



BULB LOG 52.....24th December 2014



Crocus laevigatus is the star turn on the opening page - the ongoing succession of flowers will take advantage of any bright, mild spells throughout the winter months to open, sharing their wonderful scent. With this, Bulb Log 52 of 2014, another cycle is completed. As gardeners we understand more than many the cyclical nature of things as each has its season and each season repeats itself every year but we also observe from the plants that each year is different. Subtle or extreme changes in weather have a big influence on when or how well our plants will perform for us and as I check back I see that the flowering of these early Narcissus is behind that of last year but ahead of many other years. This week saw the shortest day and next week will see the start of our New Year but for many of the bulbs the annual cycle started with the autumn storm, in our case that is on the 1st September so these plants are already four months into their year.



The Narcissus will be the mainstay in the bulb houses for the next few months with more buds appearing every day and flowers opening slowly as the weather permits. It is always exciting as new seedlings come into flower and I can observe their subtle differences and characters.

On the left is **Narcissus 'Camoro'** a great hybrid that flowers every year for us and it is fertile, both setting seed as well as pollinating other flowers. One of the many good characteristics is it has a fine sturdy stem that stays upright unlike many other forms that have weak floppy stems.



Narcissus 'Camoro'



We have derived so many forms from the original **Narcissus romieuxii JCA 805** introduction but this one with the very wide flat-faced flower is an original increased vegetatively over the years.

Narcissus romieuxii

There are so many variations to the flower shape and colour in **Narcissus romieuxii** from the wide open-faced form above to more funnel shaped forms seen on the right and everything in between.



Narcissus romieuxii



When you grow the Bulbocodium section *Narcissus* together you will get all sorts of hybrids occurring. This is a pot of seedlings whose parents include *Narcissus romieuxii*, *N.cantabricus*, *N.albidus* and *N. bulbocodium* and possibly more!



These are two more of the seedlings: one, with coloured filaments and style, tending towards *Narcissus romieuxii* and the other with white filaments and style showing the influence of *Narcissus cantabricus*.



Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger'

I named Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger' a few years ago – among its features are the petals are a slightly darker colour than the corona when the flower is fresh the corona reminded me of the shape of a bell when viewed from the side, see below.



Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger'



Narcissus seedlings



Our weather continues to be very erratic one day it is freezing, then wet, then mild so we have to take our chances to work in the garden. While I am happy to leave smaller leaves to break down naturally on some of the beds the large leaves, when they are wet, can form dense laminated mats making it difficult for some shoots to get up especially tiny seedlings.



I took the opportunity of a dry day to get out my leaf vacuum, which both collects and shreds the leaves, to clear some beds.

Lifting the leaves
reveals many shoots
that are now exposed
– having removed
their protective layer.



Helleborus shoots



Trillium shoots



Lifted and shredded the leaves are returned to the same bed as they now make a perfect mulch that will not form dense laminated layers but will simply break down slowly, feeding the soil.



As I round off another year of the Bulb Log I will bring you up to date on the progress of the seeds that I sowed prematurely which then went on to germinate before winter. As you can see they are doing well aided by the milder than normal weather we have had – I feel they are now large enough to survive a cold period.



This year also saw the plants becoming the subject for my art for the first time, other than photography - I have completed around 80 A2 sized mixed media drawings of both garden and wild subjects seen in the lanes.



It seems that I will get a week off as next Wednesday is still in 2014 and I have already written 52 logs this has only happened once before in the 12 years.

The next Bulb log will be online on Wednesday 7th January until then I wish you all Seasons Greetings.....