



BULB LOG 21.....24<sup>th</sup> May 2006



**Bulb house with**

**Nothoscordum ostenii**  
The last few weeks have been very busy with the Aberdeen Show, Workshops at Pitlochry and the Chelsea Flower Show all taking up my time. Not that I am complaining, I have loved every minute of it, spending time with so many friends and plants is always good fun, however it has meant that my bulbs have not had all the attention that they might have.



**Nothoscordum ostenii**

In the bulb house I found the yellow flowers of *Nothoscordum ostenii* having to fight their way through the collapsing foliage of narcissus and crocus - not that this is a problem for this member of the Alliaceae from Uruguay. Many bulbs can adapt to this competition by elongating their leaves and stems to get up to the light without any harm but it does spoil them for the Show benches - the Judges, quite rightly, would not like this etiolated form.





**Allium yosemitense**

Another Alliaceae fighting for the light is *Allium yosemitense*. We have shown this showy short stemmed allium before but not when it is etiolated like this, however our challenge is to grow and increase the plants not just to produce fine specimens for the Show benches – next year I will try harder to do both.



**Spray with systemic insecticide**

One thing I must not neglect is the late spraying with systemic insecticide. I was a bit late doing this but was given a sharp reminder when I saw green fly on some fritillaria leaves.





### **Aphid attack**

Luckily I got them before they spread too far but you can still see the evidence of the aphid attack on these leaves. Aphids seem more attracted to fritillaria leaves when they are just starting to go yellow' perhaps the sugars are more concentrated at this time but be vigilant and spray your plants under glass.



### **Tropaeolum azureum and tricolorum**

Along the bench in the bulb house Tropaeolum azureum and tricolorum share a climbing support but are growing in different pots. Fertilising the flowers with a paint brush will give me a better seed crop as there are not that many pollinating insects around in Aberdeen right now, where the temperatures are still distinctly cool.





### **Narcissus triandrus seed capsules**

Some fat *Narcissus triandrus* seed capsules indicate that my pollination by paint brush has been at least partially successful. You can see here the unfertile capsule going grey, the plump green one hopefully full of seeds, and a green one which is not so plump suggesting that there will be only a few seeds in it. The label tied to the stem has the pollen parent written on it so I know that this is an attempt at a hybrid between triandrus and a really good form of *N. bulbicodium obesus*.



### **Narcissus seed shedding**

Other narcissus are already shedding their seed and as the stems drop downwards moving the seed pod away from its own pot, it always falls into other neighbouring pots. It does pay to be vigilant and collect your seed capsules just as they go yellow and before they split open like this. This is the reasons that I have so many pots of mixed narcissus seedlings that have to be sorted out when they reach flowering size.





### **Tristagma leichtlinii**

On the left *Tristagma leichtlinii* is also setting seed and on the right are the first leaves on the seeds I collected from our plant last year, I will keep these growing on for as long as I can by watering and feeding with a small dose of sulphate of potash before they go dormant.



### **Colchicum hungaricum seed pod**

A chubby *Colchicum hungaricum* seed pod gives me hope as I tend to get the best germination from my own *Colchicum* seed. I have more pots of ungerminated colchicum seed than any other bulbous plant: I do not know what I need to do to improve my success rate with this genus.





### **Distorted pot**

The season's growth is seen in many ways and one of my favourite sights is a nice fat pot distorted by the bulb increase inside - a pleasure you miss if you grow in clay pots. I love to feel for evidence of the bulb growth by stroking the sides of the plastic pots and it is amazing how you can detect even the slightest bulge that may not be visible to the eye.



### **Erythronium japonicum box**

It would seem that my attempt to improve the seed set on my *Erythronium japonicum* by placing the box into my temporary greenhouse has been successful as a number of them have big fat pods.





***Erythronium japonicum* seed pods**

I could never have enough of this lovely species.

### **New grey back ground cloth**

I know a lot of you were interested when I spoke about my 18 percent grey card background for pictures. Now I have bought 2 meters of a grey cloth that gives me a much bigger background, making it much better for larger subjects to be photographed. I have this fixed to a cardboard roll and can unwind just as much as I need and it is more easily transported around than a sheet of card.

