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# Bulb Log Diary

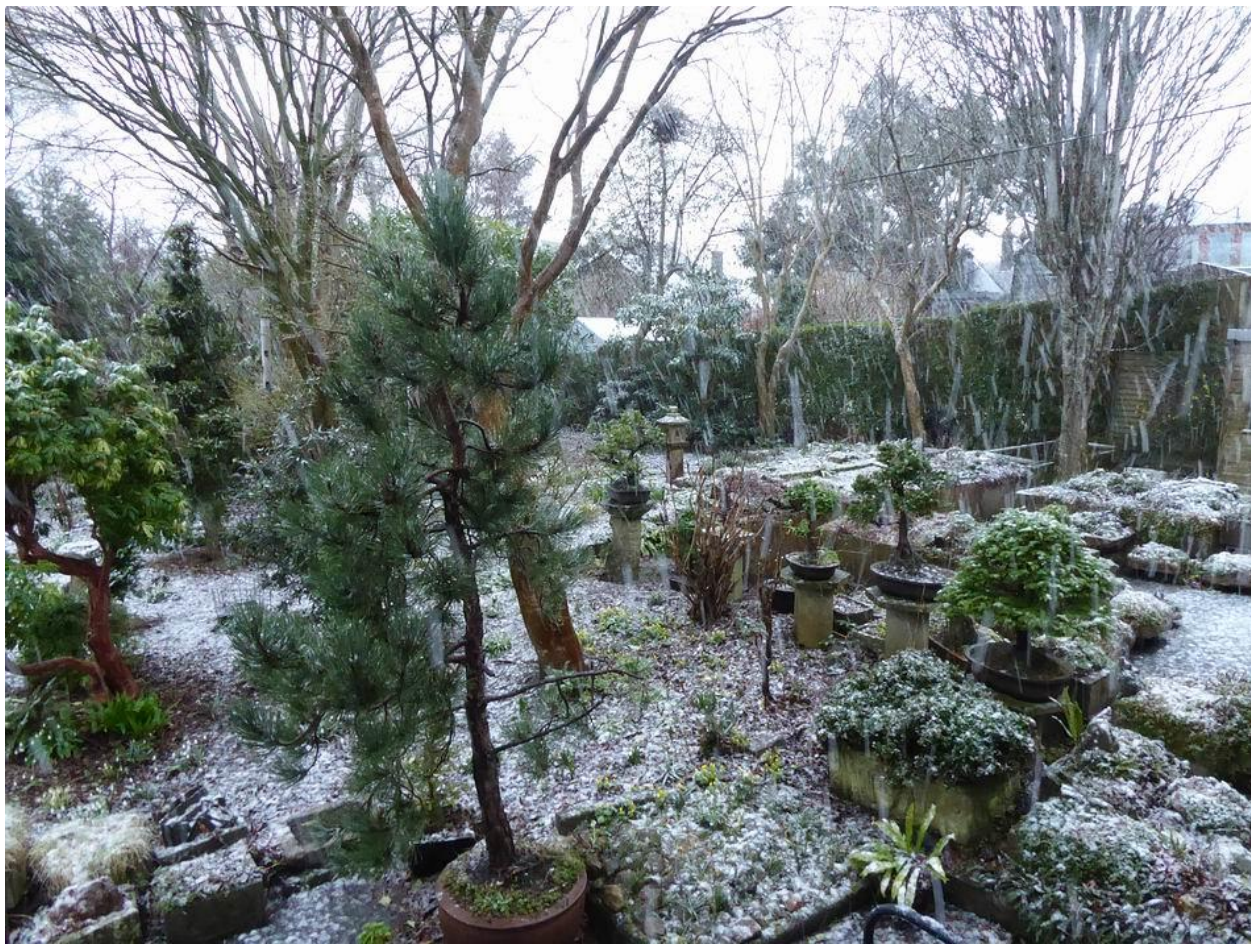
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BULB LOG 08.....23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022





Two more named storms have moved over us since last week but they came from the west, so the winds we experienced were not so severe this time, but they did bring heavy rain which turned to snow: that moment I captured in this picture. It was wild for a while and the snow built up quickly to around 5cms but then it went almost as quickly as it came.



It was too wild to go out to take pictures when the snow was at its deepest and during the night it turned back to rain which washed most of the snow away leaving just some scattered areas for me to record.

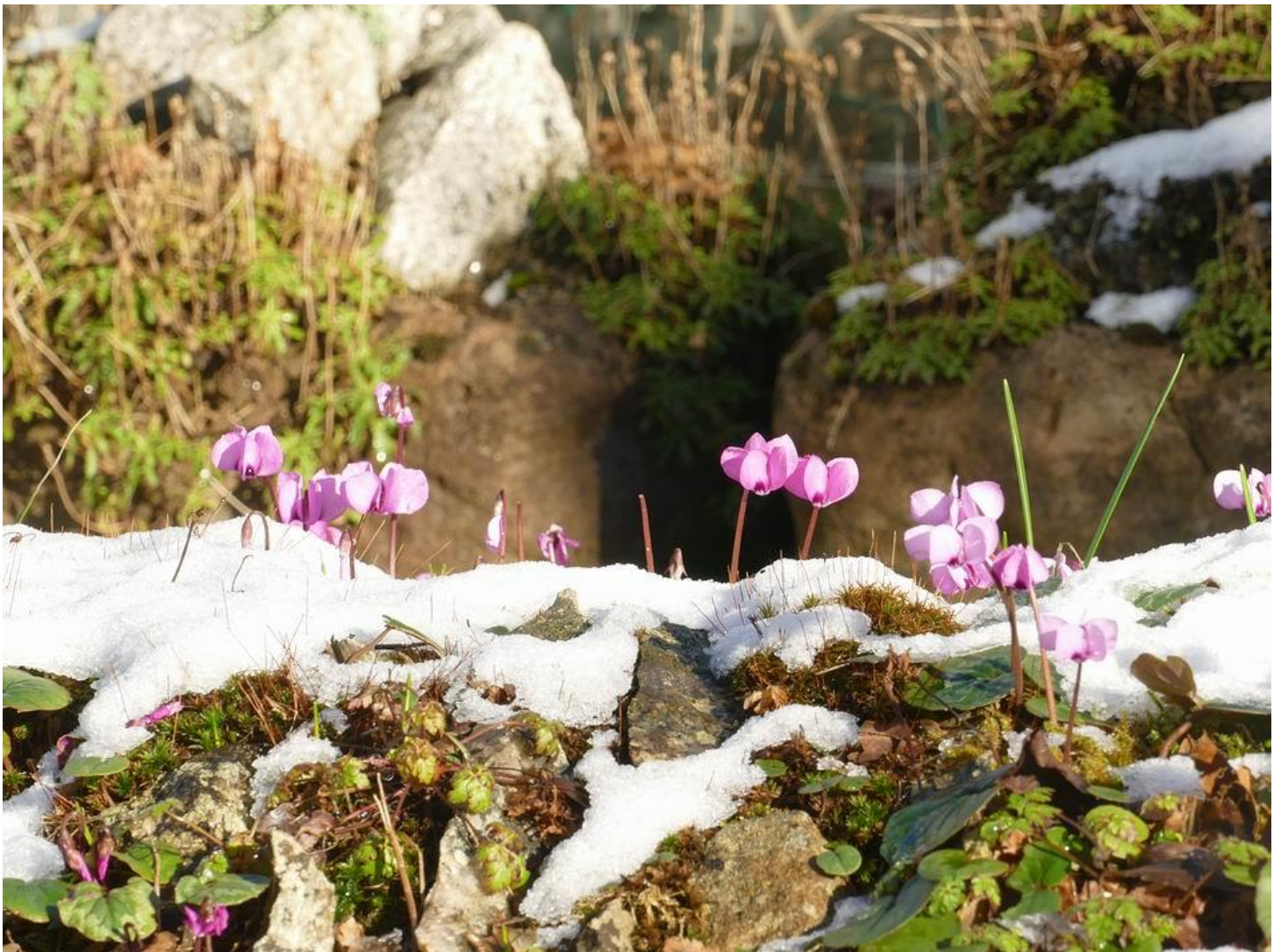


A few weeks on from the red pointed shoot emerging *Erythronium caucasicum* is now waiting for some sunny mild conditions to open its flower. This is always the earliest of this species to flower with us and in some years the light and temperature level have never reached levels required to open the flower and the bud withers without displaying its internal beauty. Because we have raised them from seed we have a range of other forms, most of which flower later when the weather conditions tend to be more favourable.





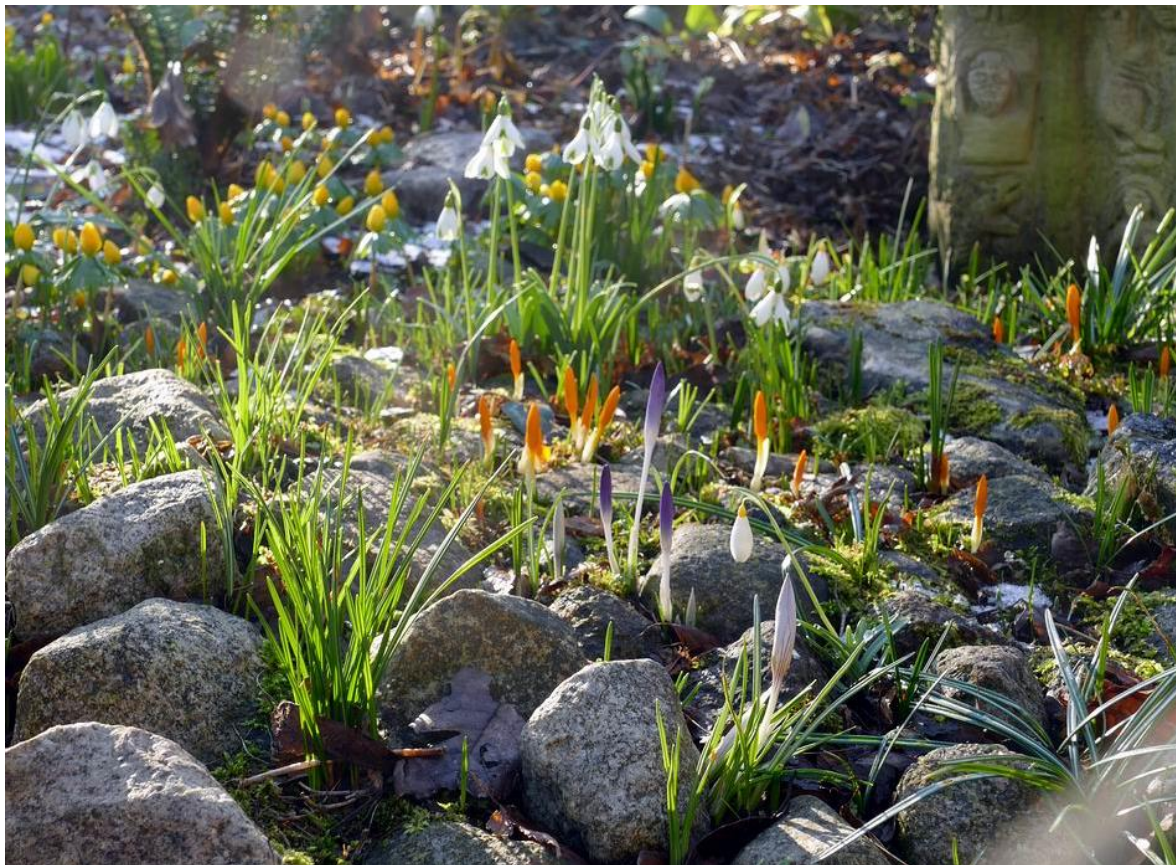
Snowdrops are perhaps at their best when seen flowering through the snow but they are not the only plant whose flowers come early and can survive being covered in snow.



**Cyclamen coum** flowers come out unscathed from under the snow.



Before they started to name storms we just called it winter and February has often been the month that we get most snow and indeed, we can get snow well into May, but the frequency of high winds is increasing.



The sudden melt of all that snow resulted in a flush of water flowing through the ground which is just what these early flowering bulbs need to fuel their rapid growth as they spring into flower. Crocus , Eranthis and Galanthus are the predominant genera in flower this early but will soon be joined by Narcissus, of which there are some buds hidden within the greenery shown in this picture. This is the cobble bed which is close to the

house so we can observe it through the windows and since I placed the cobbles some years ago to stop the mice especially from eating the crocus corms it gets better every year – at this time of year it is a reflection of the garden in miniature.



In between the storms we have enjoyed a lot of sunshine which has warmed the air sufficiently to allow the snowdrop flowers, such as '**Trumps**' to spread their outer green marked petals revealing the inner ones.



**Galanthus 'Dryad Gold Group'**



Another group of yellow snowdrops shining so brightly in the sunshine that it is difficult for a camera to capture .



We have a large number of Scottish cultivars many selected from the mass plantings at the great castle gardens and their size is just one of the variable features – compare the small *Galanthus plicatus* type in the foreground with the much larger hybrids behind.



**Galanthus plicatus type**



I like the **Galanthus 'Mighty Atom Group'** for their short stems which are topped by giant flowers.





There is now a mass flowering of the Narcissus from the Bulbocodium Group that we grow in pots in the bulb house and it is a lovely spectacle that I explore in the following sequence of images.



Their stems and foliage have sat up after I watered them last week but the sheer density of growth causes them to grow taller than they do in the other sand bed, where they are well spaced out and stay nice and short.



The paler flowers on the left are *Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Clumper' with *Narcissus bulbocodium* on the right.



The range of forms that we grow under the name *Narcissus bulbocodium* is illustrated by these two growing side by side.



We received **Narcissus 'Mondieu'** as a gift from a dear friend some years ago and it is well named because it has the biggest flowers that I have seen in this group: they are huge and stand out from the masses even where they are growing in the sand beds.



These are a few that I keep in a pot as a reference which give an indication of the size the span of the corona is fully 5cms across and it has an interesting scent.



In comparison the flowers on the *Narcissus bulbocodium* subsp. *praecox* var. *paucinervis* that featured last week are just less than 2.5cms across.



Growing in a sand bed the flowers of *Narcissus cantabricus* have a purity that makes them stand out from the many mixed hybrids.



These mature seedlings in a single pot shows the extremes of the range the hybrids can adopt, with colours ranging from almost white through to strong yellows and with as many variations in the shape of the corona, as the following images show.



Narcissus hybrid – the crumpled corona on the bottom right flower is not unusual and is not a fixed feature the flowers should open normally next year.



Narcissus forms and hybrids



Narcissus hybrid



Narcissus hybrids



**Narcissus forms and hybrids** – note the lobed corona of the flowers towards bottom.



While they all look superficially similar, close inspection is rewarded by endless variations within the flowers: one of the benefits along with increased health and vigour of bulbs raised from seed.

I have just read once again in the current issue of the RHS magazine *The Garden* the advice they churn out every year to deadhead your daffodils to encourage them to flower better next year. Over many years I have done

trials that show the bulbs (including Narcissus) setting seed, grow on for a significant number of weeks longer than those without seed: more than enough time to make up any extra energy required. Ironically in the same edition of *The Garden* there is an interesting article about the many Narcissus cultivars George Englehart raised in the late 19 century: how many of these would exist if he followed their advice? The fact is that many of the widely grown daffodil cultivars are unlikely to set any seed at all and if they do gardeners should accept them as a welcome gift from nature and either allow them to grow or pass them on. I do whole heartedly agree with the other part of their advice on letting the leaves die down naturally, only removing them when they are completely dry and yellow but leave the flower stem intact to do the same.



Moving back outside the sun is still shining, enabling the Snowdrop flowers to spread their skirts while dancing gently back and forwards in the wind - this shaking will also release some pollen from the salt cellar type anthers and hopefully we will be rewarded by some seed. Click here to check out the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary](#).