



SRGC -----

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 07.....16th February 2022



Narcissus bulbocodium subsp. *praecox* var. *paucinervis*



Many years ago we got some bulbs labelled *Narcissus bulbocodium* subsp. *praecox* var. *paucinervis* which is a very large name for such a small plant. Where it should be classified can and will be discussed for a long time but I can recognise its offspring such as this seedling, by its short stature with upward facing yellow flowers growing in one of the sand beds. This one exhibits exerted stamens and style, a feature I find attractive, but the type description states that they should be contained within the corona so perhaps this seedling has picked up genes from another type.



Narcissus and Crocus

The first series of pictures were taken in the same sand bed where the Narcissus are more recently planted out so they have more space to grow without heavy competition. Because we had the experience of seeing how successfully the narcissus would grow and increase since we planted up the first bulb house sand bed trial many years ago – here we grow a wider range of bulbs including more crocus where the first flower buds of the year have just appeared.



Each year I will have to wait until the Crocus flowers open to put a name to them but for now I am more interested in just enjoying their beauty so early in the season.



Mixed Narcissus growing in the sand bed.



Mixed Narcissus species and hybrids growing in the sand beds.





This *Narcissus romieuxii* seedling stands out because of the flared corona and extremely exerted style and stamens and behind it is one of the first of the miniature trumpet daffodils flowers to appear.



Due to growing so closely together the *Narcissus* growth gets elongated to the point that the stems and leaves start to flop around, but on this day I noted the flowers stems were drooping more across the edge indicating that they needed watering.



After last week's Bulb Log I received an interesting question on the SRGC Forum that I thought it was worth sharing here along with my answer.

A question - "you planted out the Galanthus Dryad Gold bulbs singly in the garden. Do you think this gives a faster rate of increase than planting out a small clump of bulbs? I know you often write that bulbs like company."

1. Bulbs in pots like and grow better with close company.
2. Planting out clumps of bulbs will give a bigger clump sooner than those planted singly.
3. I much prefer to see newly planted bulbs spaced out singly and in random groups to mimic

nature and while it is rewarding to see the large clumps I just want to split them up and spread them out but do not always have the time or indeed space to do it.

It may be when you first start to grow bulbs you want to achieve clumps quickly to bring an established mature look to your garden but then the clumps also get too big for their own good more quickly needing divided and replanted sooner. So I have two good reasons to plant bulbs out singly first for the more natural look and second that it will be longer before I need to divide them.

Clump-forming bulbs are not so commonly seen in the wild as they are in gardens and I have a hypothesis that the reason for this is that a bulb that is genetically inclined to increase will quickly form clumps where the bulbs have to compete against each other for nutrients and moisture leading them to start to flower less as the bulbs get more congested and smaller each year until they would eventually fade away.



In the cultivation the gardener becomes the friend and indeed favours such clump-forming bulbs because of their rate of increase and helps by regularly dividing, replanting and spreading them around. Due to this fast rate of clonal increase these bulbs have become more dominant in cultivation than bulbs that can only be increased by seed.

Galanthus 'Glenorma' planted out as a single bulb just a few years ago.



Two pots of **Eranthis pinnatifida** on the left and one of **Eranthis byunsanensis** on the right.



Superficially very similar when you look carefully you will spot significant differences between the flowers of **Eranthis pinnatifida** on the left and **Eranthis byunsanensis** on the right.



One of the excitements of this time of year is spotting the fat shoots of the early flowering bulbs poking through the ground such as these **Erythronium caucasicum** which is slowly increasing from the single bulb I planted out.



These **Iris 'Katharine Hodgkin'** were also split and planted singly not many years ago and now they have formed small clumps, especially the ones on the left which are at that stage when their flowers open they crowd into each other preventing them from displaying their full beauty.



Iris 'Katharine Hodgkin'



The relatively large flowers of reticulate Iris 'Harmony' grows in the sheltered bed at the base of the house wall.



Every day more shoots and flowers appear across the garden and even when it is raining and cold we get this view from the comfort of the house.



Galanthus, Eranthis and Crocus in the cobble bed reflect and link to what is growing in the wider garden.



Compare this view of the plants growing in the cobble bed with the very similar view, shown below, looking further into the garden.



***Galanthus woronowii* and *Eranthis hyemalis*.**



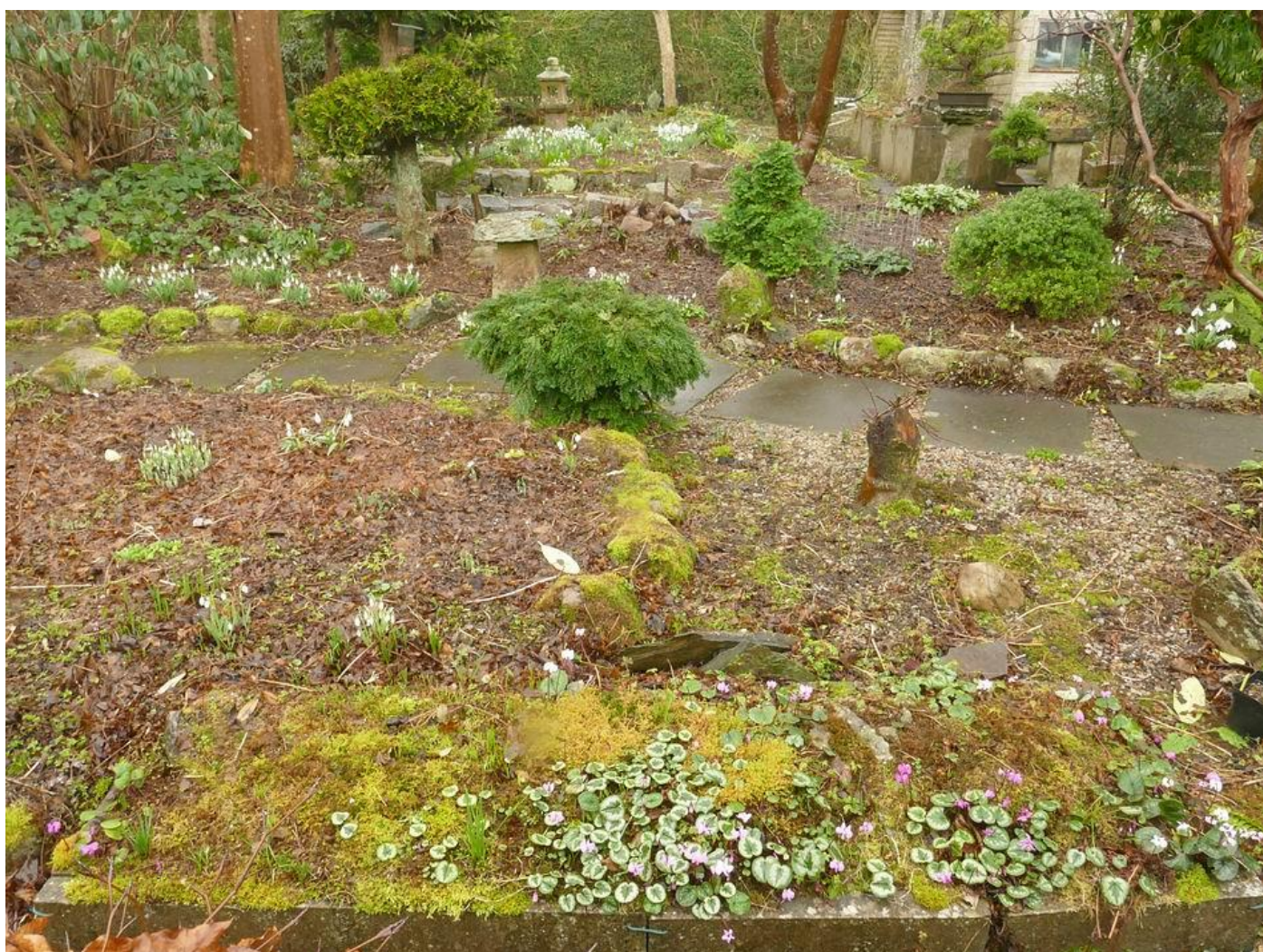
Eranthis hyemalis



Leucojum vernum var. *carpathicum* 'Podpolozje' increases well, so to keep it flowering freely the clumps should be divided regularly.



In the moss covered sand bed ever more Cyclamen coum flowers are rising up and opening every day.



This view shows that while there are areas with plenty of flowers, such as the moss covered sand bed at the bottom of this picture, many across the wider garden are still to emerge.



Colchicum and Allium go well together, their new leaves bring decoration early in the year before their flowers come in summer and autumn. By the time the Allium flowers appear their leaves are never looking their best but their tall flower stems can rise up through the Colchicum leaves at their peak; then in the autumn when all the leaves have died back, the Colchicum flowers appear.



Eranthis
'Schwefelglanz'
is one of the pale yellow flowered selections of *Eranthis hyemalis* that gradually forms clumps and in my experience most of its seedlings have a similar pale hue.



Galanthus, Iris 'Katharine Hodgkin' and Crocus atticus



Crocus atticus



Continuing round the garden I note there are many clumps of snowdrops that would be best divided.



I will leave you this week with this wider view showing the majority of plants have still to emerge so there is lots to look forward to as we move through the seasons.....