



BULB LOG 37.....10<sup>th</sup> September 2014





### **Chlorophyllum rhacodes**

One of the many pleasures of being a gardener is that we are acutely aware of the changing of the seasons; however



that does not stop them creeping up on us. Only a short while ago I was thinking how nice it is in the summer months but now I find that autumn is completely in charge. The front picture this week shows the glorious colours of autumn with the brightly coloured Hamamelis leaves decorating the ground around some *Cyclamen hederifolium*. Some people have suggested that I stage some of these colourful pictures but I can assure that is not the case. However I did facilitate that it could happen by planting

the cyclamen below the witch hazel and nature does the rest. Another sure sign that autumn is on us is the masses of fungi that are fruiting like the shaggy parasol, that is appearing in masses in our compost and leaf mould heaps.



More mushrooms are appearing in this area of raised humus bed that I am reworking having replenished the soil with some of our own garden compost. Some people worry about the presence of mushrooms in their gardens and want to know how to get rid of them – I welcome them as a sign that we have a bio diverse, healthy natural soil.



A good dark form of *Colchicum speciosum* is another indicator that autumn is here.



**Colchicum speciosum album pushing through the ground.**



**Crocus nudiflorus 'Orla'**

Crocus nudiflorus sends out stolons that form cormlets at their tip allowing this plant to spread over a wide area, the white form is no different. The main planting here is in a mesh plunge basket all the flowers at any distance have spread there by means of these stolons –they are all through this sand bed. The retreating leaves in the foreground are those of Crocus pelistericus which are only now dying back.



## **Crocus nudiflorus**

Here are two more pictures of *Crocus nudiflorus* flowering in different parts of the garden – if you look closely you can see many more flowers shoots appearing as a result of the stoloniferous nature of this plant.



### **Crocus nudiflorus albus**

I have raised many seedlings from the white flowered 'Orla' - most of which have reverted to the type purple colour but a few are white. This white *Crocus nudiflorus* seedling has good overlapping petals and the flowers are pure white from the time they first appear. 'Orla' flowers have a hint of a purple wash when they first emerge but quickly turn white.



### **Crocus vallicola**

I grow a number of pots of *Crocus vallicola*, all raised from seed, in an outside frame –to give me a better chance of getting some seed. I endeavour to move at least some of the pots under glass when they are in flower.



**Crocus vallicola showing variation when raised from seed.**



In the foreground are two species of *Roscoea* – *R. scillifolia* in the centre of the picture and *R. alpina* off to the right. You will also notice clusters of self-sown seedlings around the plants - these are the result of not collecting the seeds but allowing them to scatter naturally. I will probably lift and split these groups of seedlings as they come back into growth next year. I could split and space them out now but I think there is a greater chance of losing seedlings if I disturb them as the plants are

going into winter dormancy than when they are coming back into active growth next year.



This picture of **Roscoe** seed being shed back into the bed ensures that we will have a continual crop of new seedlings appearing around these plants.



While on the subject of the fruits of autumn this is also the season for making preserves from the harvest and for those preserves to be entered into the competition at the autumn shows of horticultural societies.



This past weekend I was down at the Dundee Flower and Food festival where many wonderful exhibits were on display.

Seeing these exhibits got me thinking about the whole issue of plant shows and the level of 'perfection' that exhibitors seek to achieve. The winning exhibit of vegetables on the right is one mark of such perfection where the skills and dedication of the grower are channelled into creating this masterpiece of large well shaped produce displayed perfectly against a dark background. Other examples of this extreme and competitive side of our interests can be seen in the colourful Dahlia and Chrysanthemum blooms shown below. You will not find blooms like those in the wild nor will you see vegetables like those for sale in the greengrocers – but that is not the intention. Just like our competitive shows of rock garden and alpine plants these exhibits are a testament to the skill and dedication of the growers and not so much to do with the plants and their natural forms. Shows do help push the level of horticultural excellence and bring these magnificent displays to the public attention - long may they continue.





There were a number exhibits and display gardens my favourite of which was this one built by the [Barnhill Rock Garden](#) community of Dundee. I thought it showed all the aspects of what we term rock gardening and the wide range of plants that we all grow. I am delighted that the SRGC has contributed some modest funds to help this project.

# Barnhill Rock Garden

**The Rock Garden** is sited on part of a former nine-hole golf course which was laid out after the Dundee to Aberdeen railway was built more than a century ago. The garden was started in 1955 by clearing an area of volcanic rock which had at one time been the old shore line. There were originally five natural springs and the lowest pond is the site of one of these, the others having dried up in 1976.

The Scottish Rock Garden Club and Dundee Botanic Garden have made generous donations to create a geographical theme to reflect the many countries from which the plants originated. **The Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden** have raised a wide range of plants from seeds and cuttings in the garden and nursery.

The Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden is a formally constituted body with charitable status and acts as a support group, liaising with **Dundee City Council's Leisure and Communities Department** on issues relating to the well-being of the garden.

The Friends also participate in joint projects to improve the facilities in the garden. *The Geddes Glasshouse*, which functions as a meeting room, information point and plant display area, was installed in 2006 with the kind cooperation of *Dundee Contemporary Arts*, and the artist *Apolonija Sustersic*.

**Membership is open to all for a modest annual subscription.** Members can take part in a varied programme of garden visits, garden-related talks and workshops. Members also have the opportunity of experiencing hands-on gardening in the nursery area and scree bed.

Picnics are very welcome in the gardens. Alcohol and fires are not allowed in any of Dundee's parks. Failure to clean up after dogs can lead to instant fines. Littering is also punishable by instant fines. **Refer to main management rules for further details.** Thank you

**Toilet Opening Times**  
 Summer (April - Sept) 08:00 - 18:00  
 Winter (Sept - April) 08:00 - 15:30

**KEY:**  
 1- Scree Bed  
 2- Snowdrop Wood  
 3- Plant Nursery  
 4- Pergola / Office / First Aid Point  
 5- Geddes Glasshouse: Information Point, Plant Display Area  
 6- Water Features  
 7- Sunken Garden  
 8- Recycling Area  
 9- Terraced Rock Garden

Barnhill Rock Garden is owned by Dundee City Council, and managed by the Leisure and Communities Department.

For more information see: [www.dundee.gov.uk](http://www.dundee.gov.uk)  
 or Telephone: 01382 434000

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My favourite part was this small corner of the display in the form of a wild flower meadow. This is not an easy thing to do and bring along for a weekend of display such as this but it does show us what we could all achieve in even a small area – a planting that not only looks attractive also greatly benefits all of nature’s creatures.



I was down on the Sunday of the show giving a workshop on making and planting up alpine troughs and taking part in a general gardening question and answer session so I was very pleased to find this lovely old trough on one of the displays. It has been carved out of a Devonian conglomerate just like the cliffs I showed at Auchmithie a few [bulb logs](#) ago.



Many other aspects of Scottish life and customs were featured at the festival including the famous 'Arbroath Smokie', which provided my lunch, hot smoked in the traditional way in barrels sunk into the ground and covered in damp hessian to keep the smoke and heat in.



It is not just the growers that like a bit of competition these youngsters were competing in a Highland Dance competition with great enthusiasm.



Still the *Cyananthus* produce flowers and they will continue to until the colder frosts start to bite.



I like them all but I think the smaller more compact plants of *Cyananthus microphyllus* are my favourites.



**Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'** flowers again this autumn pushing through and contrasting with the Digitalis leaves.



Autumn is the end of one growing season as the leaves colour up and fall from the trees at the same time it is the start of another as the autumn bulbs including *Cyclamen hederifolium* start to bloom and produce their new crop of leaves that will last all the way through to July next year.....