



BULB LOG 4.....28th January 2009



Hamamelis

It is not just bulbs that will give us flowers in the winter - there are many winter flowering shrubs to cheer us up such as Hamamelis 'Ruby Glow'. We have thought of this as a relatively small specimen as it was dwarfed by a Cotoneaster tree which it grew underneath but that was the tree that I cut down in December.



Garden View

Removing the large Cotoneaster has opened up the view (left) that faces you when you enter the garden from our seed frame area at the side of the house. It will allow a lot more light into the raised beds and trough area especially in the summer when the now removed tree cast a great shadow over them.

Tree stump

You can see the cut off tree stump in the middle of this bulb bed and the Hamamelis is to the left of the picture with the flowering branches well above the field of view.

The tree used to effectively cut the bed in two but now it looks like one large bed.

The far away part of the bed has become our “bung them in” bed an eclectic mix where we stick all sorts of bulbs that always seem to be left over at the end of a re-potting session or simply bulbs we are not sure where else to plant them.

Ideally I would like to remove the tree stump but it would be too big a disturbance to all the bulbs just now so I will wait until the summer comes round when the bulbs will be dormant before I make that decision. It will be a big dig and a lot of hard work as a thirty plus year old tree has a substantial root system so I suspect that it will stay there until it rots.



Snow drops

Among the bulbs already showing in this bed is this group of Galanthus looking very seasonal with some of the fallen red cotoneaster berries.



Galanthus elwesii

Elsewhere in the garden this lone Galanthus elwesii is bravely opening its flower in the short glimpse of direct sunlight it receives just now - it is one of my garden centre cheap purchases from a few years ago.



Eranthis schwefelglanz

A new plant to us is Eranthis schwefelglanz (translates to 'Sulphur Sheen') a paler colour form than any we have got and a welcome addition to our aconites. As we just got it last autumn (thank you, R.B) I decided to grow it in a pot for this year and when I saw it in an open frame I decided to move it into the protection of the bulb house to open the flower and keep it away from the slugs that are always after a winter snack when the frost lifts.



Eranthis pinnatifida

I also moved our pot of *Eranthis pinnatifida* inside at the same time for the same reasons. You may think that it has very tatty looking flowers but that is how it opens and then the petals expand and grow without out any form of protection such as a bud or a bract. When the flower is fully expanded I think it is the most beautiful of all the *Eranthis*.



Fritillaria seeds germinating

It is such an exciting time as every time I look something else is germinating like these pots of *Fritillaria* seeds that I was given by a kind friend. As I received them outside the time window for last season I saved them and sowed them with my other bulb seeds in September - as you can see I am now getting the start of what looks to be an excellent germination rate.



Fritillaria chitralensis shoots

I am very relieved to see these fine shoots on my pots of *Fritillaria chitralensis* appearing because you may remember last year I had a major problem and lost my biggest bulb to an attack of wet rot which almost completely destroyed it. I cut away all the rotten areas of the scale and then sliced up the small clean bits which, when placed in just moist sand, went on to produce some small bulbils - these are now also pushing up small green shoots. I also see from this picture that something, I suspect a small slug, has been having a nibble from the shoot on the right - I will put a stop to that.



Fritillaria davidii

The most extraordinary foliage you will ever see on a frit is that of *Fritillaria davidii*.

I suspect that it must be an ancient relic of the bulbs that evolved into what we know as fritillaria.

The bulbs are of a rice grain type more akin to the North American species than any Eurasian ones that I am familiar with.

The roots start to grow as early as June so it need to be kept moist all summer then increasing the amount of water given when the mass of leaves appear. I have not yet flowered this species but have seen its yellow flowers several times at Shows. They have a strange scent of guava.



Narcissus twin flower

Here are some more pictures of the Narcissus with twin flowers that I showed a few logs ago to show that I now have three stems all with two flowers on.

This is surely a confirmation that it is a genetic trait that will recur each year from a mature bulb and that it is not a simple a one-off mutation.



Narcissus twin flower



I am not sure that it is the most attractive looking narcissus variation that I have seen especially when both flowers are fully expanded as above.

It does however look quite nice when the first flower is fully out and the second one is just emerging like this.

I have been crossing it with some of my smaller flowered seedlings in this group as I think that two small flowers per stem could look nice.





Narcissus super plus scale

Friends who have visited us and seen for themselves the Narcissus super plus that I showed last week were stunned by its size and did not think that you got the full sense of the scale of this giant from the pictures I showed. I am making another attempt to show the size by comparing it to a small but normal sized Narcissus romieuxii flower.



Narcissus super plus

I am not sure if the second flower which is coming from another bulb is a clone or a separate seedling I will have to wait until it is fully expanded. I will however propagate only from the one bulb that way I can be absolutely confident that it will be clonal.

Crocus Colours



***biflorus isauricus*,**

***baytopiorum*,**

***korolkowii* 'Dark Throat'**

***reticulatus*,**

biflorus tauri

Many more Crocus flowers are showing their colours since last week and all we need now is a bit of warmth and sunshine for them to open. Unfortunately the sun is still very low in the sky and only hits the bulb houses for a few hours a day at most so I will have to be patient. I could move them into the warmth of the kitchen to open them as I sometimes do but I am reluctant to move the smaller 7cms pots because I know the roots will be out the bottom and into the bed of sand and moving them around will damage the roots and be a check to growth at this sensitive stage.



Crocus biflorus ssp isauricus

Within 30 minutes of taking the pictures above a shaft of light from the low sun struck this pot of *Crocus biflorus ssp isauricus* raising the temperature enough to encourage it to flex its floral segments enough to see inside the beautiful flowers.



Crocus biflorus* ssp *isauricus

Looking down inside the flowers you can see the crimson style and the anthers with their golden pollen.



Crocus imperati* *suaveolens

The same warm sunshine revealed the flowers of *Crocus imperati suaveolens* in all their beautiful sweet smelling splendour for a short while.