



BULB LOG.....16-05-2007



Slab beds

Many of you were interested in my plunge bed construction, which I showed in last week's log, so here is a view of our garden showing the four large slab beds that I made using the same method some twenty odd years ago. The only difference with these is that I used metal plates to hold them together instead of wire. Right angle plates were bolted at the corners and flat strip steel on the straight joins. At the bottom right you can see one similar to the one I constructed last week tagged onto the larger slab bed – it is full of erythroniums :-)



Zigadenus

One bulb flowering in one of those raised beds just now is an interesting wee Zigadenus raised from seed – I have long since lost the label so I am not quite sure what species it is.



Trillium grandiflorum double form

Aborting flower buds on *Trillium grandiflorum*, double form, is a recent topic of discussion on the forum and I will give my thoughts here. I must say that I have not found this a problem as all our forms flower quite well. Firstly if it is only the double forms that abort their flower buds we must consider that the genetic mutation that causes the double flowers also brings with it an increased rate of flower bud failure. I am sure that the reason for this failure must be a lack of moisture as the flower stems start to elongate in the spring. That would certainly tie in with the very dry period most of us experienced this year - it could also be that the warmer than normal temperatures were a contributory factor. It is worth remembering that a plant can only take up nutrients when there is water present so it is a double whammy for a plant when it is dry - no food or water.



Calochortus uniflorus flowers

Staying with North American bulbs, *Calochortus uniflorus* is in flower in the bulb house. At long last we are now getting a good variation from seed after a generous friend sent us some bulbs and seeds a few years ago, prior to that we had a single clone.



Calochortus uniflorus: looks good coming through the yellowing leaves of all the narcissus and crocus.



Bulb house yellow leaves

I have never known the bulbs to go back so early as this year - it has to be as a result of the very sudden warm spring weather we had in April. Until then I was saying that everything was flowering to within a day or two of exactly the same time they have for the last five years but the first few hot weeks of April has advanced everything by four weeks giving us a very short intense period of flowers. The other result of the warm dry spring means that many of the lilies and arisaemas that I would expect to be soon in flower, have not even appeared yet, giving us a gap in flowers that we do not usually have. The heavy rains we have had in recent days means that there is plenty of water in the ground now so I expect to see lots of growth and flowers in a few weeks' time.



Narcissus triandrus and *Tristagma leichtlinii*

The heat has also advanced the seed collecting period so I have to keep watch for splitting seed capsules.



Erythronium montanum seed pots

Talking of seeds these are two pots of *Erythronium montanum* seedlings sown in September 2002 and both producing their first flowers this year, having never been repotted. Had they been repotted at the end of their second year of growth they would most likely have flowered a year or two ago but I do not have time to repot everything. They will get planted directly into the garden when they go dormant in June/July.



Arisaema griffithii seed pot

Another seed pot that has not been touched since I sowed the seeds is this pot of *Arisaema griffithii*.



Arisaema griffithii seedlings

One flowered this year but most of the others are still very small: I wonder if the dominant bulb can inhibit the growth of the others while they remain so close.



Arisaema griffithii range of sizes

You can see the range of sizes of the corms which I have now planted out in several locations around the garden and I can look forward to a mass of flowers in a few years' time.



Uvularia grandiflora

A last picture for this week, as I must go and help Maggi with the preparations for the Aberdeen Rock Garden Show which is this Saturday, it is another from North America. Two forms of *Uvularia grandiflora* - one has pale yellow flowers, while the other has egg yolk yellow flowers.