



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 45.....10th November 2021



Eucomis bicolor



The front cover picture shows **Eucomis bicolor** in what I think is its most decorative stage. When the swelling, bright green seed capsules are held aloft on the purple blotched stem above which we see the remaining flowers, varying in colour according to their stage of maturity, topped off with a pineapple like tuft of leafy bracts.

Now the foliage of **Podophyllum hexandrum** is collapsing, the large red fruits, which have been hiding under the leaves, are revealed.



The plants that form dry seed capsules have already shed their valuable contents but now is the season of the fruits where the seed is surrounded by some form of fleshy structure known by gardeners as fruits; such as this **Fuchsia procumbens** fruit that I sectioned to reveal the seed inside.



This is the first year when we have had so many ripening fruits on our **Fuchsia procumbens** and I speculate this harvest is down to the warm dry summer when it produced a long succession of flowers. This plant is over thirty years old and the only factor that has varied is that we have experienced two of the warmest, driest summers on record. Nature always achieves a balance so while some of the plants we grow will enjoy the warming climate, the majority we have chosen (because they prefer what has been our typical cool moist summer) may sadly be put under stress in the dryness.

Two summers ago, when we were suffering from the first drought, I wrote that some of the harm caused to the plants may not manifest itself until the following year or later and that was indeed the case. The growth on a number of Rhododendrons was poor and then we had a similar second long hot dry period this year which compounded the damage to the roots and they did not get a chance to recover fully.





Most of our Rhododendrons are tolerating these conditions but one that has succumbed after over thirty years of growing well is this **Rhododendron elegantulum**. It is always sad to lose a plant especially after such a long time

but you will see behind it, there is another large Rhododendron looking healthy.



This is one of a number of plants of seed raised plants of **Rhododendron uvariifolium** that we planted in various parts of the garden and because the garden is so full they were often tucked away behind other larger specimens now when we remove the dead elegantulum it can grow into and fill the space.

Gardeners have to accept that losses are natural but if you are continually raising

plants from seed you will always have a supply of young healthy material coming along.



I never feel that we have properly established plants in the garden until we get seed from them and preferably establishing self-seeding colonies. Like many similar organisations the SRGC has a well-established seed exchange however the Covid restrictions severely hampered their operations last year - fortunately things are now a bit better, with most seed exchanges functioning to some degree, there are however increasingly difficulties in sending seed across borders making saving and sharing the seed from our own gardens ever more important.



While so many plants are disappearing underground for the winter there are some that are just coming into growth – one of these is **Corydalis** ‘**Craigton Purple**’ the newly emerged leaves are shown above and can be seen more closely on the left. These leaves will remain green all through the winter spring and well into next summer before they die back to make way for the next crop.



The new leaves of Cyclamen also grow in the autumn surviving all the way through until next summer.





The leaves of these tree peonies brighten up on colour before they say goodbye for the year.



We have a range of ferns; some like this one are losing their leaves (fronds) for the winter others remain evergreen.



Evergreen subjects form an important part of the garden design and structure as well as providing valuable habitat and shelter for the wild life.



The structure, shape and form of evergreen plants become more dominant in the garden as we head into winter.



The next sequence of images is an update of the growth in the bulb house sand beds along with the early flowers.



Sand bed



In the bulb house sand beds the first of the hoop petticoat Narcissus hybrids are either in bud or starting to flower now and will give us flowers all the way through the winter.



Over recent years we have been given a few forms of *Galanthus reginae olgae* and these flowers are on top of very long stems largely due to the low light and the dense competition from the many neighbouring *Narcissus*.



It is interesting to compare the above with this tiny *Galanthus peshmeni* growing in another sand bed with minimal competition.



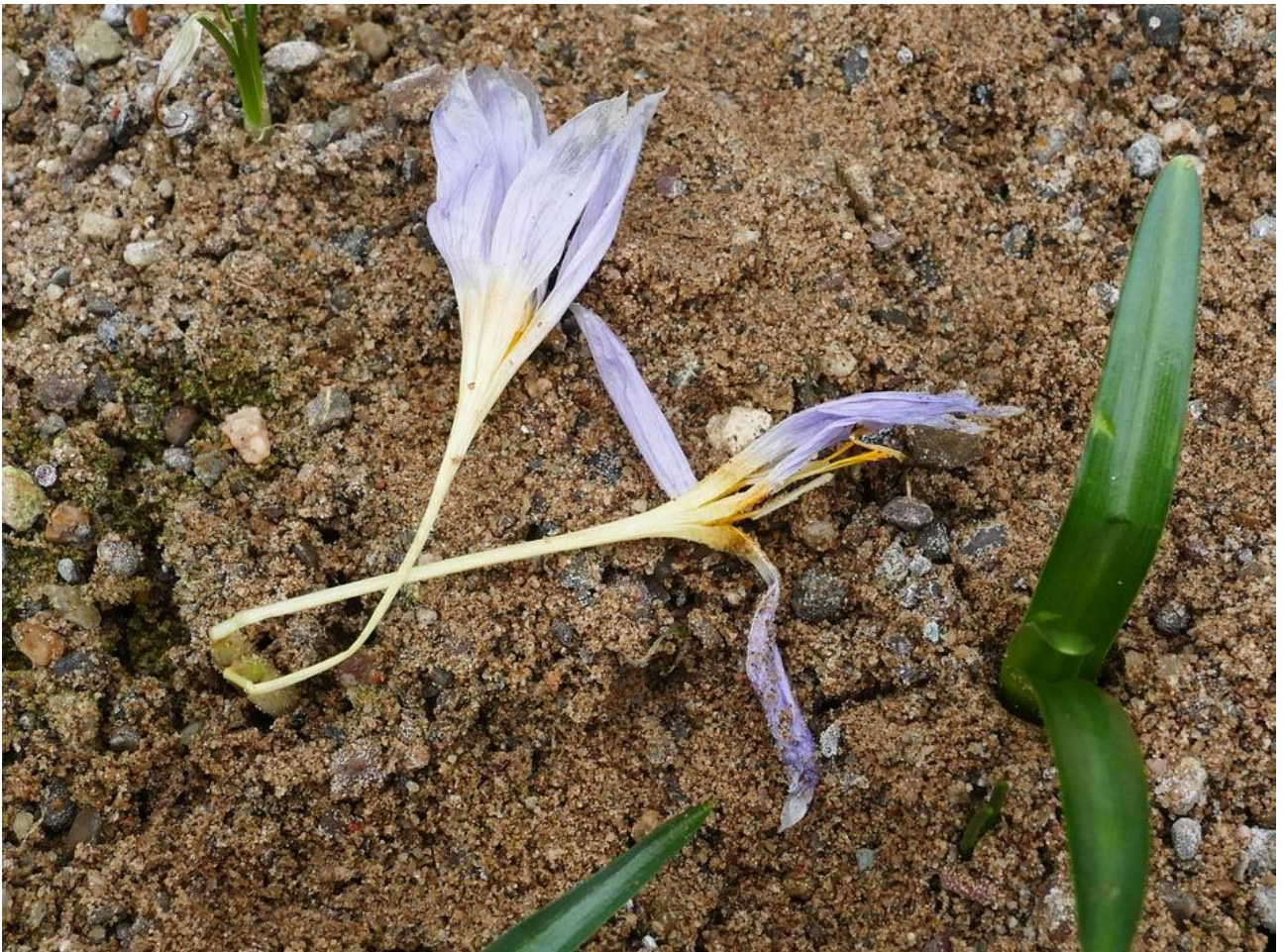
Crocus pulchellus



Crocus asumaniae



Crocus longiflorus



To prevent rot and mould forming the old flowers should be plucked off when they collapse.



Crocus ligusticus and *Crocus caspius*



Crocus ligusticus and *Crocus caspius*



There are plenty Narcissus buds appearing that will flower in the coming weeks and months.

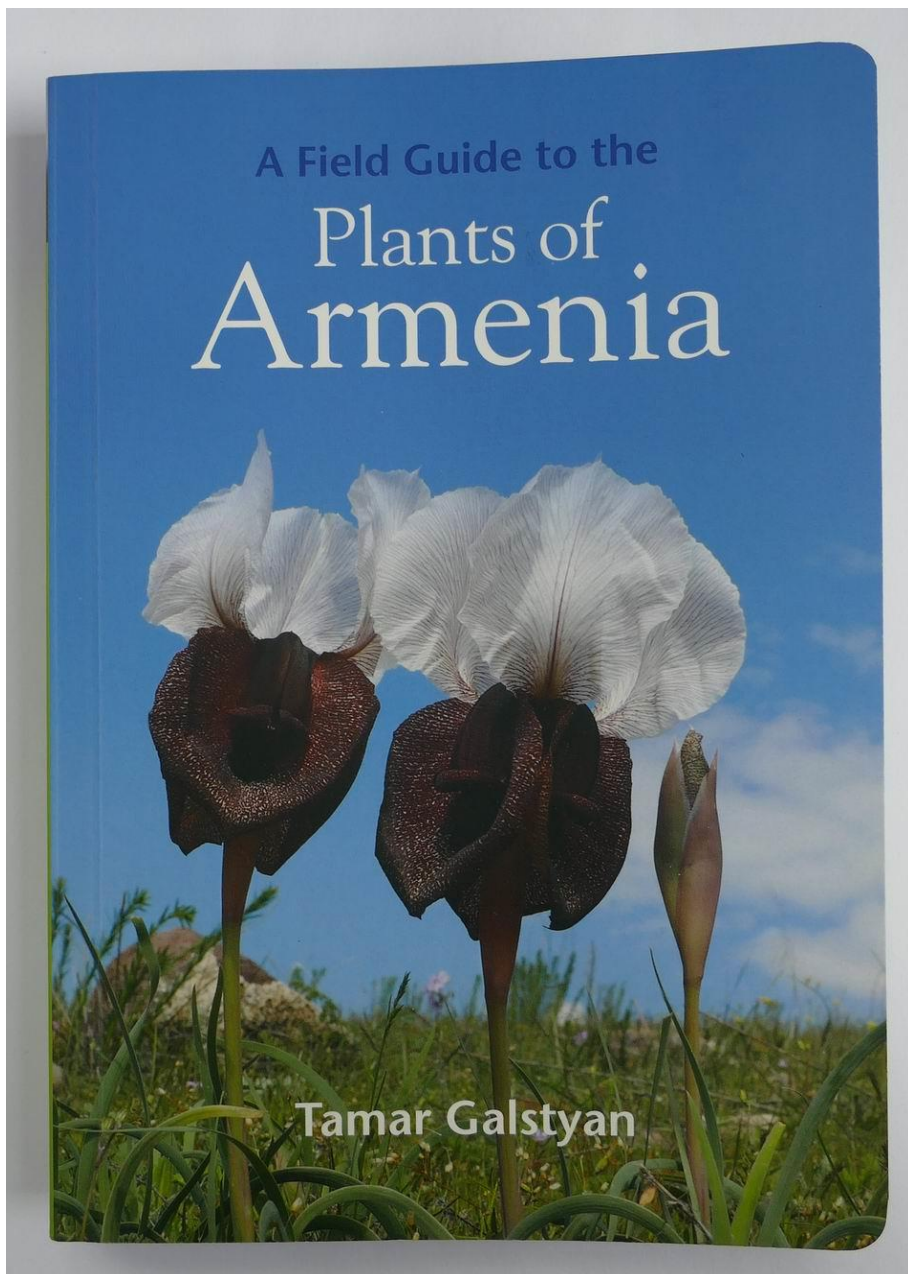


Back outside in the garden, the evergreen **Asplenium scolopendrium** loves to spread around by spores.



Another good decorative evergreen plant, or should I say ever-silver, is *Celmisia lyallii*.





Tamar Galystan graduated from the University of Art and Theatre in Yerevan. She studied ecology and worked with children as an ecology teacher. Tamar began to travel regularly in Armenia, taking numerous pictures of plants and identifying them. She created a website to help students learn about the Armenian flora and this led to her popular Facebook page Plants of Armenia. In 2012, she was invited to guide a botany trip. Gradually, the geographical range of her trips expanded, and some are managed through her own travel company, SkyGreen. Travels in Georgia, Iran and Central Asia have deepened Tamar's love of Nature as well as her plant knowledge.

**A Field Guide to the Plants of Armenia
by Tamar Galstyan**

Publisher: Filbert Press

ISBN: 9781999734589

This book has the feel of a weighty tome coming in at 782g, and flicking through the 592 pages, I realise that it could have been much heavier. The paper is thin enough to keep that weight (and price) down but not at the sacrifice of print quality which I find to be good throughout. I also like the design of this book - physically the soft cover and rounded corners will make it a comfortable fit to be carried in a backpack or even a large pocket.

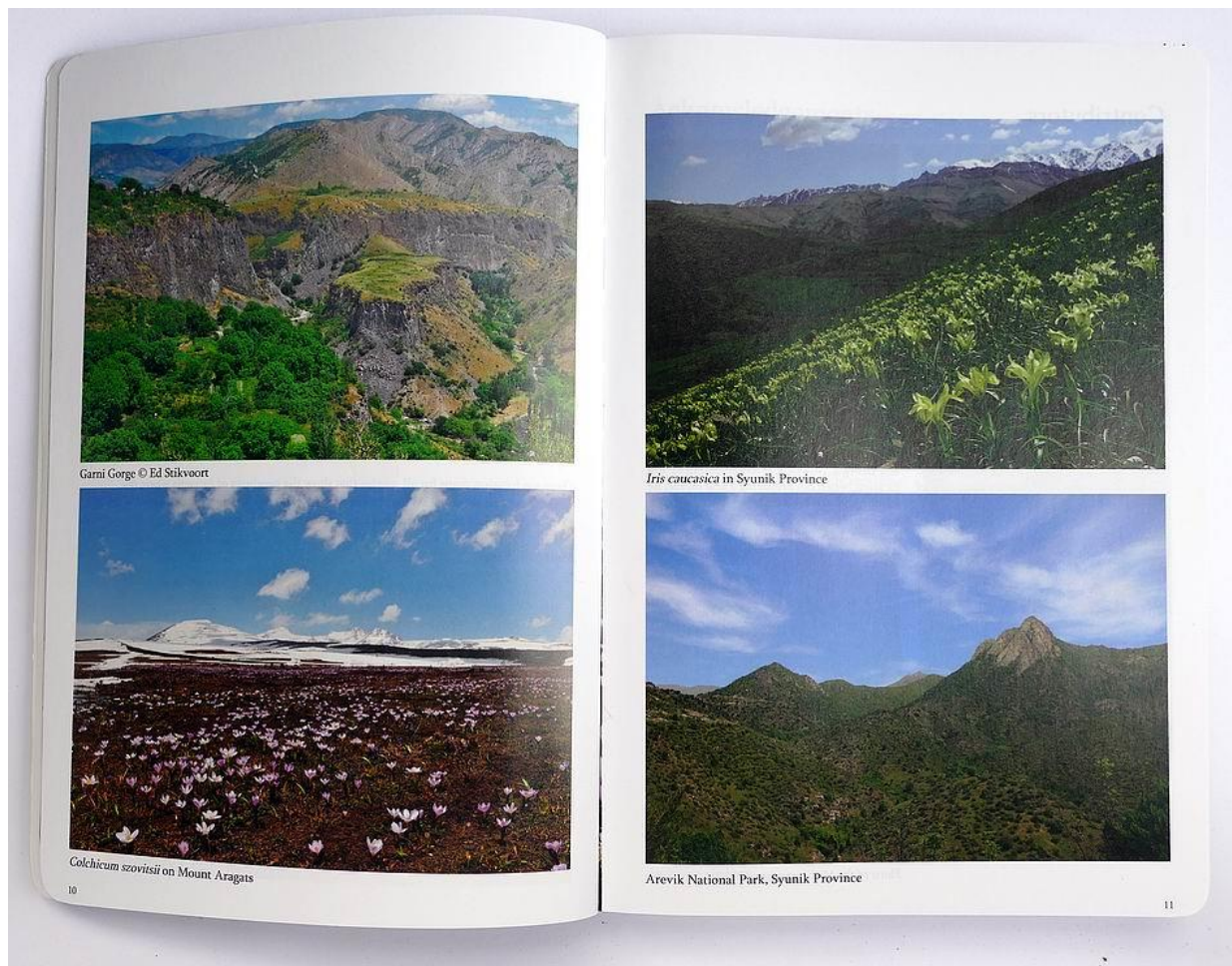
The plants are listed in two sections; one

for Monocotyledons and the other much larger section for the Dicotyledons.

I very much like the addition of six pages each containing 12 images to help the user identify the main plant families, which in turn will help to navigate the rest of the book where the plants are listed alphabetically under their plant families. I also find the consistent layout using two columns per page where the upper two thirds contain the pictures with the descriptions in the bottom third very logical and easy to search through plus there is a small map at the bottom of the page indicating the distribution of each plant in Armenia. Sometimes there is a single image of the plant in the upper part sometimes where appropriate to aid identification there are two.



Some of the plants, especially those with smaller flowers, can be challenging to photograph however I find the photographs are of a good quality throughout and again serve to help identify the subject.

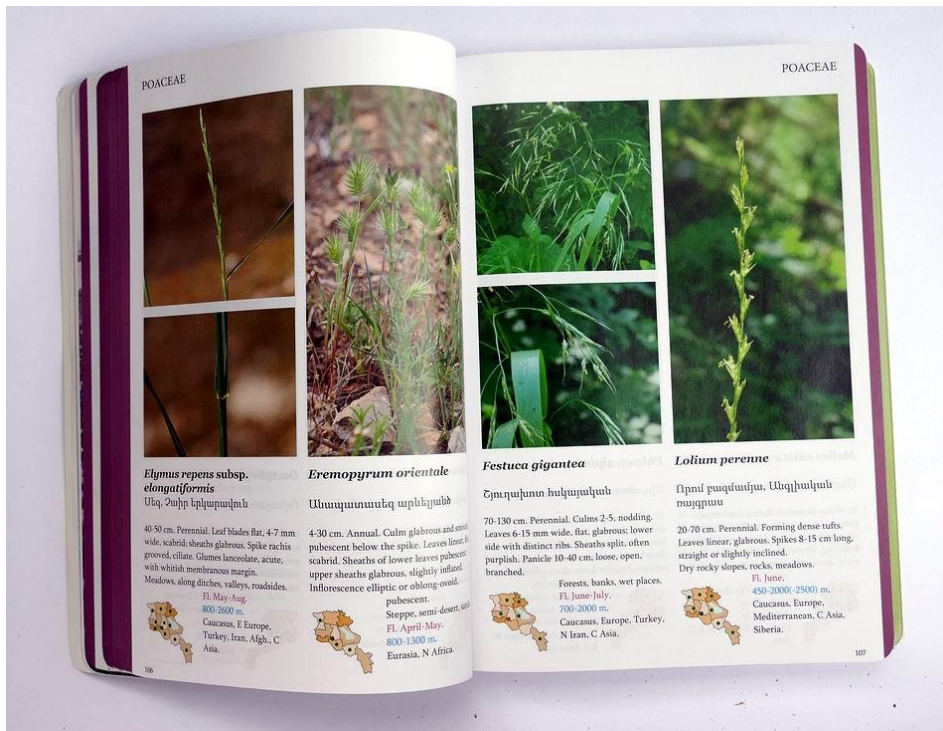


Landscape views

Reading the author's introduction I was struck by how the love and enthusiasm she has for the plants of her homeland has driven Tamar Galstyan to seek and then share this knowledge, first through her Plants of Armenia Facebook page which then, with the help of her collaborators including Christopher Gardner and the publisher resulted in this book.



Monocotyledons



I also like the fact that the author has included sections covering grasses, ferns, conifers and ephedra.

With pictures and descriptions of 1000 plants including bulbs, herbaceous plants, woody plants, grasses and ferns this is an impressive list but in the words of the author –

‘I only regret the limited number of species included here, but to have included more would have made the book too large and unwieldy. A good reason to plan a second book!’



Naturally the largest section of the book covers the many Dicotyledons.

I concur with the publicly expressed opinion of Panayoti Kelaidis (Senior Curator at Denver Botanic Gardens): ‘Wow! This is a remarkable and significant contribution to the literature of the region. The Photography is exceptional and despite my vast botanical library I’ve not seen at least 50% of the plants in any other book of this nature.’

This is a wonderful introduction to the plants of Armenia as well as a field guide and I have thoroughly enjoyed looking through at the many plants that I have not seen before so I for one would look forward to a second book.



I will leave you this week with a closer look at the inflorescence of **Eucomis bicolor**.....