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# Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 04.....26<sup>th</sup> January 2022





Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) are very territorial especially at this time of year but we still have a number of them in the garden. I can almost draw the boundaries between the territories of at least three Robins that keep me company and they are especially interested when I am tidying the garden, uncovering some of the micro fauna as I disturb the ground and mulches. As well as having their company I love the high pitched

melodic song they deliver from a favoured perch high in the trees. We garden for benefit not for neatness so I tend to leave the tidying up for as long as possible because the old growth provides a valuable natural habitat that benefits the wild life that we share the garden with.



The point at which I cut the old growth back is dependent on the weather and as we are having a very mild sunny January, with day time temperatures around 6C to 8C, the new season's growth is responding so to minimise the chance of damaging the new shoots I am doing the tidying now.



All the old growth I cut back gets shredded and composted, you can see some of the heaps in the background, before it is returned to the beds as a mulch.

The natural mulch of leaves may still seem untidy to some but it is there to benefit both the plants and the wild life. The birds are constantly rummaging among the various organic mulches searching for and finding insects and grubs to their benefit reinforcing our policy to garden for wild life as well as the plants.





This is one of the more recently replanted areas in the garden which had become dominated by a few large shrubs until we cut them back a few years ago opening up the ground planting opportunities once more. The longer you garden the more you will realise that this cycle of planting, watching the plants growing until they get too big then cutting them back to start the process again is natural in a mature garden and it is always exciting to get this chance to create a new planting.



As I clear I am finding plenty of shoots, like this Trillium, poking through the ground.



Having finished the work I take a walk to see what is new today and these glossy red fruits of an Arisaema catch my eye in the sunshine, sitting untouched where they fell last autumn. A reminder that now is a good time to scatter the seeds around where we would like more plants.



Snowdrop time is starting with the first flowers of this year pushing upwards encouraged by the sunshine and current mild weather conditions. Gardeners often comment that the season is earlier or later than normal but I tend not to generalise in this way firstly because I do not know what a normal season is. What I do is refer back through my picture files which are filed by the Bulb Log week and year so I can quickly look back through 20 years of

week 4: checking with the date on the image I can do a direct comparison often with the exact plant or clump of bulbs. Checking the last four years from 2019 shows that this year sits in the middle of the range ahead of some but equal or behind with the others but I can confirm that the general trend over the long term is for earlier flowering.



The air temperature is warm enough for the petals of some of the snowdrops to start opening.



As I walk around I see more groups of snowdrops poking up through the natural mulches just as they might do in their native habitat.



I am amused by this group pushing aside one of the larger leaves as they grow upwards into the light.



The low sunshine acts a bit like a spotlight casting strong dramatic light and shade across the beds picking out the emerging snowdrops.



Cameras do not cope very well with such high contrast between the light and shade and as I walk past this bed I spot a small cluster of midges dancing in the mild air.



*Celmisia mackaui* surrounded by the emerging snowdrops and colchicum leaves.





It is unusual for snowdrop flowers to open this early but the mild air has enabled the more advanced blooms to reflex briefly when they are in the spotlight.



The snowdrops will soon be joined by the Eranthis and a whole succession of early flowering plants that will completely cover the ground.



A quick check on the ***Eranthis pinnatifida*** as I walk past the frame shows their flowers are continuing to develop.



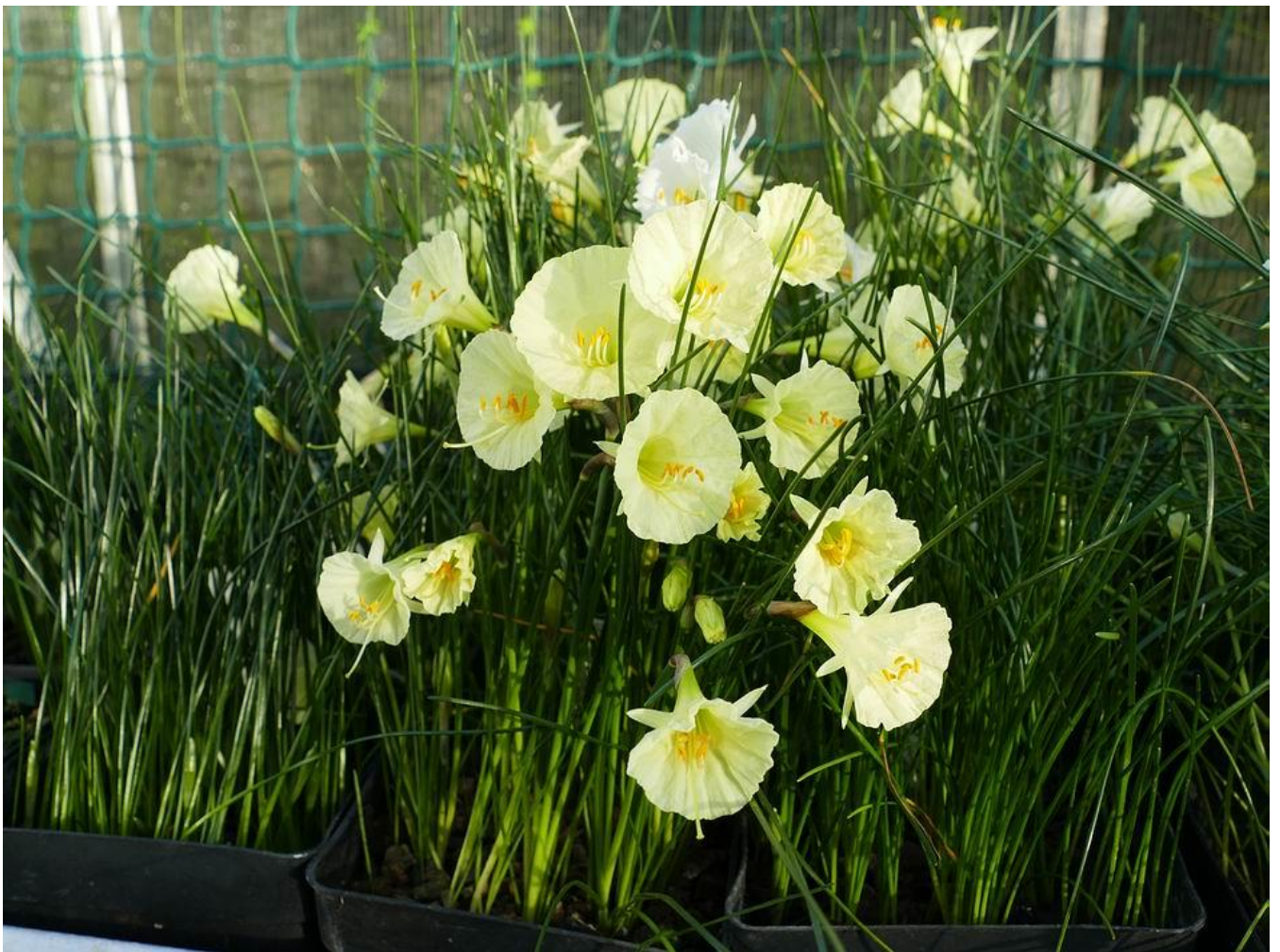
In the bulb house the *Narcissus* in pots are getting into flower now.



Growing them so crowded is not ideal because they constantly have to compete for light but I cannot resist growing so many.



Before I leave you this week I will take a quick jump through the hoops.



Living up to its name: a crammed full pot of **Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper'**.



**Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper'** is a seedling I selected from *Narcissus romieuxii*.



**Narcissus hybrids.**





Even after the Narcissus flowers I had picked to stage last week's still life cover picture had faded, they still possessed some beauty so I could not resist one more image. If you want to see more of the Narcissus and the garden then click to view the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary](#).