



BULB LOG 01.....6<sup>th</sup> January 2021



*Cyclamen coum*



Here I am starting into year nineteen of the Bulb Log - a project that I started in 2003 with the intention of writing the weekly garden diary for one year - however with your support and encouragement it has just kept going and this is the 937<sup>th</sup> edition. The weather has turned colder over the last few weeks and much of the ground is now frozen although the frost will not have penetrated very deep. We have also had a little snow.

This is the view from my work table looking towards the bulb houses with the sun rising in the south east.



The first few flowers of Cyclamen coum are opening and the other buds will open over the coming months.



**Cyclamen coum**

The toughness of the bulbs that flower in the winter is well illustrated as their flowers regularly push through the snow and frozen ground.



This is an early flowering form of **Galanthus nivalis** which usually flowers through December and January.

**Galanthus  
nivalis**



Some mornings just before the sun rises the warm light illuminates the clouds filling the sky above the bulb houses with beautiful colours but the display does not last very long, it disappears when the sun appears.

The flowering display provided by the Narcissus growing in the bulb houses continue to delight us as we wait for the first wave of flowers to sweep across the garden.

The 'U' shaped sand bed is crammed with blooms. The earliest flowering ones, which started to flower in early November, are now going over.



**Narcissus flowers**

Before it turned cold we had weeks of dark wet weather when the air was heavy with moisture so I have to watch carefully for grey mould establishing on the flowers as they start to go over.



Often the first point of attack for the mould is on the pollen as seen on these **Narcissus 'Craigton Chalice'** flowers.



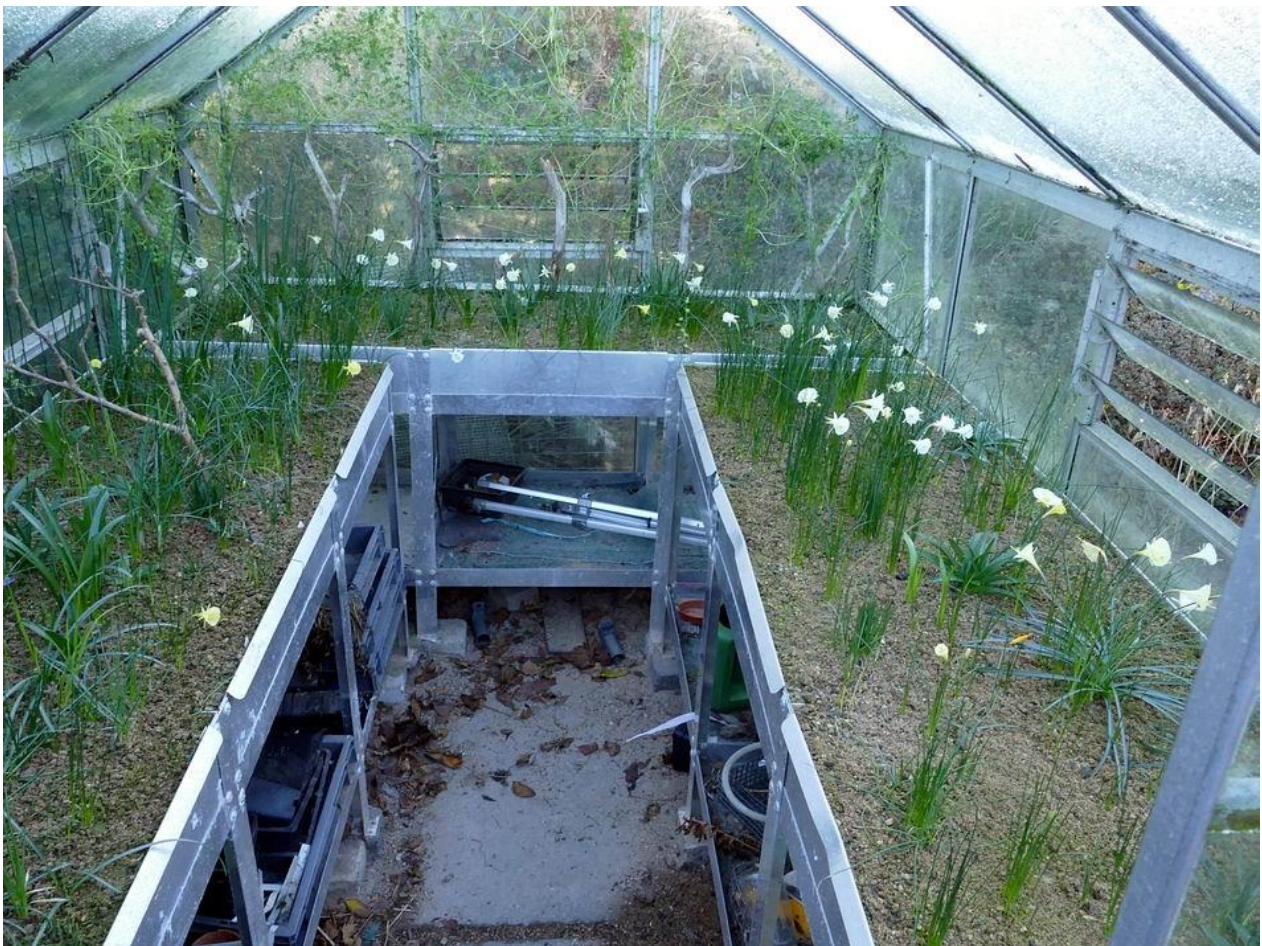
From the pollen the grey mould transfers to the corona so I will remove the flower.



As some of the earlier predominantly white flowered Narcissus start to fade it is the turn of yellow flowered forms to take the stage – these are a mixture of *Narcissus bulbocodium* and *romieuxii* as well as a number of hybrids.



Mixed species and hybrids.



In the former Fritillaria house the sand beds are not so densely populated allowing the Narcissus more space.



Most of the Narcissus in these sand beds are our own seedlings which were open pollinated so are of mixed parentage.





**Narcissus romieuxii**



**Two variations of Narcissus romieuxii.**



We still have one bulb house where we still grow all the bulbs in pots.



**Galanthus 'E. A. Bowles'**

When we first get a special Galanthus we will grow them in pots until we have sufficient numbers to test their hardiness planted out in the open garden.



I have a number of pots of mainly Narcissus and Crocus seedlings in one bulb house including some Crocus melantherus that were sown on 27/09/19. If you look carefully at the pot (centre left) you can see leaves of varying sizes; the taller thicker ones germinated last year shortly after they were sown while the smaller ones have just germinated. Bulb seeds often display sporadic germination especially if they were sown outside the optimum time which is when the parent bulbs would be coming into root growth, however many

have also evolved this trait so as not to have all their eggs in one basket. If the weather was to turn inclement when the seed was germinating then all could be lost so there is an evolutionary advantage for the seed to germinate over more than one season offering a better chance of survival.



**Eranthis pinnatifida** is coming into growth in an outside frame even though the pot is frozen solid.



Winter fungi with an icecap.



*Helleborus x ericsmithii*



### **Helleborus x ericsmithii**

As gardeners we are often more aware of the changing seasons and commonly state the plants are coming earlier but that is not always the case. It feels early this year but on checking my records we are at much the same state of growth as this time last year however over the longer term there is no doubt that we are getting warmer winters resulting in many plants coming into growth and flowering earlier than ten or twenty years ago.



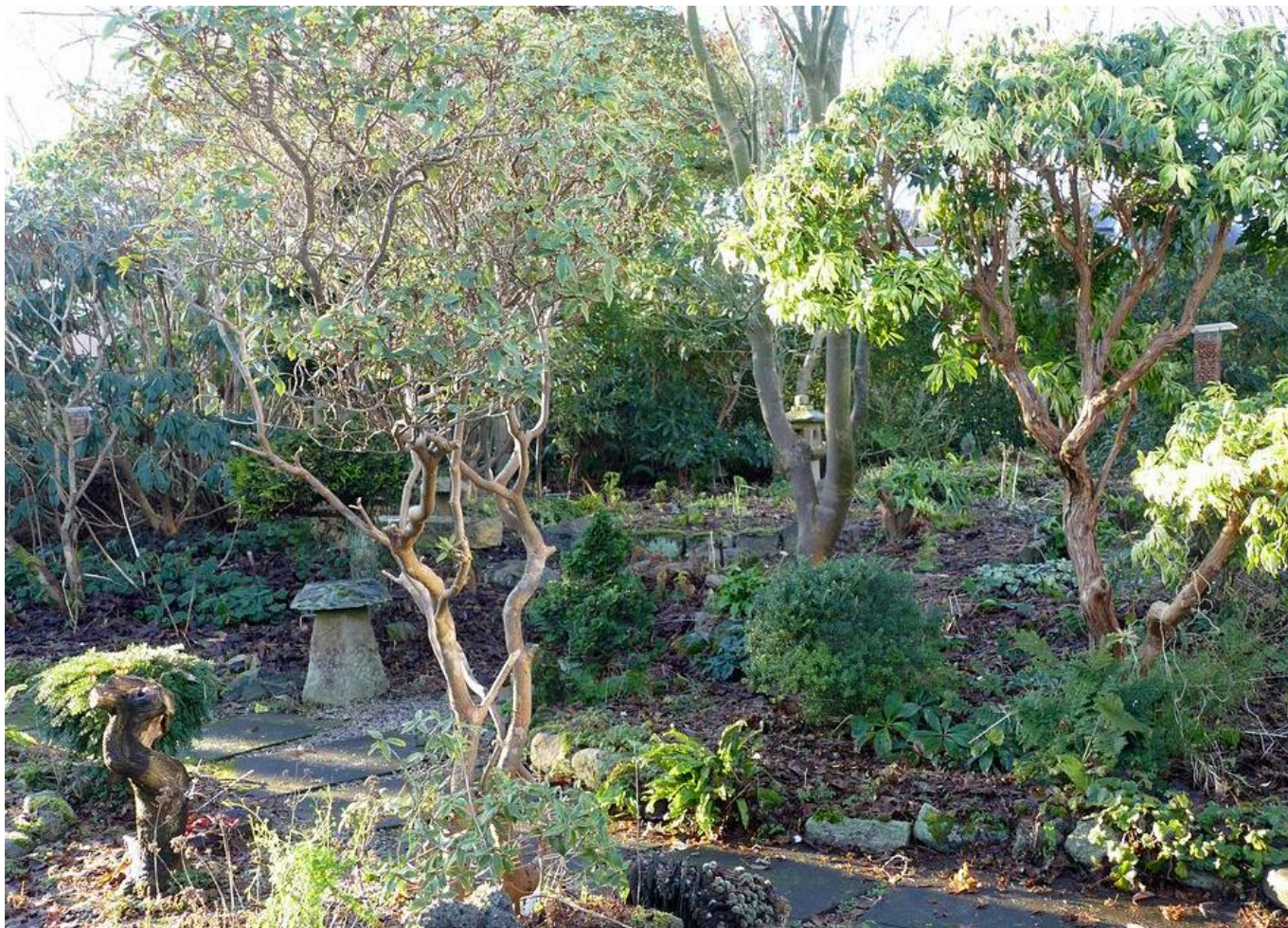
This 'yellow' Hellebore has always been one of the first to flower in our garden and this year is no exception. I have not checked it for a few weeks but now I find the flowers stem extending I will remove the old leaves.



Looking across to the bulb bed I can see there are many shoots suggesting it will not be long before we get flowers.



Galanthus and Colchicum are among the bulbs in growth.



Gradually as the weather permits I am clearing old growth and getting the garden ready for the start of the mass flowering of the bulbs over the months to come.





The days are at their shortest just now this picture shows the highest point that the sun reached on that day it will slowly get higher as the planet tilts towards it and the days start to lengthen.



Last week I uploaded a new [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) looking at the garden and the bulb houses in mid-winter click the link to view.....