

# Crocus Group Bulletin No 26

## Summer 1998

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<b>Committee</b>	<b>Ray Cobb</b>	<b>Home 128</b>
	<b>Alan Edwards</b>	<b>Overseas 36</b>
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### Editors Note

The season has started with the usual early species, *vallicola*, *scharojanii*, various *kotschyanus* and *speciosus* taxa all having and continuing to flower here. The current seasons leaves are still green (only just) on *pelistericus*, *scardicus* and *scharojanii* with next years flowering spikes just visible. I am looking forward optimistically to a good growing season, hopefully better than the last which although not disastrous, was not very good. A very early very warm spell in February beguiled the Crocus into precocious growth only to be followed by cold dank dirty weather which stopped growth. A lot of my Crocus went dormant very early and did not make the size of new corm they should. Indeed, on repotting there were quite a few instances of the old corm not being fully absorbed by the new corm and consequently the new corm was small. But I am eternally the optimist and with new plants flowering each season from the 200 or so pots of seed I accession each year, there is always something new, interesting and exciting. **DBS**

### Seed Exchange

As I write this the annual effort involved in the seed exchange is just ending and members seeds will be posted with this bulletin. This is the seventh successive year of the seed exchange and it has got so big and successful that I shall probably need help in future years. This year there were nearly 200 seed accessions of 81 of the 123 recognised taxa including many rarities. Seed which used to be rare such as *abantensis*, *adanensis*, *antalyensis*, *alatavicus* ( I'll stop with the 'a's' ) are now quite commonplace in the seed exchange, which is ample proof of the fact that our intention of getting all known taxa of Crocus into cultivation whilst not supporting commercial collection of wild corms is working. Would all members please make an effort to donate in future. It is difficult to get seed set on a lot of the Crocus taxa but keep the paintbrush in use particularly if you grow some of the rarer ones. **DBS**

## Group Funds

As you all know, the Crocus Group does not have an annual subscription. The need for money is very limited and consists mainly of stationery supplies and costs of postage. What little money we do need is raised in two ways. Firstly we have an annual sale/auction of members spare corms which should be brought along to the autumn visit on Saturday 10th October 1998 at Richard Nutt's place(details below). You will all have probably either finished or be close to finishing repotting so keep your spares dry and cool and bring them along to keep the Crocus Group afloat a bit longer. The second method is rarely used, but if we get seriously low on funds we have a direct appeal to members.

## Crocus Notes

Answering some queries from me recently, our patron Brian Mathew ventured a few interesting observations on various Crocus taxa. In hindsight he suggests that **biflorus ssp wattiorum** would have been better as the full species **wattiorum** in the series biflori. Also, that further study has lead him to believe that **baytopiorum** should not have been placed in series verni, but probably deserves treatment as a one off in a series of its own like fleischeri.

## Autumn Visit and Corm Sale/Auction

To launch the '98/'99 season of Group activities, members are cordially invited to visit Richard Nutt's 1.5 acre garden on **Saturday 10th October 1998** when he hopes, with a modicum of good luck and co-operation from the Clerk of the Weather to have some attractive displays of the more common autumnal taxa flowering around the periphery of his extensive lawns. Richard anticipates that autumnal fruits and colours will also be well developed at that time and there may also be some late Colchicum to add interest. Coffee will await your arrival at 1100. Take a picnic lunch. Please be sure to ring Richard in good time if you wish to attend, **Telephone: 01494 563741**. His address is **Great Barfield, Bradenham, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire** which is best approached via the A4010 4 miles N.W. of High Wycombe / 4 miles S. of Princes Risborough. Having reached Bradenham village green, turn right directly along a narrow lane to Great Barfield where there should be ample parking space. Richard hopes to put up direction boards on the green to assist navigation.

## Spring Visits

**Sunday 21st February 1999** we have been invited to visit the garden of Terry Smale at **28 St Leonard's Road, Epsom Downs, Epsom, Surrey**. Arrive at 1100 and bring a packed lunch. Terry is a grower and successful shower of bulbs especially Crocus and has won many awards for his pots of Crocus including the coveted Crocus Spoon.

We hope to arrange a visit in the middle of March 1999 to John Grimshaw in Maidenhead Berkshire and go on from him to the Inkpen Crocus vernus field on the BBONT Naturalist Trust site. Further details in the Spring Newsletter.

## CROCUS BIFLORUS HYBRIDS ON ULU DAG

I have always visited Ulu Dag near Bursa in Turkey during the first two weeks of May when the lower meadows have finished flowering and *crocus biflorus pulchricolor* is in flower together with *crocus gargaricus* much higher up at the snow line, around the ski hotels. The latter occupies very wet sites often under water, with the former in drier areas.

Last year I was in the area during the first week in March and had near Domanic, on the morning of a glorious spring day visited a site for *crocus antalyensis*, which was in flower in large numbers. Close to the site I had previously found some plants of *cyclamen coum* in leaf and these were now in flower.

I then moved on in the afternoon to visit Ulu Dag. Once on the mountain having left Bursa, *crocus flavus* is common on the roadside banks. Pine forest starts to appear and there are areas of snow amongst it. In clearings large areas are blue with *scilla bifolia*, and a few *crocus chrysanthus* appear.

Higher up is the entrance to the National Park and here there is a pay booth guarded by a soldier. The road divides to pass around this small hut and behind it is a triangle of fenced off ground about 15 metres long and 4 metres wide at its base. This contains hundreds of *crocus chrysanthus*, *crocus biflorus pulchricolor* and hybrids between them in every conceivable combination. I think it is clear that these corms have been planted and are multiplying.

I am aware that Brian Mathew in "The Crocus" states that the two species on Ulu Dag are separated ecologically, which is what I have observed previously. However about 1 kilometre further on there is a large meadow surrounded by light pine forest. On the edge of the forest there are numbers of *crocus chrysanthus*, which is at as high an altitude as I have seen it growing. In the meadow there is *crocus biflorus pulchricolor* in quantity which again is as low as I have seen it. In amongst the latter, particularly where the two species are within a few metres of each other, are a number of plants which clearly appear to be hybrids, in many colour combinations. Most of these could be described as curious rather than beautiful as they do not have the clear colours of the species.

From this area as far as the hotels the snow was thick and skiing was in full swing with all the plants still completely covered.

Tony Willis