

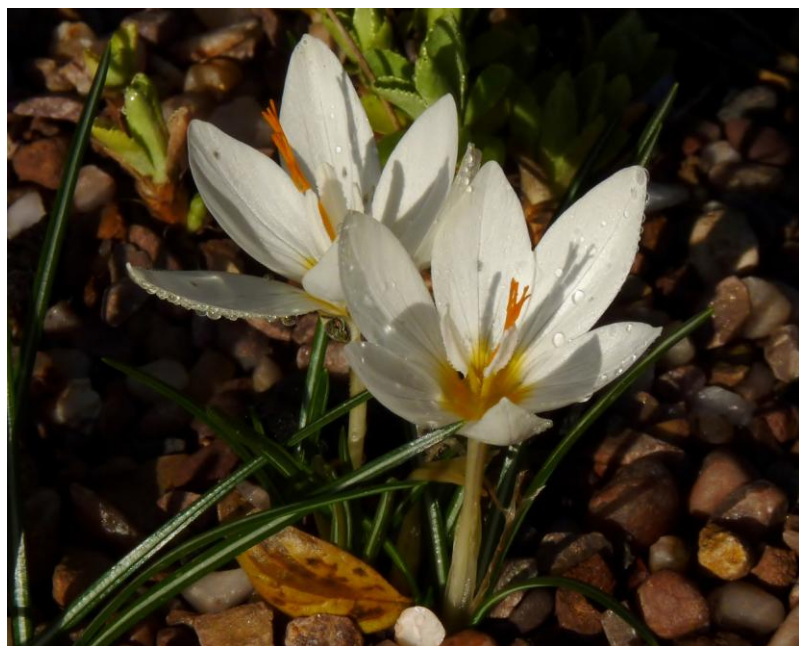
Crocus Group Bulletin No. 42 : Summer 2013

Patron	Brian Mathew MBE VMH	Members	199
Committee	David Stephens	Home	114
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Hon. Sec.	Tony Goode		

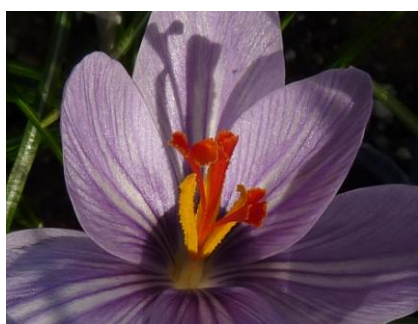
Hon Sec Notes

It has been a very mixed season for crocus growers in the UK. Here in Norfolk, I repotted late (during September.) After a serious problem with root rot in the Autumn taxa I now delay watering until temperatures drop. A warm autumn led to a delayed start to growth, and late flowering. While the flowering was generally good, the result perhaps of a cool April/May which extended the season for leaf activity, the late flowering and low temperatures meant very few pollinators were active and cold nights may have inhibited fertilisation. Seed set from the Autumn taxa was very poor indeed. The Spring flowering was very late here after a long, cold Winter, but the peak flowering was impressive, condensed as it was, the usual early flowering taxa having been held back. Seed set was much better than with the Autumn taxa. TG

A few images from the Plant Heritage Collection of Species Crocus in Norwich, UK.



Crocus boryi x tournefortii – planted in a raised bed. Will it thrive?



Three seed raised crocus from Crocus cartwrightianus.



Crocus biflorus ssp in greenhouse bed.



Crocus sieberi ssp sublimis



Crocus pestalozzae 'caeruleus'



Crocus cvijicii



Crocus corsicus ex wild seed



Crocus minimus seedling ex 'Bavella' (April Flower)



Crocus kosaninii



Massed crocus in the Spring frame.
TG

Crocus Group Seed Exchange

The aim of the seed exchange is to get *Crocus* seed to members as close as possible to the correct time for them to be sown for optimal germination. *Crocus* seed has been shown to germinate best if sown during the higher temperatures of late summer before the lower temperatures of autumn and winter initiate germination. The best time for sowing is therefore at the same time as nature does it in the wild, that is when the ripe seed is expelled from the mature seedpod in late spring to early summer. For this reason we ask donors to send seed as soon as possible after they have collected it, and in any case before 31st of July.

During the first week of August a seed list is compiled and sent to members by e-mail or surface mails, who have requested a copy by sending an e-mail request or a stamped addressed envelope, again before the 31st of July.

Members should indicate on the seed list request form which seeds they want up to a limit of 20 packets, and the form should be returned by e-mail or surface mail before the 31st of August. About the 1st week of September the seeds are divided between the members who request them, **with donors getting first choice**, although non donors always get a good deal. You will receive your seeds within a few weeks after that. They should be sown immediately and left exposed to the weather until they germinate, after which they may be brought under cover.

Donations of seed and requests for seed list should be sent, before 31st July to: -
David Stephens, 76 South Terrace, Dorking, Surrey. RH4 2AQ, UK. or for an e-mailed seed list to:
thecrocusgroup@hotmail.com

To recap:

Rule 1. If you are a donor, send seed before 31st July

Rule 2. If you are not a donor but want a seed list, send an e-mail or SAE before 31st July

Obviously, donors always get first choice and very rare seed in short supply invariably goes to them. However, non-donors receive a fair proportion of what they ask for and always get a good deal. S

An Enquiry from a member researching Crocus in Spain.

I am writing to you for some help, if possible, or advice, or for both things at the same time. In our laboratory at the UCLM, Albacete (Spain), we are working in the biosynthetic pathway leading to crocins formation in the stigmas of *Crocus*. We want to perform a transcriptomic approach on different developmental stages of the stigma in order to get an idea about the metabolic changes taking place during crocin formation and accumulation. Because saffron is a triploid, and is going to be an inconvenient for study the different transcripts. We have decided to work with its relative *C. cartwrightianus*. However, we have a big problem with the material. In two nurseries that we already tried last year the corms were finally of *C. sativus*, and we cannot find really diploids of *C. cartwrightianus*, and this is the reason of my e-mail:

Do you know people growing real *C. cartwrightianus*? if so, Do you think they can send corms to us as donations for our project or paying for them?. We will really appreciate your help and recommendations.

Looking forward to hear from you soon

With regards

Lourdes

University of Castilla la Mancha.

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Campus de Albacete.

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A shorter than usual newsletter this year. Please consider writing a few notes for us about your crocus growing experiences or your trips to see them in the wild. I would especially welcome a review of the various new taxa that have been described. You can find an article in the June Alpine Garden Society Bulletin covering some of these.