



BULB LOG 09.....1st March 2017



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- A white label with black text, partially obscured.

Inside outside

The pictures I use in the Bulb Log are of our garden and the plants we grow, with occasional exceptions when I may use pictures I take on my travels, so to keep up a weekly log I need interest all year round. The cover picture shows inside the bulb house with a glimpse of the flowers growing outside towards the top.



The bulbs that flower through the winter months in the cold glass houses bring us a great deal of pleasure, cheer us through the dark days of winter and provide me with flowers to photograph and share with you each week. Sometimes in the winter it is hard to find enough of interest to fill out a log but at this time of the year I am spoiled for choice. There are so many bulbs currently in flower inside that my dilemma is not what I have got to show but what I should leave out - in addition the garden outside has also sprung into bloom. I save and catalogue my picture files on a weekly basis and for much of the year, like spring, there can be two or three hundred images in each.



Inside - *Corydalis nudicaulis* just starting to show flowers with Narcissus flowers behind. See more from the bulb houses in this [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) which I uploaded last week to my [YouTube channel](#) where you will find all of my 90 videos.



Galanthus 'E A Bowles'

We grow most of our Galanthus outside but when we receive a special bulb I will grow it inside until we have at least five bulbs – then I will put some outside.

Some are special because they named after one of my plant heroes. You cannot be interested in bulbs without coming across the writings of E.A. Bowles - his books should be read by all gardeners.

My first introduction as a young gardener to Brian Mathew, another of my bulb heroes, was through reading his book 'The Smaller Bulbs' since then we have met and become friends.



Galanthus 'Brian Mathew'



**Galanthus
'Kath
Dryden'**

The late Kath Dryden was another outstanding grower of many plants and especially bulbs. Although we lived at opposite ends of the country we kept in touch with regular telephone calls to share our experiences.



Crocus adanensis grown from seed will I hope also grow outside when they increase enough for me to try.



I keep a pot of **Crocus sieberi tricolor** inside where I can enjoy their open flowers something that due to our weather I cannot always rely on seeing with the many that we grow outside.



Outside - Crocus herbertii



Crocus heuffelianus



Crocus tommasinianus



Crocus tommasinianus

White forms of *Crocus tommasinianus* flowering on the rock garden with the bulb bed beyond.



Narcissus cyclamineus



I planted a pot of seedling ***Narcissus pseudonarcissus*** out here.



Trillium ovatum forma maculosum



This lovely form of *Trillium ovatum* is named for the dark pattern that decorates the leaves which in this species are normally plain green.

We originally got a small packet of seeds and now we are slowly building up the plants by collecting and sowing the seed directly from our own plants.

As with all bulbs, the seeds germinate at the same time as the parent plants would be flowering. As with many *Trilliums* it is hypogeal which means that germination takes place underground in the first year – the first seed leaf does not appear until the second year after sowing. This seed was sown in July 2015, a root and small rhizome will have formed last spring and now the first leaves are appearing.



Erythronium caucasicum is always the first of this genus to flower in our garden.



The first plant to bud had its flowers chewed off again this year - at first I thought it was slugs or snails but the extent of the damage seems too great so I suspected wood pigeons but now I think that mice may be the problem so I will have to move that plant to a different spot later in the season.

When we first raise and introduce a plant to the garden we plant them out in a number of different spots around the garden as an insurance. This species is slow to divide vegetatively so seed is the best way to increase numbers. We do have a number of pots of seedlings of *Erythronium caucasicum* of various ages ready to be planted out this year.



This pot of **Erythronium dens-canis** is from the most easterly known distribution of the species and last year I collected and sowed some seeds back into the pot with the parents here you can see the seed germinating just as this seasons flowers make their appearance.



Growing from seed is my favoured method of acquiring plants and now I often allow the plants to take control. None of the three flowers you see here are growing in their own pot – all have self-seeded into another pot, of *Fritillaria* in these cases, so we have a hybrid *Crocus* and two forms of *Eranthis hyemalis*.



Iris hybrid, Cyclamen coum and Galanthus 'Elizabeth Harrison' growing in an outside sand bed.



Inside the former pot plunge of the Fritillaria house that I converted to a sand bed there are some Narcissus and Crocus flowering. The planting looks rather sparse just now but will soon fill out as the Fritillaria are now pushing through.



A mixed group of Narcissus seedlings.



Gardening is like a journey to me - a long excursion where you never reach the destination. It is just as well there is no end point because while I do have a vision of what I am trying to achieve the direction I take changes along the way as things evolve and that is what keeps gardening exciting. Last week I received some seeds and decided that rather than sowing them

into individual pots each with its own label in the normal way that I would simply sow the seed directly into the sand plunge. To help identify the seedlings when they germinate I have adopted a similar method to the one I use in troughs of photographing the seed packets where I sowed the seed which I can refer back to when they germinate.



Crocus sieberi seedlings.





Fritillaria chitralensis, now in bud, is one of the most advanced in growth.



Fritillaria obliqua



Flowers are also worth looking at and photographing as they start to go over, not just when they are perfect and fresh - I find a beauty in these *Colchicum szovitsii* (above) and *Romulea* (below) flowers as they start to wither.





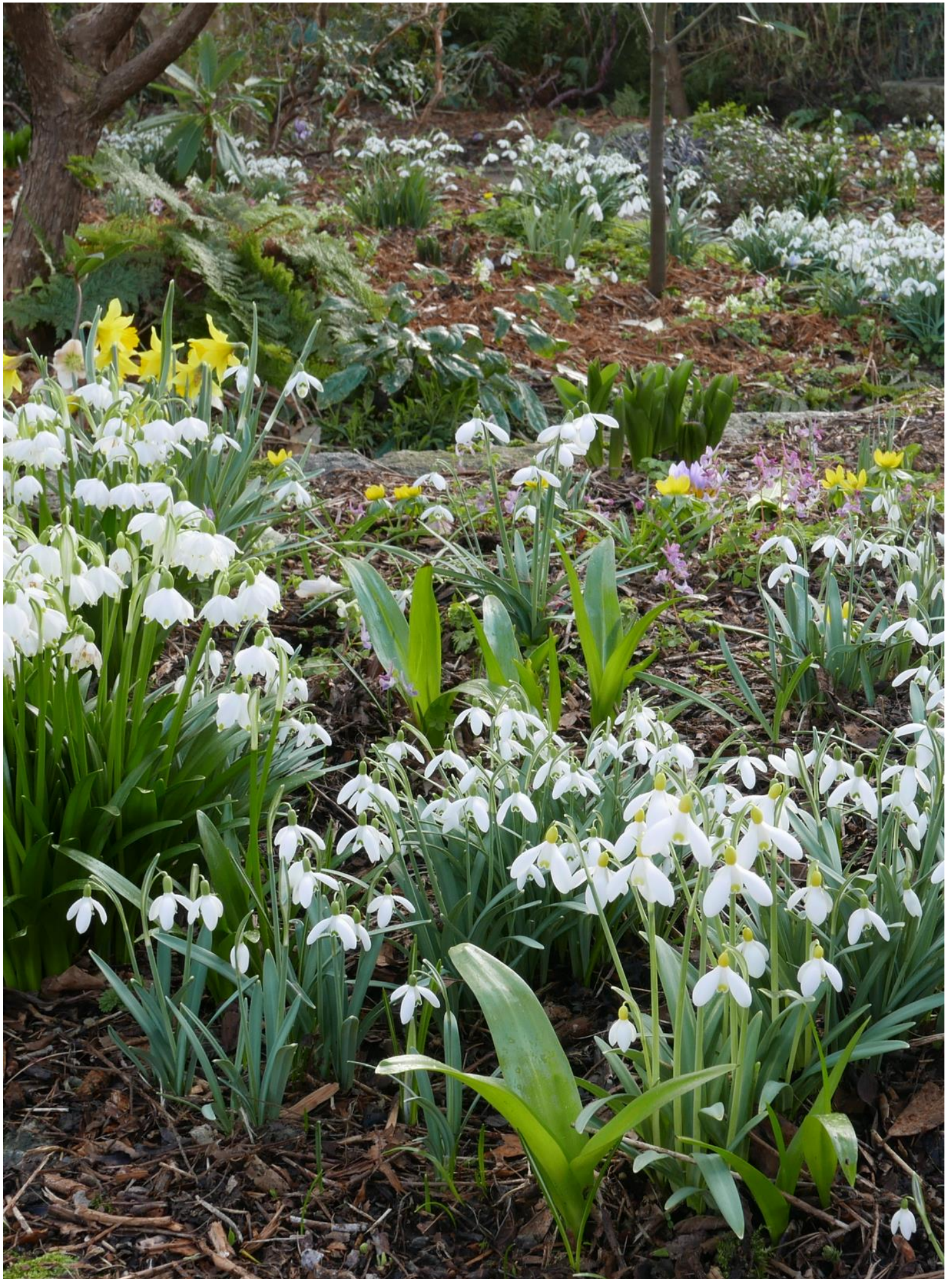
A group of Narcissus flowers at various stages of freshness.

It is like comparing a portrait of a beautiful young face without imperfections with one of an older person where the creases and wrinkles that come with age add to the character.

Both images can have beauty but there is more interest in the older version– well that is what keep telling myself when I look in the mirror!

These perfect flowers are of **Narcissus cantabricus** growing inside.





This weeks cover was a view showing some of the many flowers inside the bulb house I will leave you with this one showing as many flowers outside.....