



BULB LOG 06.....7th February 2018





Art which includes photography should push you to look in different ways and to observe in detail what is in front of you. The picture above is looking down on snowdrops which along with the sideways glance is the only way many people see them – of course those infected by the white fever get much more intimate with the flowers, doing the snowdrop pinch to check out the interior markings but how many get down looking upwards into the flowers?



I think this is the best way to view the flowers looking upwards towards the sky when the flat white outer petals take on a new attraction as you can see the lighter veins. The green striped interior with the cluster of golden pollen forms an irresistible attraction and if you look carefully you will see some small black insects have been drawn towards some food inside the flower and shelter from the harsh winter weather - could they also serve to pollinate the flower?



The more familiar side on view of snowdrops emerging through the cobbles covering a sand bed - one group with green marked outers the other just emerging is one of the yellow forms.



Every day more shoots are pushing through the ground as if a slow rolling wave is breaking across the garden - over the next month a white carpet will form which will also include *Leucojum*.

Ideally when snowdrops, or any bulb, reach a clump of this size I would like to split it, spreading the individuals out, but there are practicalities that hinder this. Time being one –not just the time the task would take but the timing of when to do it without damaging the bulbs being lifted or the many others that are also in the beds.



Early Snowdrops opening in the bulb bed.



Corydalis caucasica is also starting to make an appearance in the bulb bed.



Bulb Bed.



Not that I am at all biased but the beautiful **Galanthus 'Maggi Young'** is advancing in growth since last week and below I have applied that snowdrop pinch to show the upside down 'Y' inner markings.



Galanthus 'Maggi Young' under the snowdrop pinch.



Our weather continues to vary and when the sun does shine the temperature in the bulb houses can almost reach double figures so I have been checking the moisture levels in the sand and pots. On a bright day the surface of the sand dries out so I will make a scrape to assess if I need to water - if it is dry for much more than a centimetre I will water.



Watering

To every can of water I add about quarter to a half the recommended dose of tomato-type liquid fertiliser.



Many of the first Narcissus flowers are fading.



The larger flowers are Narcissus 'Craigton Choister' with some smaller flowered seedlings in the foreground.



The upwards facing flowers of *Narcissus romieuxii rifanus*.



Narcissus romieuxii



Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger'

Two of the hybrids I have named are just starting to open their flowers.



Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper'



Narcissus bulbocodium note the exerted and scattered stamens.



A small flowered **Narcissus bulbocodium** seedling.



Narcissus bulbocodium seedlings light from behind are made even more beautiful as the *Narcissus romieuxii* seedlings below.



Narcissus romieuxii seedling



It is always more attractive when the different colours of Narcissus are mixed together like here in the sand bed.



The first of the spring crocus are also appearing - it is difficult to be sure of the species until the flowers open but it is possibly a form of **Crocus biflorus**.



Here is the first *Fritillaria* shoot to make an appearance in the sand bed.



In the garden an *Erythronium caucasicum* shoot pushes through – the two leaves means it will flower.



Crocus atticus with a mass of seedling shoots appearing in the gravel.



Reticulate Iris these pictures were taken one hour apart as the first flower unfolds.



The next day the first flower is now open – note the damaged tips which were chewed on by a slug when they first poked through the ground.



The silver foliage of *Celmisia semicordata*, the dried stems of an *Erythronium* remaining from last year and snowdrops catch the light in a typical winter garden scene.



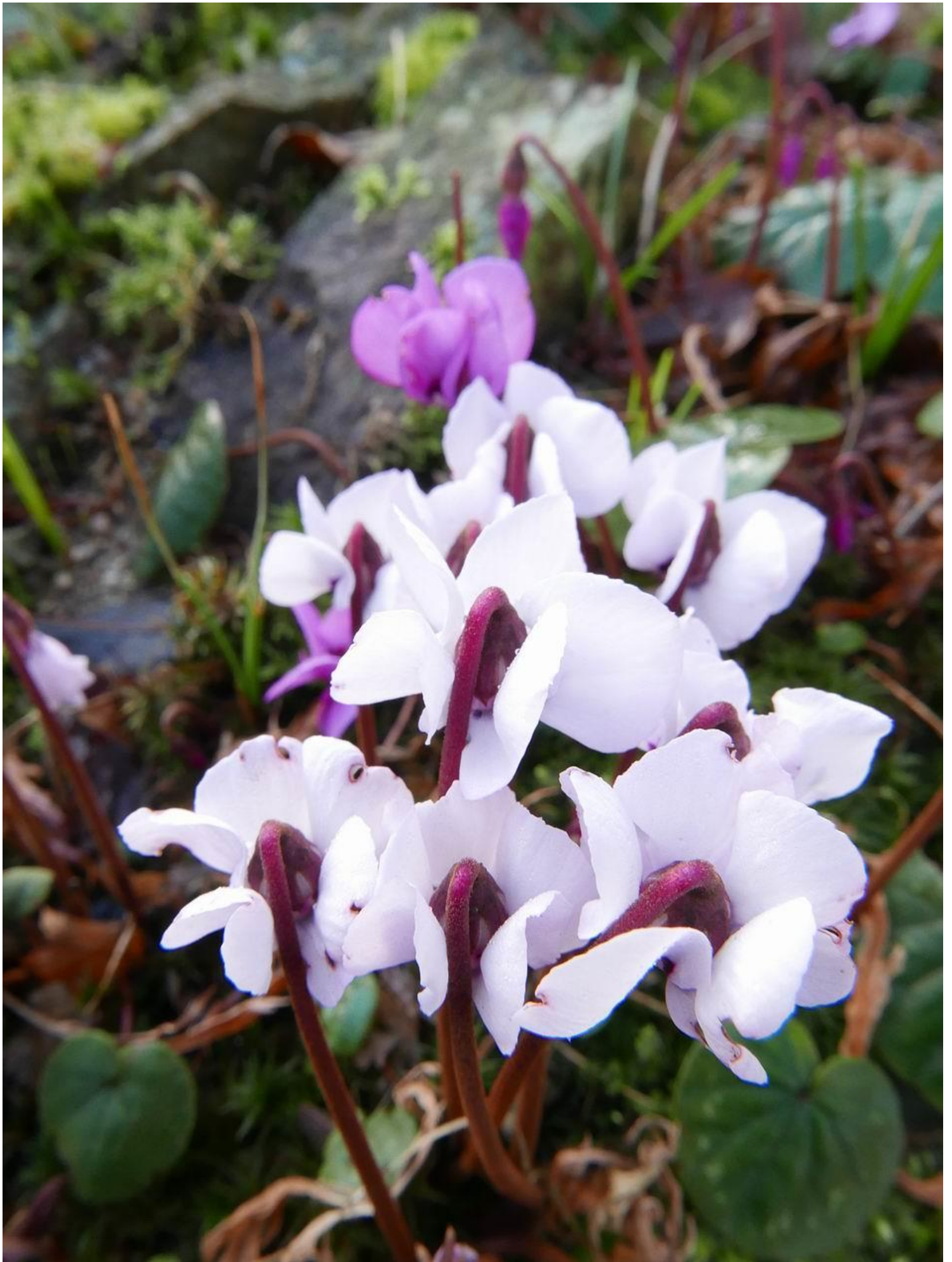
Crocus atticus is one of the best for the garden here is another group growing through *Corydalis* foliage.



Eranthis 'Orange Glow' is still in a pot while I maximise the rate of increase - this year I will plant some out in the garden along with others with to mix up the colours.



Self-seeding often happens in the open frames and the Eranthis shoots unwinding in this pot of Fritillaria gives away how long it has been since I last repotted.



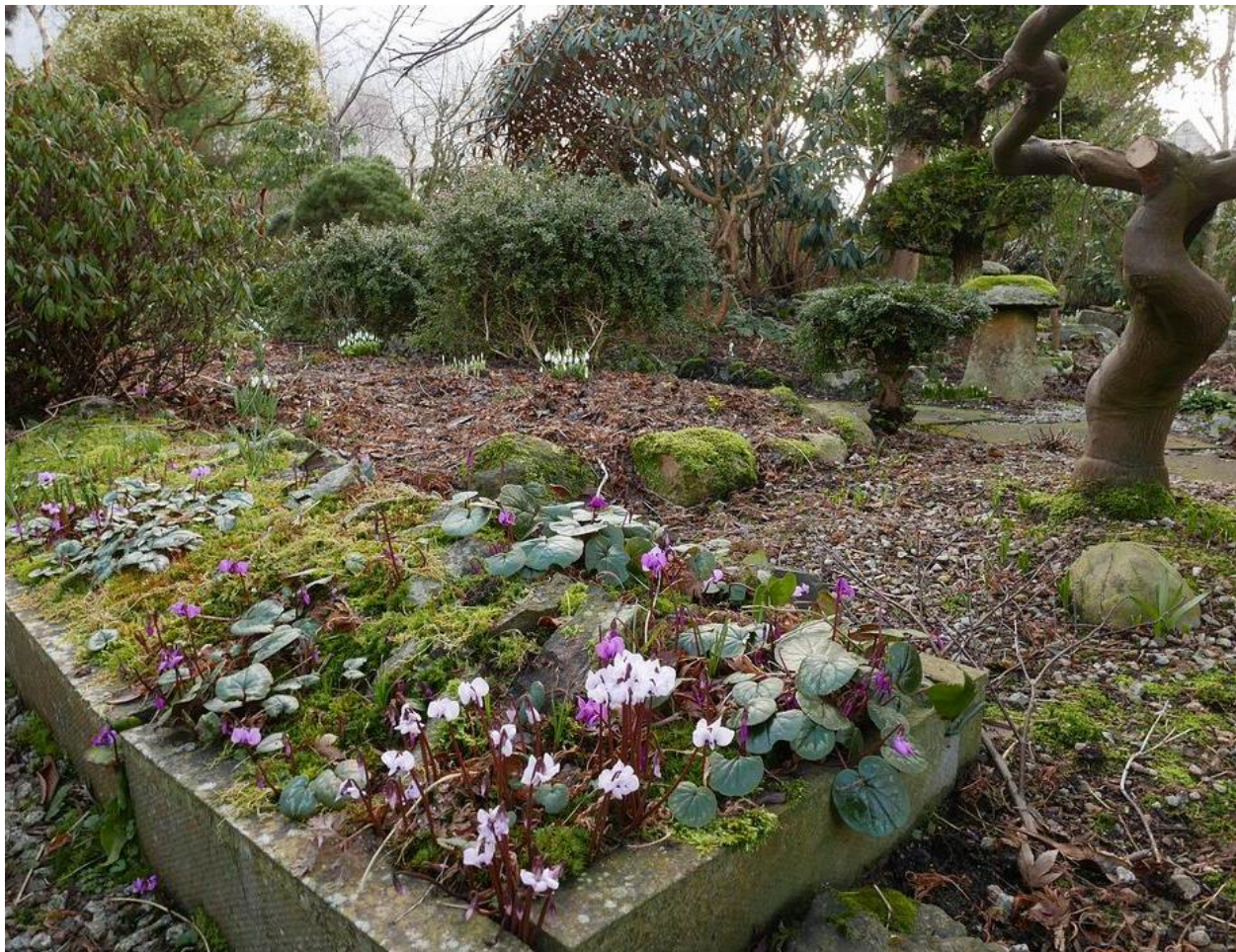
Cyclamen coum

Looking down on a group of Cyclamen coum flowers is the typical view.

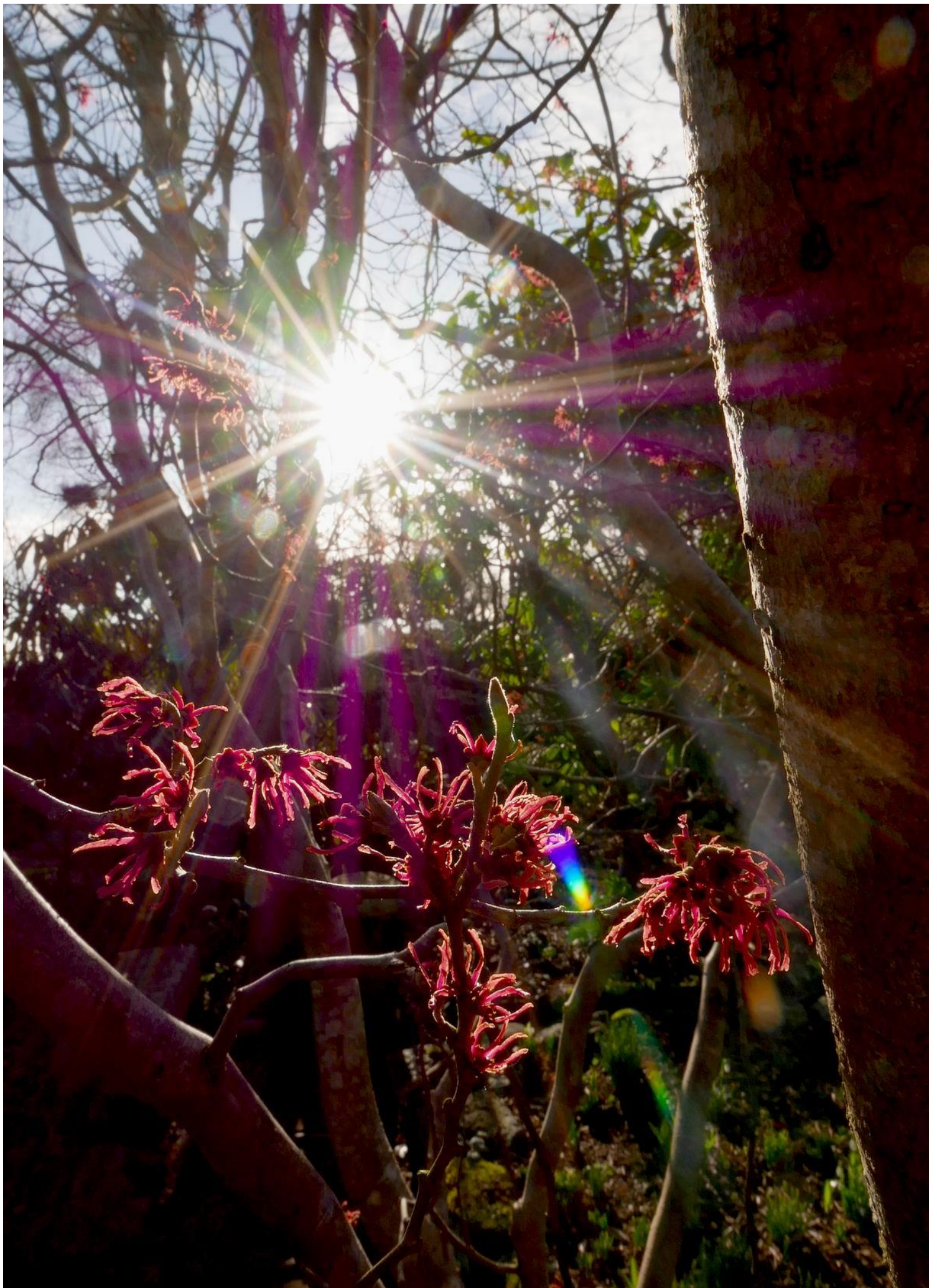


Cyclamen coum

It is not so easy to get a view looking up into the face of the flowers but it is well worth taking the extra effort.



There are a number of considerations adjustments you need to make when taking an upward facing picture. I switch the camera to manual so I can set the focus and exposure and normally have to take a few pictures to get these correct also as I cannot see the viewfinder these trial images help with the framing of the image.



Light is so important in the garden it allows the plants to grow as well as enabling us to see them – and using lighting effects can add drama to your plants and photographs.....