



BULB LOG 07.....12th February 2020



I have just arrived home from Grünberg in Germany where I was speaking at the 13th International Perennial Plant Conference of the [International Hardy Plant Union \(ISU\)](#) - described as a conference for gardeners of perennial plants from all over Europe with a series of lectures from international speakers on the topic of perennials.

The ISU further state 'the aim of this conference is to create international contacts in the Perennial Plant World. It is an opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise in an inspiring atmosphere. We invite all perennial nursery staff, gardeners, growers, company owners and landscapers to join our delightful perennial garden caravan. It's pure joy. The language spoken is English.'

The Conference was fully booked with 135 delegates and I can say it was a great pleasure to be there in such knowledgeable company and to enjoy the friendly welcoming atmosphere.

Grünberg Market Square

I arrived at the historic town of Grünberg, located around 45 minutes away from Frankfurt Airport. I spent a few hours I had free on the Friday morning exploring the well preserved historic areas of the town including the square where the market was in full swing.



Monastery buildings dating to the sixteenth century are well restored and in modern day use.



The conference was held in the [Bildungsstätte Gartenbau, Grünberg](#) which is a hotel/conference venue dedicated for the use of horticultural events, They state ‘The horticultural training centre in Grünberg is the ideal place for conferences, seminars, working groups and workshops. We are the central training institution for the horticultural profession and offer our own seminars and conferences for horticulture, gardening and landscaping, for florists, garden planners and landscape architects. Even if you are not part of the green sector, you are welcome to join us as a group. Meet in a calm and warm atmosphere - be our guest!’



Bildungsstätte Gartenbau, Grünberg

The Conference centre is surrounded by well stocked gardens which were still in their winter state but from the plant labels I saw I can imagine they would a very pleasant atmosphere in spring and summer.



The 135 delegates return from a break to take their seats in the well-appointed lecture theatre as I prepare to give my talk 'Bulbs from Seed to the Garden'.



The Speaker's view a few minutes before I start my lecture.

I was humbled by the number of attendees who are regular Bulb Log readers who thanked me for my work: indeed it is I who thank them and all my readers because without you there would be no point in doing this every week.



As with many others my travel home was interrupted by the force of storm Ciara. The strong winds delayed my flight causing me to miss my connection so I had to spend an extra night in a hotel in Amsterdam, organised and paid for by my airline KLM. I was very pleased to get a seat on the early morning flight and to see the welcoming view of the City of Aberdeen complete with wind farm and dozens of oil service vessels at anchor in the bay.



Molly accompanies on a walk around the garden to see what other flowers have emerged in the five days that I have been away and, despite the storm, there are plenty.



Iris 'Katharine Hodgkin'



Puschkinia scilloides



**Erythronium
caucasicum**

The stems of the various *Erythronium caucasicum* are elongating pushing the emerging flowers ever higher in a futile search for better light in our northern latitude.



Erythronium caucasicum

The **Erythronium caucasicum** seed from the garden which I collected and sowed in May last year, see [Bulb Log 2119](#) for details, is now germinating.

An observation I have made, which is common across all the many bulbs I have raised, is that if the seed is sown in a natural timing, that is soon after it is ripe, then the seed will germinate at the same time as mature plants are coming into flower.



Similarly this pot of **Eranthis pinnatifida** seed sown the week before, see [Bulb log 2019](#), is also germinating – note that unlike the other Eranthis, this group have just a single seed leaf in the first year – with good growing conditions I have achieved the first flowers in the third year from seed.



I am hoping to get more seed from this mature pot of **Eranthis pinnatifida** seedlings that I sowed some years ago. Note in addition to the flower stems there is a good growth of leaves so I am hoping for some good size tubers some of which I will plant out in the new bed beside the pond where the ones I planted last year are growing well.



Looking similar and flowering a bit later than *Eranthis pinnatifida* is **Eranthis byunsanensis** see [Bulb log 0819](#).



Moving into the bulb houses the next series of images are mostly of the Narcissus growing in the sand beds and looking stunning – as well as studying the wide range of flowers on the many seedlings I just get so much joy and pleasure from these plantings. Despite the winter growth and dirt on the windows you can still see through to make out some of the snowdrops flowering in the beds outside.





I cannot help sharing with you a few more of the many pictures I have taken.



Narcissus romieuxii types



Narcissus bulbocodium types





Mixtures of seedlings show the wide range of varying shapes and colours of the coronas.





Narcissus seedlings





Narcissus bulbocodium

These two are from my reference collection still labelled and flowering in pots.



Narcissus romieuxii



One of the many things I love about gardening is that it is a journey of exploration with a continual learning process and I have learned a lot since planting up my first sand plunge bed shown above. The rate of growth it has achieved means that it is now too densely planted and needs thinning out.



Narcissus and Crocus growing in one of the sand beds with many more, such as Fritillaria, still to come.

Learning that lesson I planted this one less densely although in time it will also become crowded - then I will need lift and split the bulbs. I estimate that I will have to do this around every three to five years which is much less work than having to repot hundreds of pots of bulbs every single year which was part of the reason I converted these plunges from pots to sand beds in the first place.....