



BULB LOG 44.....4th November 2015





Colchicum 'Rosy Wonder'

It is the changes within the garden that I enjoy the most because these involve me in decisions and activity. The routine jobs such as clearing the leaves, cutting the hedges are necessary but I much prefer it when I am involved creatively making a new bed or renewing an old one as we have been doing over the last few years both in the front and back garden. Creating a new bed from scratch involves the creative processes but it is often more of a challenge to regenerate a mature or overgrown planting. Over the last year I have been slowly planting into the areas of the front garden that we opened

up and now we are seeing the results. The gloriously colourful carpet of autumn leaves is lifted by the appearance of the flowers of Colchicum 'Rosy Wonder' a new cultivar I was given to try out – in the background you can see a white Cyclamen. You may also notice the leaves of Gallium odoratum which runs through the front garden creating a lovely green carpet topped by the white flowers in the spring and summer without inhibiting any of the other plants .



This is one of the half-price Cyclamen cultivars that I bought at the supermarket a month or so ago – these mostly end up as 'house plants' where they can look very attractive for a short time however the atmosphere and temperatures that we keep our homes at to be comfortable for humans are way too warm for these plants, they prefer much cooler conditions.



It is interesting to see how the various Cyclamen cultivars are faring in the different environments, the ones in the front garden are doing reasonably well as are the ones in the container by the front door, that featured a few weeks ago, but the ones that are performing the best are the two I planted into the bulb house sand plunge. The biggest difference is that we have many more flowers open on the ones in the bulb house. I do not

expect these Cyclamen cultivars will survive long term in the garden nor am I sure that I would want them to as I much prefer the species that we grow but I do not want to become a plant snob and I could not resist the bargain!



This is one of the changes that keep me interested as I experiment with different ways of growing bulbs. It will be interesting to see how the growth of the bulbs planted here compare to the same bulbs growing in pots. As there are no labels here knowing what the plants are will challenge both my memory and observation.



Already I am seeing buds on the Narcissus planted into the sand which are more advanced than those in pots, they obviously are enjoying the freedom for their roots to grow out along with a more consistent level of moisture.



Narcissus cantabricus foliosus is usually the first to flower for us and this one in the sand plunge is flowering well ahead of those in pots.



Narcissus cantabricus foliosus

As they are opening the flowers of *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* are a creamy white turning pure white after a few days.

In the background of the picture above you can see the drift wood and plastic mesh that the *Tropaeolum azureum* is growing up.

The flower on the right is one of my 'found seedlings' that is one of the many that grew from seed shed into the sand plunge. I can only speculate about its parentage but am confident that this is one of the hybrids between *Narcissus romieuxii* and *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus*.



**Sternbergia
lutea**

I have planted all sorts of bulbs in the sand from seeds to flowering sized bulbs hoping that each day will bring new surprises. The *Sternbergia lutea* were planted as full sized bulbs just a few months ago. I am interested to see if I can get them to flower better than they do in pots when they have the relative freedom of the sand plunge.



Sternbergia lutea



Galanthus reginae olgae



***Crocus pallasii* 'Homeri'**

I can be sure of the name *Crocus pallasii* 'Homeri' as this was a kind gift that I received from a friend at the recent SRGC Discussion Weekend and what a beautiful *Crocus* it is.



Crocus pallasii 'Homeri'



I hope that by growing it in the sand and taking the time to pollinate it with a paint brush that I will get some seeds to help us perpetuate this beauty.

I am not the only thing pollinating the Crocus – there are plenty of hoverflies also being attracted to their charms as you can see on these Crocus speciosus xantholaimos flowers.

Crocus speciosus xantholaimos



Crocus ochroleucus albus



Crocus ochroleucus normally has a yellow throat but this is a fine form which has a white throat.



Crocus goulimyi 'Sofia Agia' MJ9562

Most Crocus species exhibit variation and this form of [Crocus goulimyi](#) introduced by [Melvyn Jope](#) has particularly dark and well-feathered markings.



As a rule I do not lift pots out of the plunge when they are in growth I try and photograph them as best I can in situ, however I wanted to both photograph this Crocus against a grey background and also to check that the bulbs were making good roots this year. Last year I slipped up and did not supply as much watering as I should have resulting in poor bulb growth. I am not making that mistake this year: I have been watering all the pots where leaf growth is present regularly

which as you can see, along with the scattering of the N-P-K 7-7-7 fertiliser that I added, is resulting in a healthy root system. To ensure the roots were back in the sand I watered heavily while replacing the pot to wash them in.



This is a more typical form of *Crocus goulimyi*.

Crocus goulimyi



Crocus goulimyi leucandrum

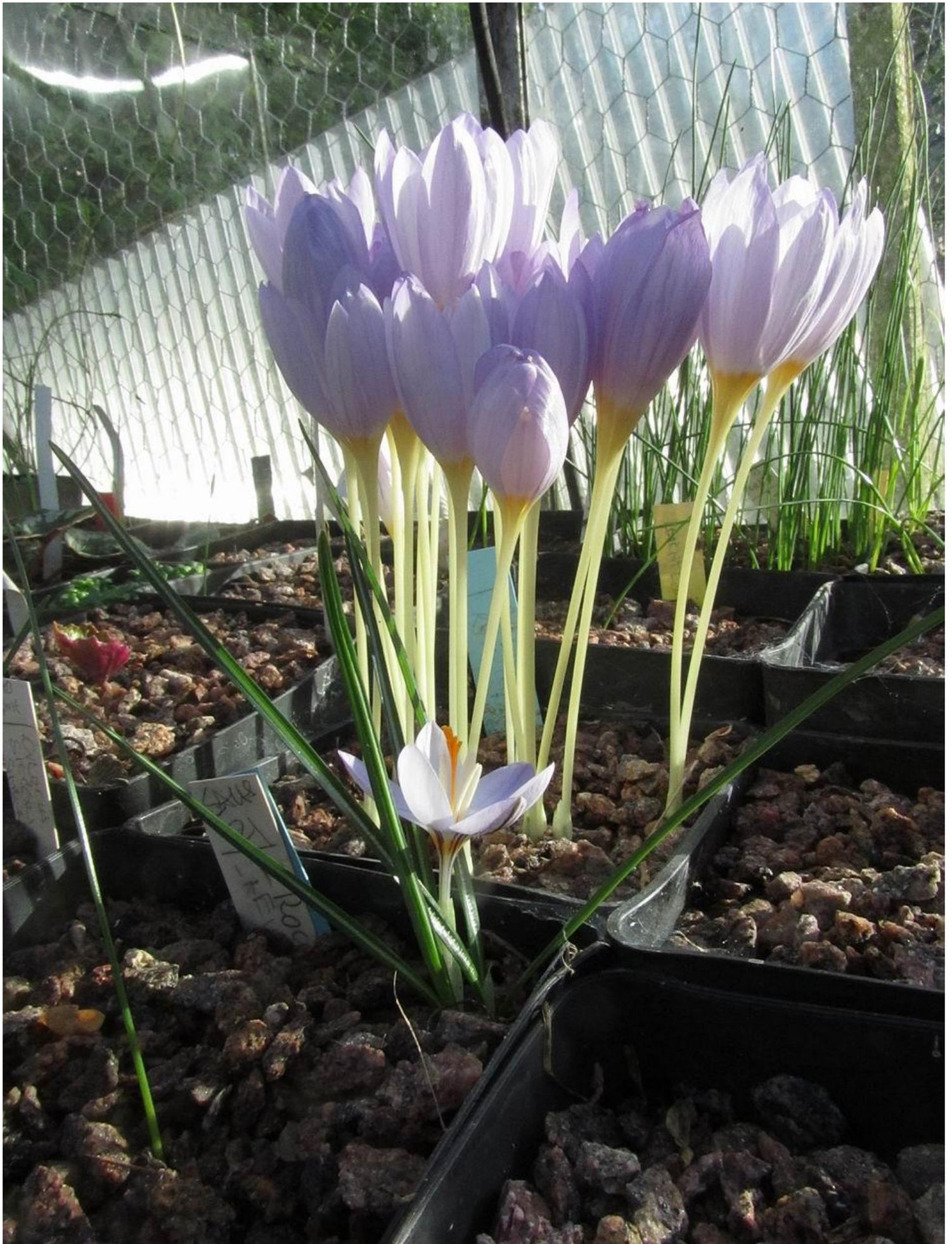


Crocus caspius



Left and below is
Crocus longiflorus





Crocus kotschyanus* and *Crocus laevigatus

Crocus species also vary in size you will be immediately drawn to the large group of *Crocus kotschyanus* cast your eye down to the small *Crocus laevigatus* growing in the front pot – and these are neither the largest nor the smallest of the genus.



Crocus kotschyanus



Crocus laevigatus



A nice dark form of *Crocus banaticus* growing in the bulb house leads me nicely back outside to the garden where we have lots of this species growing and seeding around, as can be seen in the rock garden bed below.





Crocus speciosus

During the winter we will rely on the bubs under glass to provide us with flowering interest but for the meantime the sun is shining and I am off to enjoy those early blooms that risk our November weather.....