



BULB LOG 25.....23rd June 2010



Corydalis 'Craigton Blue'

You cannot fail to be attracted to the splash of blue provided by Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' and its seedlings.





Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' Seedling

It is not just our eyes that they entice but also our noses as they give off a strong scent reminiscent of honey that filters all through the garden on a warm day.

I always take time to observe the many seedlings to appreciate the variations that occur and the picture above is one that stands out as a good strong form. You will notice that it has red stems topped off by a good number of strong blue flowers.

The close up on the left shows that these flowers also have a good sized bottom lip giving the impression of a large flower.

Compare this plant with the seedling below and you will start the range of variation that can be seen in this group of seedlings.





Corydalis 'Craigton Blue' Seedling 2

The picture above shows that this seedling is smaller and much less showy than most of its siblings.

There are relatively fewer flowers per spike and they are significantly smaller than the form shown above.

I am reluctant to select and name any more of these plants as I am just enjoying them in our own garden but I am tempted to propagate up the good red stemmed form and distribute it to a few gardens on a trail basis.

I believe it is very important when selecting seedlings for breeding not to discount the smaller less showy forms such as the one on the left because they may be the ones that can pass on an essential gene that gives hardiness or resistance to disease or fungal attack.



Corydalis capitata seed pods

The nice fat seed pods on *Corydalis capitata* show that it has been well fertilised. As I was not aware of many insects visiting it when it was in flower; I think it must have evolved some method of self fertilisation.



Corydalis pseudobarbispela seed pods

Unfortunately it is not such good news on *Corydalis pseudobarbispela*. Despite my best efforts with a paint brush only a few pods show any signs of swelling indicating they may contain seed. The pods that are swelling and remaining on the plant do not look as though they will contain seeds. I'm hopeful!



Delphinium sp.

Many years ago I received some seeds collected in the USA of a so called dwarf Delphinium species. It grows well enough and every year it produces these lovely bright blue flowers.



Bulb bed

However as you will see from this picture rather than being dwarf the Delphinium is somewhat sprawling and inclined to be blown over in our strong winds. Provided the stout hollow stems are not completely snapped off when they are blown over they continue to produce masses of blue flowers to provide interest in the bulb bed through the summer when the bulbs are resting.



Bulb bed February

This is the same bed in February when the bulbs were just emerging - it then went on to be a mass of mixed bulbs which are now all retreating to their summer rest so it is good to have plants, like the Delphinium, that will provide interest through the summer until the autumn bulbs start to appear.



Fritillaria alburyana root ball

It is really too early to start repotting the bulbs – ideally they should be repotted just before they get the first autumn storm – but I can never resist checking to see how they have fared underground. Also when we have so many pots to do I have little choice but to start repotting in July if I am going to stand any chance of getting through them all. I do pick certain ones out for an early check and I am always pleased to find the remains of a good root growth like the one on this *Fritillaria alburyana* above.



Fritillaria alburyana bulbs

I was a bit concerned at how early a lot of the Frits lost their leaves and went into their resting period this year. I am very relieved to find that these *Fritillaria alburyana* bulbs had, despite their apparently short time of leaf growth, managed to grow to replace themselves and produce offsets.



Crocus mathewii

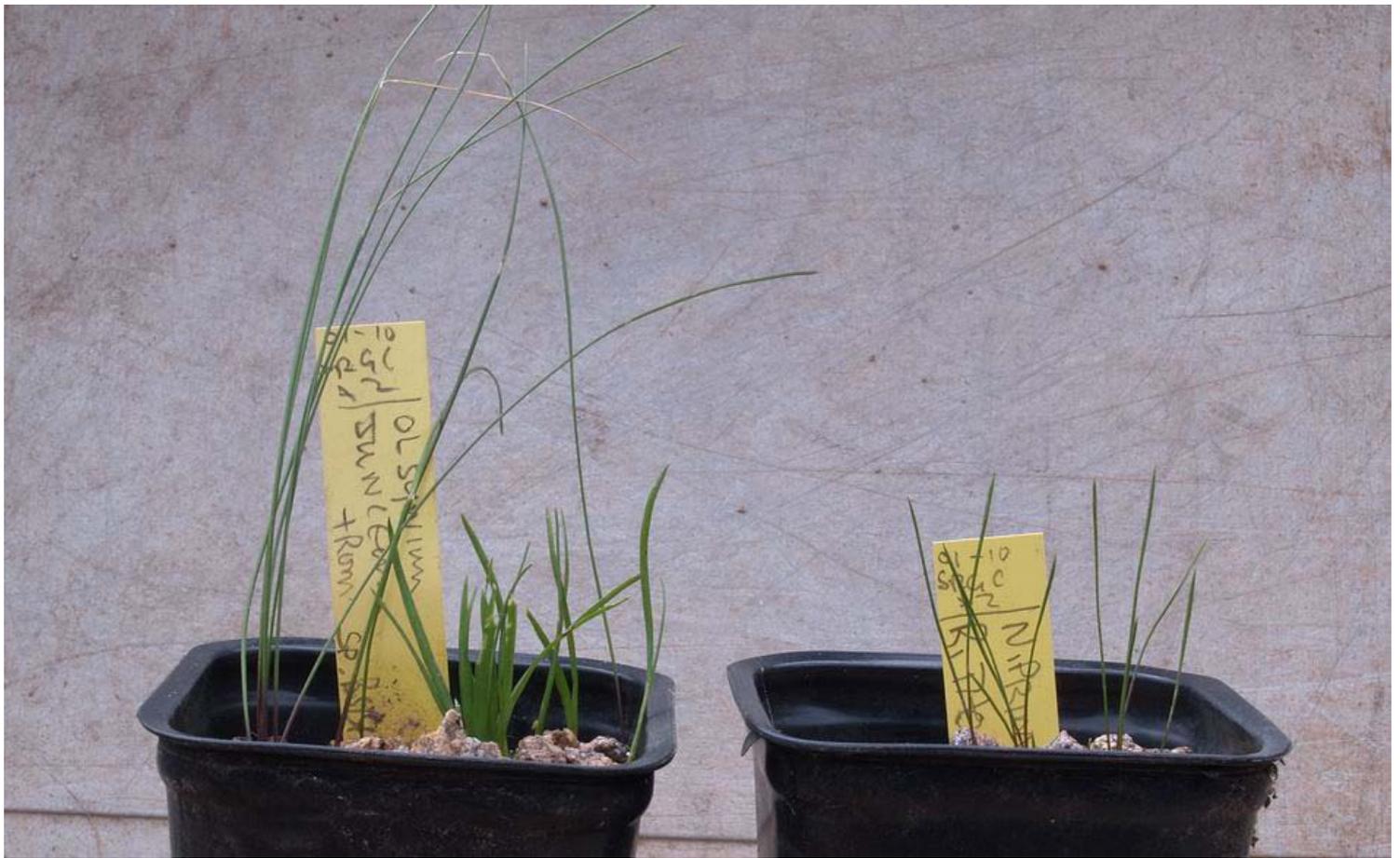
It tends to be the rare and more difficult to cultivate bulbs that I check on first because they are a good indicator – if they have done well then most of the others should also have increased.

This Crocus mathewii corm has really excelled itself by producing no less than seven offsets.



Crocus mathewii corms and seeds

Here you can see the best result I have ever had from a single Crocus mathewii corm – one flowering corm, seven offsets and a pod full of seeds. This was a seed raised corm so I hope that this is not a freak year of productivity and that it will continue to increase so freely.



Seedling twins

You may remember early in the year I showed my method of sowing small quantities of seeds from the seed exchanges together in a single pot to save space - here is an update of two of them. On the left both the Olsynium and the Romulea have germinated and you can see that they are easily distinguishable by the leaves but more importantly for my method to work they are easily separated by their different looking bulbs. Only the Romulea has germinated in the pot on the right so I will just grow it on to suit the Romulea and hope that the Narcissus will germinate next spring. As a general rule I never replot bulb seeds until at least the end of the second year of growth anyway so the Narcissus will get another chance to germinate.



Lilium mackliniae

One of my favourite lilies is the very beautiful *Lilium mackliniae*.



Lilium mackliniae

Unfortunately it is like the *Nomocharis* -very susceptible to virus and you can see the early symptoms of infection in this flower namely the pink blotchy appearance.



Lilium mackliniae

This is a detail showing the leaves of the same plant which also have the same blotchy appearance indicating the presence of a viral infection. If left these plants will, over the next few years, show increasing amounts of the blotching and streaking of the leaves and flowers as well as increasing signs of distortion and most plants die after about three years of infection. Unfortunately virus is all around us and you can find many infected plants of all types for sale in garden centres around the country. Many of these plants are robust enough not to succumb to the virus infection: some show few symptoms when they are growing strongly but they remain and are propagated. Then they are sold by the thousands and become carriers allowing aphids, slugs, and many other vectors to act to cross infect other plants especially in a town gardens. I will take seed from this infected plant before lifting and destroying the bulbs.



Lilium mackliniae

This flower and the one below show how beautiful this species is and the subtle variation that you can get in colour of the flowers. Luckily this lily produces plenty of seeds that can reach flowering size in as little as three years. There is a very dark flowered form that has been introduced and I hope to show it in a year or so because I have seedlings growing on.

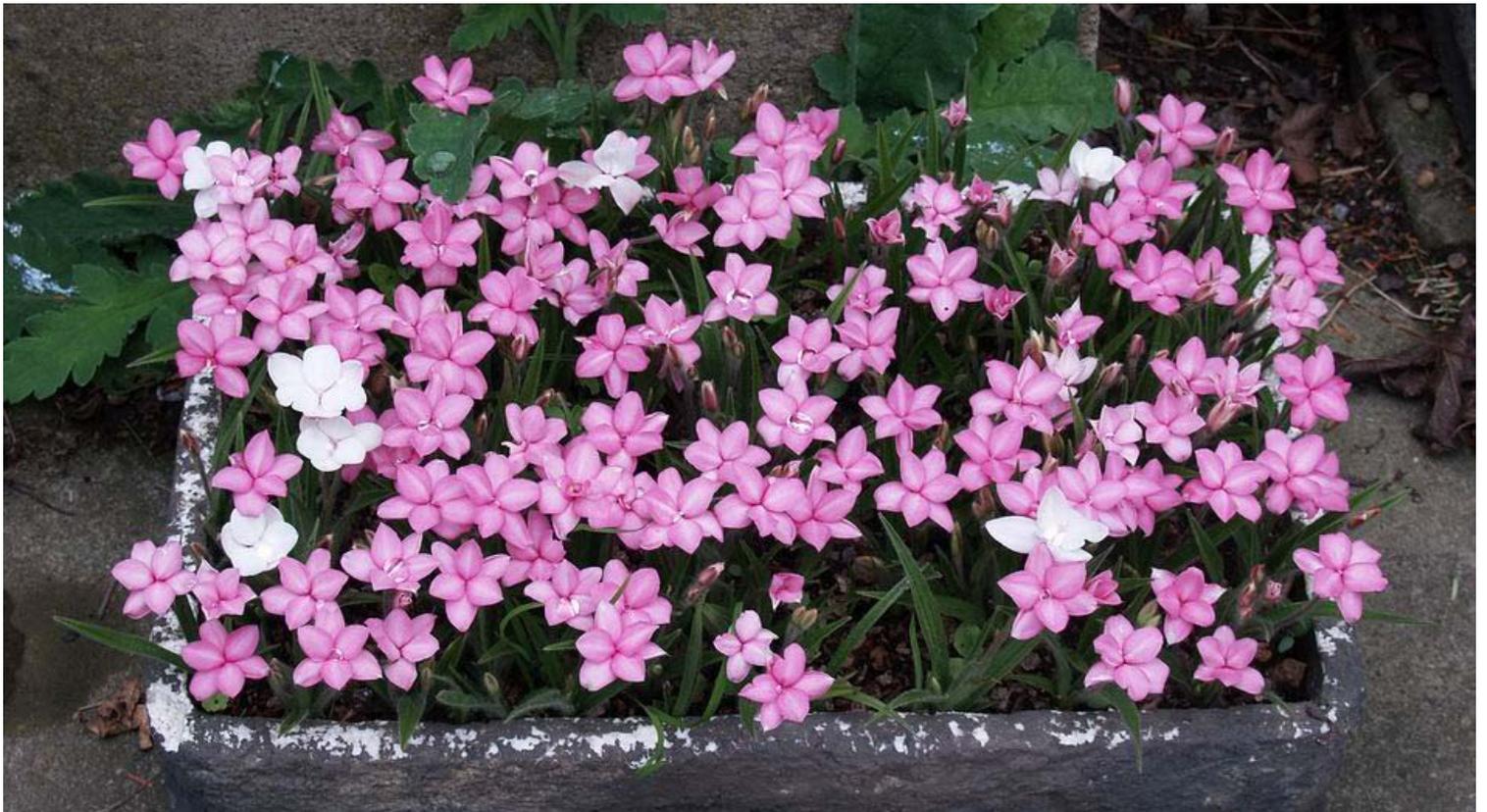


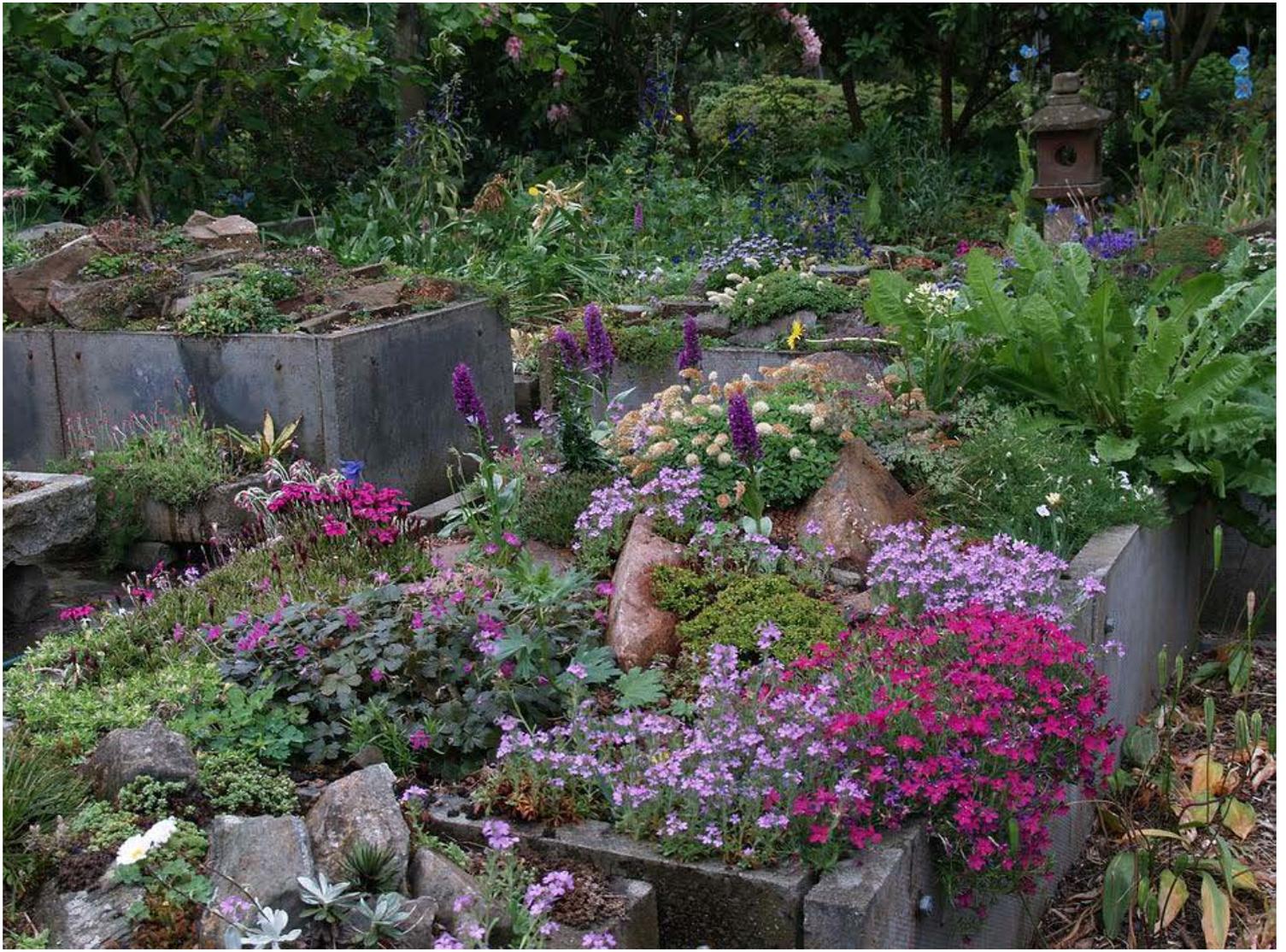
Lilium mackliniae



Rhodohypoxis baurii

Above and below are two of my many small troughs of *Rhodohypoxis baurii* which are just reaching their full display. I keep them dry all winter and when they flower depends on when I bring them out and water them: it was well into the third week of May this year and so they are perhaps a bit late into flower. These fish box troughs are getting a bit bashed, revealing the white polystyrene. This is not surprising considering the amount of times they have been moved around over the last several years. I could retouch the worn areas with more paint but it is my intention to replace all these troughs with the fish box mark two version that is covered in a layer of mortar.





Two pictures of the garden to finish off this week's bulb log show another view across the trough area and a mass of self sown plants adding colour to the gravel areas.

