytopiorum**

Removing the old flowers is even more critical when the leaves of the bulbs grow at the same time as the flowers.

The old flowers are now carefully removed so the leaves can grow on without the risk of grey mould.





**Cyclamen cyprium**

Removal of the old flowers from Cyclamen is even more critical as the flowers fall onto the flat surface of the leaves as you will see if you observe both these pictures carefully.



**Cyclamen mirabile**



If the flower has been successfully fertilised the stem should start to coil, pulling the seed capsule towards the corm – sometimes the flower gets trapped in the coils and should be removed. It is easy to tell the stems that are not fertile as they just go limp and collapse so should also be removed.

Grey moulds thrive in the still, cold, damp air of the bulb houses – providing maximum ventilation or having fans to move the air around will all help minimise this problem.



It is most essential to ensure that no dead remains are left either lying on or attached to the top of the corm as the mould these remains will attract quickly transfers across to the corm.



Here you can see one aborted flower stem deep in the tangle is in the first stages of a mould infection if this is not removed the infection will spread to the other flower stems and the corm.



### **Colchicum 'Waterlily'**

Due to the wind moving the air around grey moulds are not such a problem in the open garden.



Last weekend around 140 Scottish Rockers gathered in Granttown on Spey for our annual Discussion Weekend – we completely booked out two of the largest hotels in the town. Delegates from all over the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Poland, USA, Canada and maybe more, had a great weekend of fun friendship and lectures by an international array of speakers, more details and the full programme can be seen on the [forum](#).



Kit Strange from Kew Gardens delivers her presentation displayed on a super large screen to a full room.



## Bulbs at the Discussion Weekend

Here are just a few of the pictures I took at the Discussion Weekend show. Due to the long journeys most people have to make it is not a very big show but always contains some wonderful plants and colour – many more pictures have been posted by Stan de Prato on the [forum](#).



The first prize winning pot of [Colchicum cilicicum purpureum](#) was generously donated and included in the auction on Saturday night.



**Colchicum cilicicum purpureum**



***Sternbergia greuteriana***

Back home two forms of *Sternbergia greuteriana* are in flower the one above is always smaller at about half the size of the one I show below.



***Sternbergia greuteriana***

Both share an important characteristic lost in herbarium specimens that is they do not photo react like other species we grow. That is once the flowers of *Sternbergia greuteriana* open they remain open the flowers of other species open and close according to light levels and temperatures.



I have moved these pots of **Allium seedlings** that are just germinating into the glasshouse to give them some protection from the weather and to minimise predation by slugs and snails. An advantage of digital photography can be illustrated by the number of times I spot something on the screen that I missed in real life as can be seen in this picture – can you spot it?



Finally this week here is the progress of the seedlings that I have to nurse through the winter. Last weekend I was in Grantown this weekend I am off to an [STA symposium in Uppsala, Sweden](#), I hope to meet some of you there.....