



BULB LOG 42.....20th October 2010



**Colchicum and Crocus
with Snow**

I had intended to start this week's Bulb Log with the Cyclamen picture below but I wanted to share the scene we awoke to this October 20th morning.

Winter is sending us a reminder that it is not far away as we had a heavy frost and some snow fall this morning.

This means that many jobs that I have not yet managed to do such as moving the troughs of Rhodohypoxis into the bulb house will now have to be done quickly.

Bulb house





Cyclamen mirabile



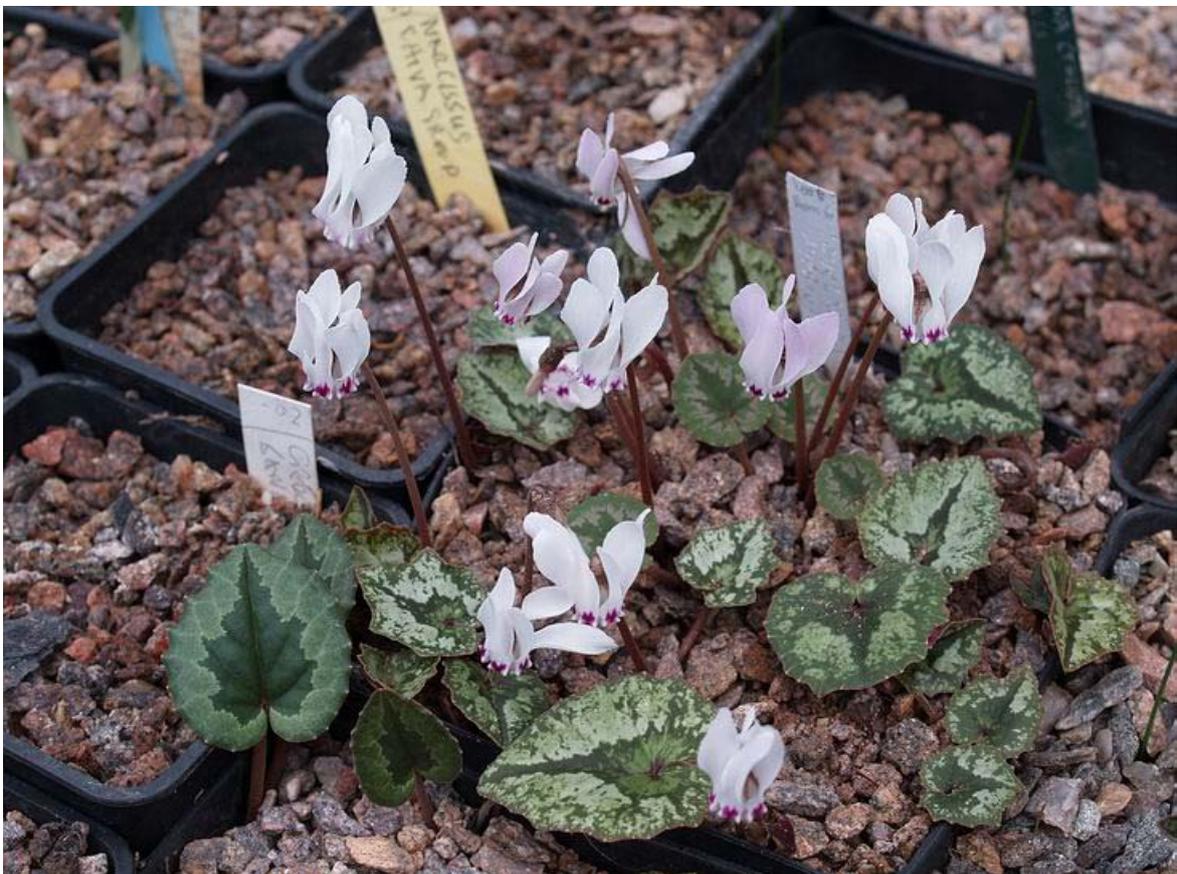
Cyclamen mirabile flowers

This Cyclamen is my favourite of this wonderful genus and as well as wonderful variation in patterns provided by the leaves the flowers offer different shapes. Some short and wide others long and narrow all with the lovely toothing along the edge.



Cyclamen cyprium

The one thing that could improve Cyclamen mirabile would be if it had the wonderful scent that Cyclamen cyprium provides us with. I have often said that if you could bottle this scent you could make a fortune – it is so relaxing - take a good sniff and a wave of calm flows through your body - it is almost as good as the scent of Cyclamen purpurascens.



Cyclamen cyprium

This is a pot of seedlings as you can see from the different leaf markings displayed and the eagle eyed among you may notice a Cyclamen mirabile interloper has crept in.



Cyclamen graecum

Now I don't want you to be laughing but this is the first flower I have managed to get on a *Cyclamen graecum* for a very long time. I have given all my *C. graecum* away to homes in the warmer south in the past but I can never resist the temptation to try once more to see if this time I can raise a form whose flower buds will ripen in our cool summers. Compared to the magnificent plants covered in flowers I see on the Forum it is pathetic but it is a step in the right direction.



Sternbergia sicula and *S. greuteriana*

The annual *Sternbergia* debate has been going on in the Forum for a while now and the next few pictures which were taken a few weeks ago show two of the contenders in the discussion as to whether there are three species, *S.lutea*, *S.sicula* and *S.greuteriana* or just one variable species.



Sternbergia greuteriana

I received the plant [left] as *Sternbergia greuteriana* and there are some differences including the fact that the flowers remain open at night between it and the pot of *S. sicula* [pictured to the left above] but I am far from convinced that we only have one polymorphic species covering all the plants we grow under the tree taxa.



Sternbergia greuteriana

This is the plant that I have grown for a long time as *Sternbergia greuteriana* it is much smaller with very exerted stamens and I can see that if you crossed this with the familiar *S. lutea* you would get a hybrid swarm with the characteristics seen in all the other forms that I grow – just a thought.



Crocus speciosus and Colchicum agrippinum

This is a typical Autumnal scene in the garden with the low sun providing back light through the flowers of *Crocus speciosus* and *Colchicum agrippinum*. When photographing into the light like this it is difficult to avoid flaring on the camera lens and you can just make out some flaring at the bottom left of the picture. I managed to avoid flaring across the whole scene by shading the lens with my hand which has just encroached into the top right hand side of the picture. Hopefully your eyes were so focused on the main subject that you would not have noticed this vignetting effect if I had not pointed it out.



Crocus speciosus

I got this particular very dark form of *Crocus speciosus* from Alastair McKelvie some years ago after I admired it in his garden- it is by far the darkest form I have ever seen.

It may be that it is an old clone that should have a cultivar name but I cannot be sure.



Crocus speciosus

This is the open flower of the Crocus speciosus above showing its wonderful rich markings and its deep orange multi-divided and branched style.



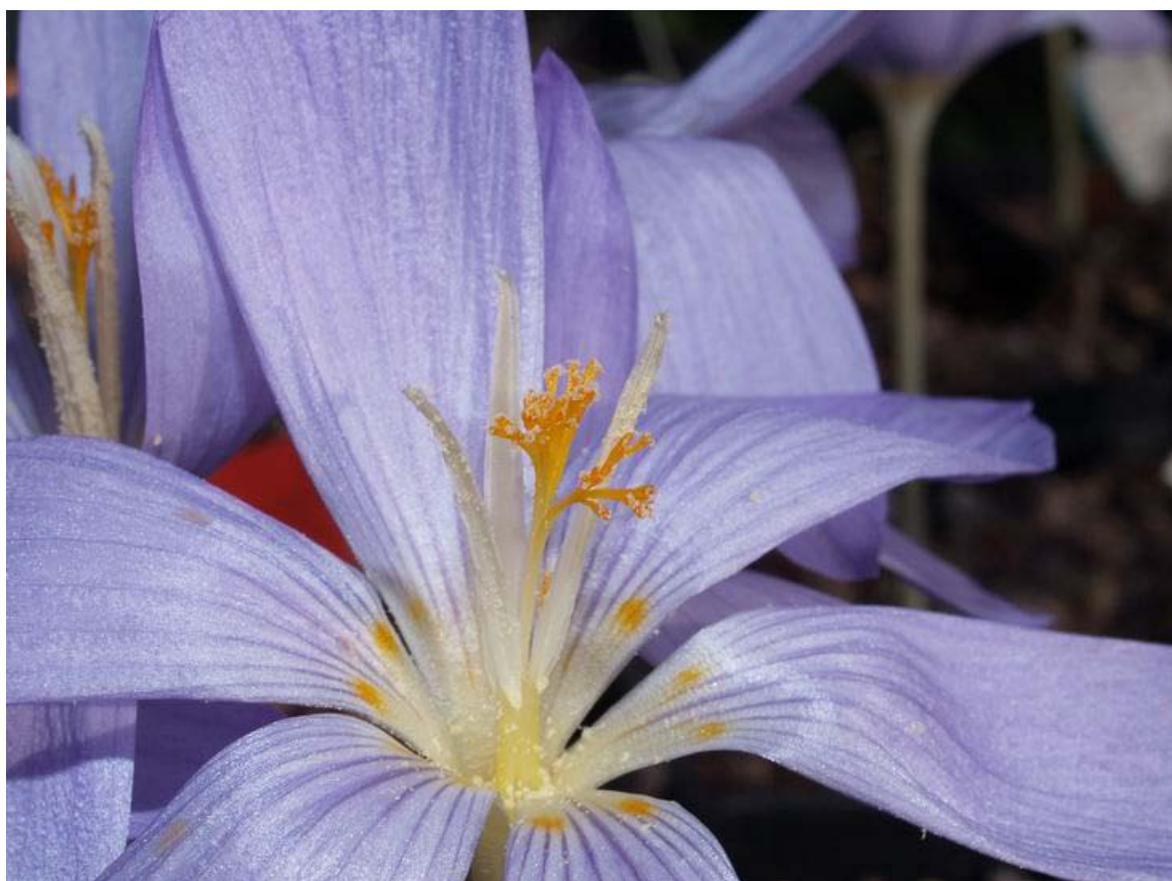
Crocus speciosus albus

I have also grown this beautiful Crous for many years and it grows and increases well in both pots and the open garden. I first received it under the name of Crocus speciosus albus but I believe that this is a hybrid most likely to be between C. speciosus and C. pulchellus - it looks just like the plant called Crocus 'Zephyr' which I suspect it is.



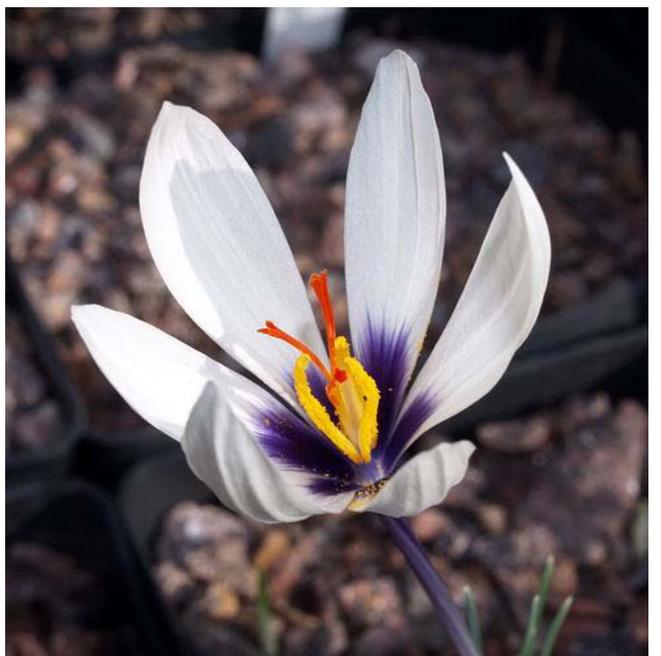
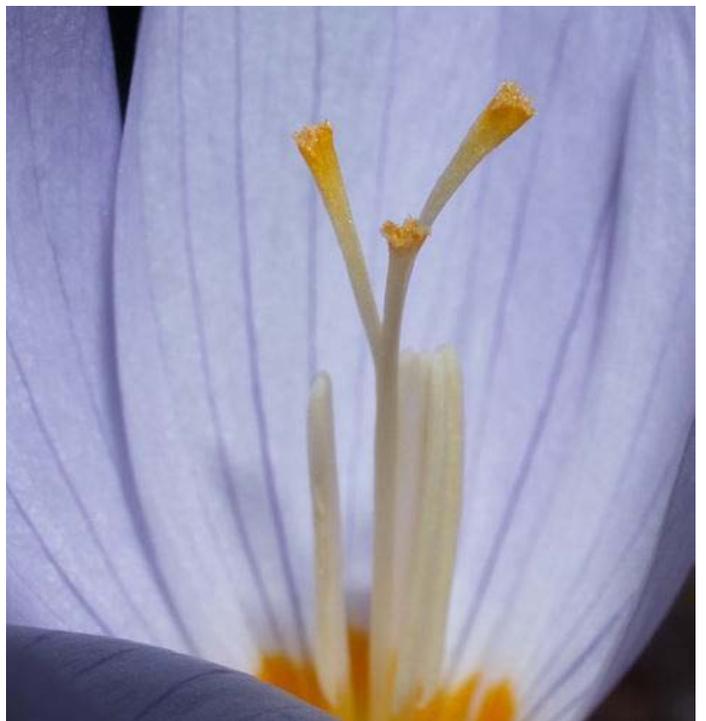
Bulb house

There are a lot of fine Crocus in flower in the Bulb house and it is a real delight to spend an hour or two studying them and inhaling the wonderful perfumes many of them provide on a sunny day.



Crocus kotschyanus

I have a lot of forms of *Crocus kotschyanus* mostly raised from seed and many are from seed taken from our own plants. As I examine them I notice that the typical 'M' shaped orange marking of the species has been reduced to two dots in some forms like the one above – also the style is more divided and I am wondering if some have hybridized with another species or if this is within the variation expected from this species. See more *C. kotschyanus* seedling styles below.



Crocus mathewii

Crocus mathewii showing some variation in petal width and depth of colour between seedlings.



Crocus caspius

I am always attracted to *Crocus caspius* even though it shows little variation in its seedlings. The colour variation seen between the two flowers above is as much as I have noticed and this often a temporary effect that disappears after a few days.



Crocus caspius

Looking into the bright orange/yellow flowers of *Crocus caspius* you may notice something different about the flower at the back left.



Crocus caspius

It is another Crocus with extra floral segments and anthers. I called this a mutation previously but a learned friend has pointed out that this phenomenon should be called a modification because it is temporary effect- a mutation would be genetic and recur each year.



Crocus caspius and Crocus niveus

This picture shows very clearly the difference in scale between *C. caspius* and the much taller *C. niveus*.



Crocus niveus

I am not the only one to be enjoying the beauty and scent of the Crocus and it is interesting to note that it is always the most scented species that the hover flies visit. They too are relaxed by the aroma therapy making it easy, with a little patience, to get photographs of them

