



BULB LOG 40..... 3rd October 2012



Last week as I wrote the bulb log I mentioned that we were being battered by the most terrible storm. I sat and watched our trees and shrubs, still heavy with leaves, getting bent nearly horizontal in the 75 to 80 miles per hour wind and was relieved that only a few branches were ripped off of the Acer you see behind me and some others.

Many of you may have seen part of Aberdeen, called Foot Dee but known locally as Fittie, covered in a deep layer of sea spume on the [TV news](#) - we know it was shown as far away as Australia. The foam only lasted a day and did little damage to property but as it receded it revealed that many rabbits had been drowned in the foam.



Wood pigeon eggs

Unfortunately there is a wood pigeon nest in the tree above and the eggs were blown out. Unlike most birds Pigeons may lay eggs at any time of the year and this enthusiastic pair have had several broods already this year.



Most herbaceous plants were also flattened by the powerful wind like these *Dactylorhiza* which stood upright the day before. However as most of these plants are in the process of going underground for the winter no lasting harm will result. I have commented before that this has been the worst year I can remember for seed with very few plants producing any viable seed and that includes the *Dactylorhiza*.



The Colchicum I pictured last week also got flattened but the flowers do not give up and continue to open and close as they react to the sun and any warmth and a steady supply of new blooms emerge daily.



Colchicum agrippinum

There are still plenty of Colchicums yet to come into flower - like Colchicum agrippinum which is seen here sharing its garden space with Hepatica leaves. Flowering at different seasons they make good companions. The hepatica leaves both set off and help support the Colchicum flowers and the

leaves of this colchicum are not too big in the spring to bother the Hepatica.



It is at this time of year with so many plants retreating for the winter that you start to appreciate the structural plants in the garden more - and how well they have grown in the cool wet summer. Just look at the growth on *Rhododendron makenoi* in the foreground. This plant comes from an area of high rainfall and it can get a bit stressed even in Aberdeen by a lack of summer moisture - I notice this most in the leaves going yellowish. I put this down to the fact that as the plants have evolved in such a wet region they get a constant supply of nutrient during the growing season and so they suffer in dry conditions. I often have to apply a foliar feed to this species to rectify the nutrient deficiency but not this year.



Above - yellowing *Uvularia* leaves contrast nicely with the emerging *Cyclamen hederifolium* flowers while below you can see the large red fruits of *Podophyllum* add a stunning effect along with some *Arisaema* berries.





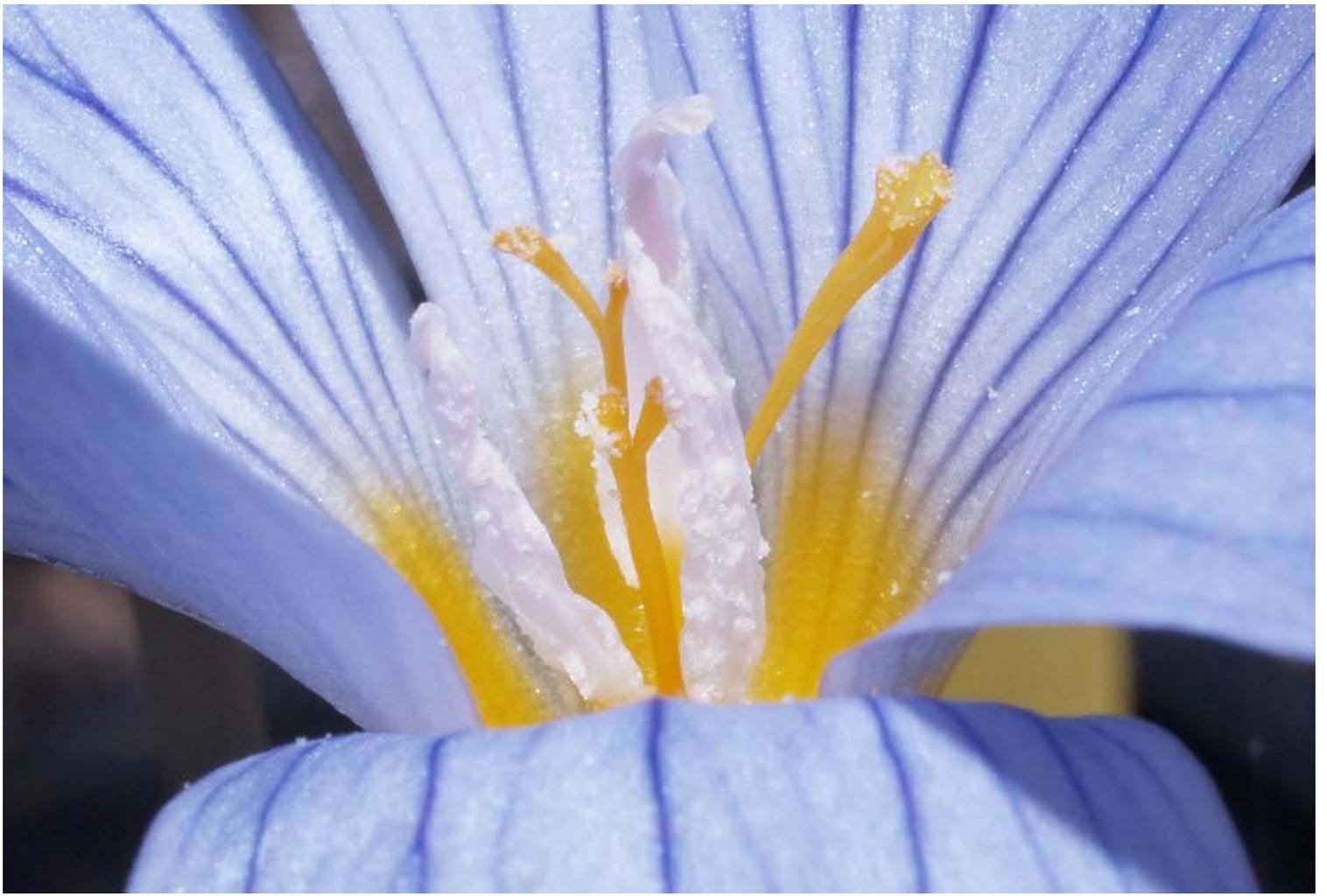
More autumn colours are seen here with Cyclamen and Colchicums providing plenty of flowering interest.



Crocus in the sand beds include *C. nudiflorus albus* and *C. speciosus*.



No garden should be without some of these easily grown autumn flowering bulbs.



I find most Crocus irresistible with both the structure and colour combinations adding to their beauty. Pure white pollen, golden yellow style branches and gorgeous blue floral segments - what a combination.



Crocus pulchellus



Another wonderful colour combination and structure is seen in this detail of **Eucomis schiffii**. I am hopeful that the few swollen seed pods indicate that I have at least some seed to look forward to.



Fuschia procumbens

Fuschia procumbens has survived for over 25 years in one of our peat beds and again it displays a stunning colour combination that can only be appreciated by careful inspection.





Meconopsis betonicifolia

Perhaps not what you would expect to see flowering at this time of year but with a constant supply of moisture and cool conditions some plants have set seed and just kept on growing.

Due to the unusually cool wet summer conditions many plants are repeat flowering or putting on a second spurt of growth this year.

This same plant did this last year so there is obviously a genetic inclination in this clone to flower again in autumn. When you witness this you can see how over a very long time scale of natural selection some plants, such as Crocus and Colchicums, have spring and autumn flowering relatives.



Meconopsis seed pods

Where ever you look there are photo opportunities and you can capture these better by knowing how to use the numerous functions on your camera and how they will affect the picture you take. I used flash to both push the background back, highlight the Meconopsis seed pods and get sharpness through maximum depth of field. Last weekend around 150 of us had a wonderful time at the SRGC Discussion Weekend in Dumfries where I gave a photographic workshop to encourage people to learn how to use their cameras to best advantage. I used a



PowerPoint presentation for the first hour to demonstrate the changes that the different settings will make and how having control of these gives you greater creative freedom then we got exclusive access to the Show Hall to put the lessons into practice. Here a group get to grips with how changing the camera settings, such as white balance, can dramatically change your picture. The 18percent grey card acts as a neutral background to isolate the subject removing the clutter of the show hall from the picture. If you have never been to one of our weekends I would strongly recommend that you consider coming - a warm friendly welcome awaits you. Next year we move into the Highlands as we take

over 1 or 2 hotels in Grantown-on-Spey - full details will be published in the January Journal. Follow this link to the [forum](#) for many pictures and more on this year's weekend.



Last picture for this week is yet another colourful vignette that you will find in the autumn garden - always have your camera with you.....