



BULB LOG 13.....30th March 2011



Mixed bulbs

All over the garden the sequence of flowering I described last week is progressing and groups of mixed bulbs like the one above are in flower. As a result of the long cold winter followed by a bit of sunshine and warmth we find that a number of bulbs that would not normally be in flower at the same time are flowering together this year.



Plunge frame



Narcissus cyclamineus

This is one of the plunge frames where the bulbs are grown in square plastic mesh pond baskets to keep the bulbs separate and make them easy to lift and repot. The bulbs are grown in our standard bulb mix and plunged into a bed of sharp sand. The bed is mulched with some shredded prunings which helps to keep down weeds and also reduces the evaporation of water for these moisture loving bulbs such as *Narcissus cyclamineus* which never like to be completely dry.



Crocus pelistericus

One of the best colours in the plant world is presented here in *Crocus pelistericus* which also wants all year round moisture if it is to increase and flower freely.



Crocus pelistericus

The side view of *Crocus pelistericus* shows how rich the colour is. In the left foreground is one of the first *Erythronium sibiricum* flowers to open for us this year.



Erythronium sibiricum

Another group of *Erythronium sibiricum* is just starting to open an adjacent frame. In many years this particular form has a tendency to try and open its flowers before the stem has pushed them above ground but the this year the cold winter seem to suit them well as there is a good stem as the flowers are opening. This is just a preview of the many *Erythroniums* we grow and I am sure that I will return to them plenty of times in the next month or so of bulb logs.



Erythronium hendersonii

In the same frame one of the other early flowering Erythroniums, *E. hendersonii* is also just opening its flowers.



Erythronium japonicum

Over the years I have discovered that *Erythronium japonicum* grows much better in the garden than it does in a pot or mesh basket so I now plant the seedlings out when they are three or four years old. As I do not always remember exactly where I plant things this means we have lots of these gorgeous forms appearing all around for us to discover and enjoy.



Bulb frame

In another bulb frame there is a mix of bulbs in pots, Narcissus, Crocus, Fritillaria, Eranthis, etc - some have flowered while others are just coming through now. I have a decision to make about this frame because I was thinking of turning it into a sand bed (while I have lots of sand) and planting the bulbs straight into the sand to look after themselves – but it is also useful to have it as another frame for pots of seedlings. No decision has yet been taken.



Fritillaria house

I have not shown you much from the Fritillaria house so far this year so here are a few pictures to bring you up to date with the growth in there.



Frit House

In this corner I grow some of the larger Asian fritillarias.



Fritillaria bucharica* and *Fritillaria yuminensis

Fritillaria bucharica shows some signs of damage to the tips of the leaflets around the flowers – this has most likely been caused by the cold. One of my favourites for its extraordinary colour and lovely scent, *Fritillaria yuminensis* is just starting to come into flower now.



Frit house view and *Fritillaria caucasica*

Across the other side of the house *Fritillaria caucasica* dominates the foreground of this picture.



***Fritillaria montana* and *Fritillaria* 'Craigton Max'**



Fritillaria chitralensis

The lovely *Fritillaria chitralensis* continues to grow well for us but increase is slow. I am very encouraged by the best germination of seed that I have ever had this year and hope that this will greatly increase our stock of this rare beauty.



Fritillaria chitralensis*, *F. stenantha* and *F. carica



Fritillaria carica

Fritillaria carica is very variable as you can see from the two pictures above one of which displays distinct brown streaking. I have other forms that are almost completely brown and seem to merge into the related *Fritillaria pinardi*.



Fritillaria korolkowii

Very distinct and easy to recognize is *Fritillaria korolkowii* sometimes put into its own genus.



Fritillaria pudica* and *Narcissus rupicola

The dwarf North American yellow *Fritillaria pudica* blends well with and leads me nicely into *Narcissus rupicola* which self seeds around our plunge beds.



Narcissus rupicola marvieri* and *Narcissus watierii

The larger corona seen above distinguishes subsp. *marvieri* from *Narcissus rupicola* and *Narcissus watierii* is for all the world like a white version.



Tecophilaea cyanocrocus white seedlings

Talking of white versions this is a group of young *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* raised from some seed collected from my existing almost white forms. This is the first generation of seedlings that I have raised where they are all close to pure white with just a hint of blue around the exterior of the base and edges of the petals



Garden view