



BULB LOG.....08-01-2003

Having watered the bulb houses the weather was sure to turn cold and it has.



Bulb Houses 04.01.03

A touch of snow fell this week and the thermometer dipped to -5C. The watering was essential as with the cold comes brighter days and even the few hours of low sunshine pushes the temperature inside the glasshouses up to the point that the bulbs must have moisture available. It is surprising how far advanced some of the Frits are.



Fritillaria biflora

Fritillaria biflora is always the first fritillaria through for us which is interesting as it is also the last to flower in late May and sometimes as late as June which gives it the longest period of above ground growth of all the frits we grow.

The next early fritillaria to show is *F. caucasica*. We have several forms and it is interesting to compare how they emerge.



Fritillaria caucasica 2

F. caucasica 1 always comes through showing the tepals in this way while with *F. caucasica* 2 the leaves always grow up quickly and contain the flower.

Fritillaria caucasica 1



It is no surprise that with everything else being early the frit seed has started to germinate.

Fritillaria seedlings

These all germinated outside with no protection in December and we have had to move them under glass. They need protection when they germinate this early or many of them would get damaged by snow, hail and slugs. *Frit obliqua* is usually the first to germinate and it is joined here by *Ff. argolica*, *pluriflora* and *stenanthera* all sown in September/October from our own seed.



Outside a fish box trough of *Corydalis* Beth Evans is frozen solid.



Corydalis Beth Evans, trough

It is interesting to note just how advanced these plants are some are actually showing flower.

Corydalis Beth Evans closer

Despite the frost and ice crystals that have formed on them they will be perfectly ok they are regularly frozen in our garden when they normally flower in March.

The reason this trough is so advanced is that these were some of our surplus bulbs that had been stored in a fridge and forgotten about until I found them in late November.

They were in a sealed box with some moist leaf mould to prevent dehydration and when I found them they had started to root and the shoots were starting to lengthen. I planted them immediately into the trough. We have another trough of Beth Evans that was split and replanted in May and there is no signs of growth it yet nor is there any signs of the ones in the garden.

I suppose that the lesson here is if you want to flower your *Corydalis* early keep them in the fridge. I have also noted this with *Erythronium* 'White Beauty' which suffered the same experience and the growth was alarmingly far advanced with the roots all tangled around the square box and the leaves were also developed.



I dug a hole in the garden popped the whole tangle into it and covered it over, this gave us the earliest flowering clump of E. 'White Beauty' ever. I guess this is what the Chelsea Show exhibitors discovered years ago and have now developed it to a fine art.

The temperature dropped to -10C on Monday night and stayed below freezing all Tuesday. This left some plants with their leaves frozen solid.



Frozen cyclamen



Frozen arum

Will they survive this extreme ? Follow their progress in next week's log.