

CROCUS GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 45: Spring/Autumn 2015

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FROM THE EDITOR

Finally I get around to sending this. My apologies it is so late! You can see how long ago I started it!! I am already drooling over the sumptuous pics of Autumnal Crocus from the Northern Hemisphere colleagues. Life's BUSY!!! Just a quick note for those who access Facebook. The wonderful site for Crocophiles to display their beauties flowering or ask questions is Greg Boldistons site. Search for Crocus.

In the southern hemisphere it is the peak of the spring flowering Crocus. Currently the last of the Crocus chrysanthus cultivars are vying with the first of the Crocus vernus cultivars to catch my attention. The flowering season here is quite different from the Northern hemisphere. It tends to be much earlier in comparison here. Probably because our winter daytime temperatures and sunlight are quite different. Even in the coldest areas of New Zealand long freezes are rare. Day length is also longer with a lot brighter sun.

It has certainly been a colder winter than normal here in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney We have had frequent snow and hard frosts, With LOTS of sunny days. Hopefully seed set will be great this year.

As I write this I am beginning to harvest the seed from the past growing season. Crocus tournefortii is the first species to send up its seed capsules I will collect it. Dry it. Clean it and then store it in a cool dry container in my fridge. Till I sow it in early autumn or send it in

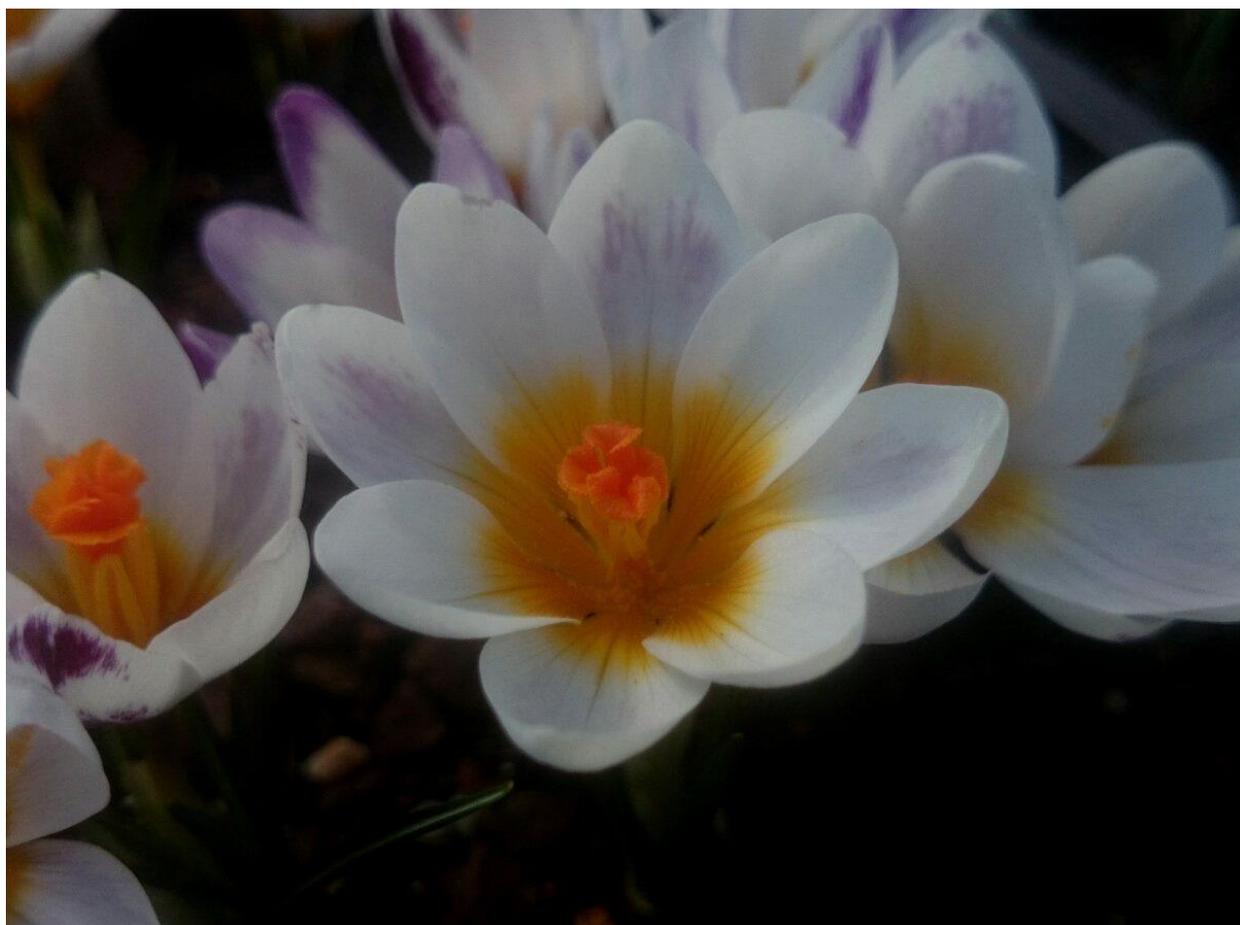
for distribution in next years seed list



It can be surprising to see seed germinating a year or more after sowing. Some species seem to sulk a year before germinating. *Crocus autranii* is well known for this. But, I also find *C. cvijcii*, *C. veluchensis*, *C. vallicola* and *C. vernus* also this from time to time for me. I wonder if this is something to do with the fact they all come from cooler and wetter climates.



It's always exciting to see new plants flowering or the first time. Occasionally producing something unexpected. A new colour, sometimes extra petals or a particularly fine form particularly if grown from seed. This is one of the many advantages of growing plants from seed. In Australia, our rigorous importation laws make the import of the sumptuous cultivars we often see on overseas sites. Onerous and costly. Of course this is a necessary thing. So, we are slowly developing our own. Through selection of particularly good/unusual forms or purpose breeding. For example I am developing a range of hybrids between the various forms and subspecies of *C chrysanthus* and the much more extensive range of *C biflorus* ssp. It will be interesting to see what will develop over time. I will keep you informed. Here are some interesting forms that are appearing in Greg Boldistons collection. *Crocus sieberi* ssp *sieberi* with extra petals.



Crocus tournefortii exhibiting similar features. I wonder what is in the water in Gregs area.



I hybridised *Crocus vernus* with *C heuffleianus* and these are the first flowers. They are HUGE!!



More recently I hybridised a *Crocus vernus* seedling I raised that was a pallid form of "Pickwick" with *C heuffleianus* "Carpathian Wonder" the resulting seedlings flowered last year. They are a very large white with purple tips and pale stripes.

Onto seed matters... I have just received my allocation of seed from the exchange. THANKYOU so much to Wim and his team. They do an amazing job. Following are the statistics of the species and corms distributed

Seed-exchange Crocus Group 2015 closed

Some numbers regarding our last, quite successful seedex.

We made about a thousand small packets of seed from 195 different species/cultivars/forms of *Crocus* which were sent in by 34 donors and sent out to 50 members.

Here below the top 10 of the "most wanted" species, but almost all seeds were asked in high quantity. As always, I could not give everyone everything they asked for, but I did our best.

No.	Name	Packets asked
92	mathewii	19
32	cambessedesii	19
125	pelistericus	17
88	longiflorus ex Malta (dark flowers)	17
JR-8	fleischeri JATU-017	16
177	wattiorum	16
25	biflorus subsp. stridii	16
JR-2	armeniicum species nova, nomen nudum (cornlets)	15

Onto the matter of seeds... Your support for this wonderful service is invaluable!! Please pollinate as many plants as you can!! Even common species are sought after by the novices amongst us!! I recall being over the moon receiving my first seed of *Crocus longiflorus* some years ago Get busy with the brushes! Below is *Crocus longiflorus* "Albus"

