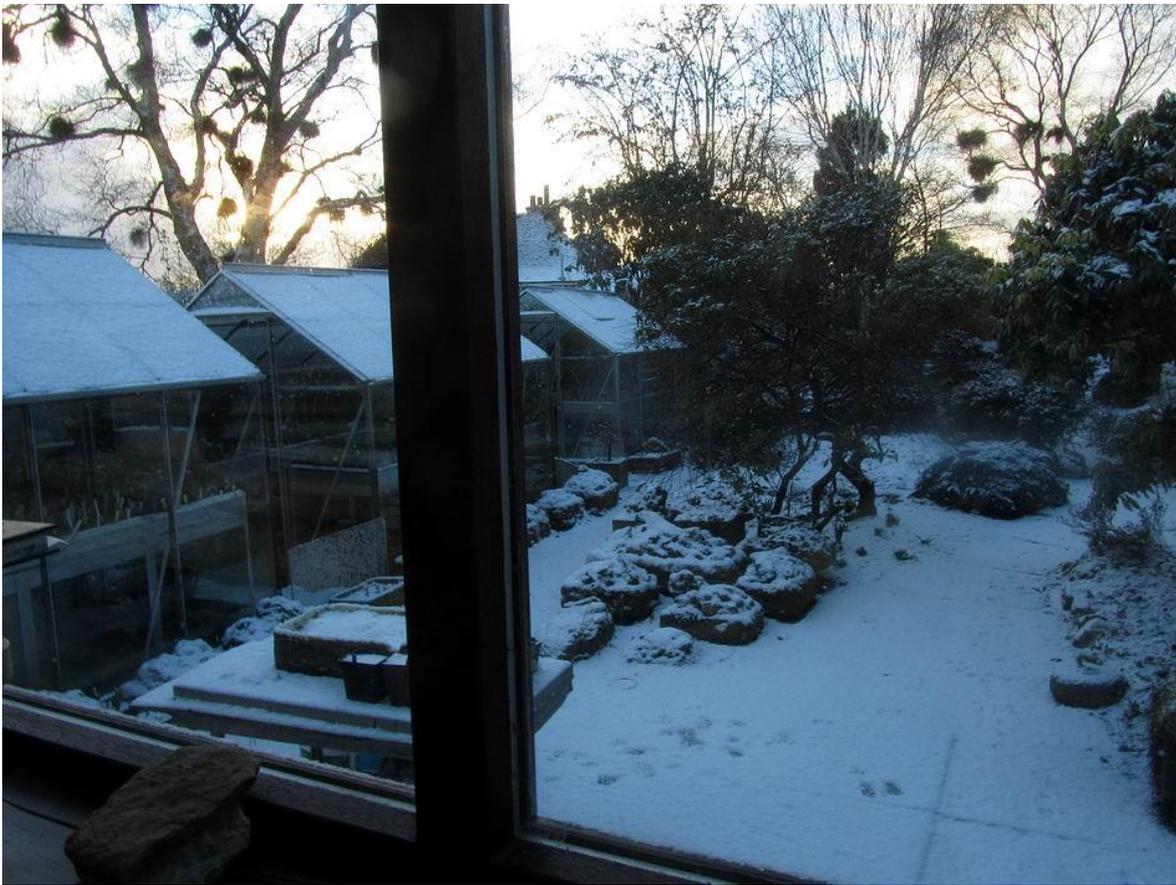




BULB LOG 07.....17<sup>th</sup> February 2016





**View through window**

There was a light covering of snow on Monday morning and I sat in my usual spot looking out the window watching the sunrise as I had my breakfast.

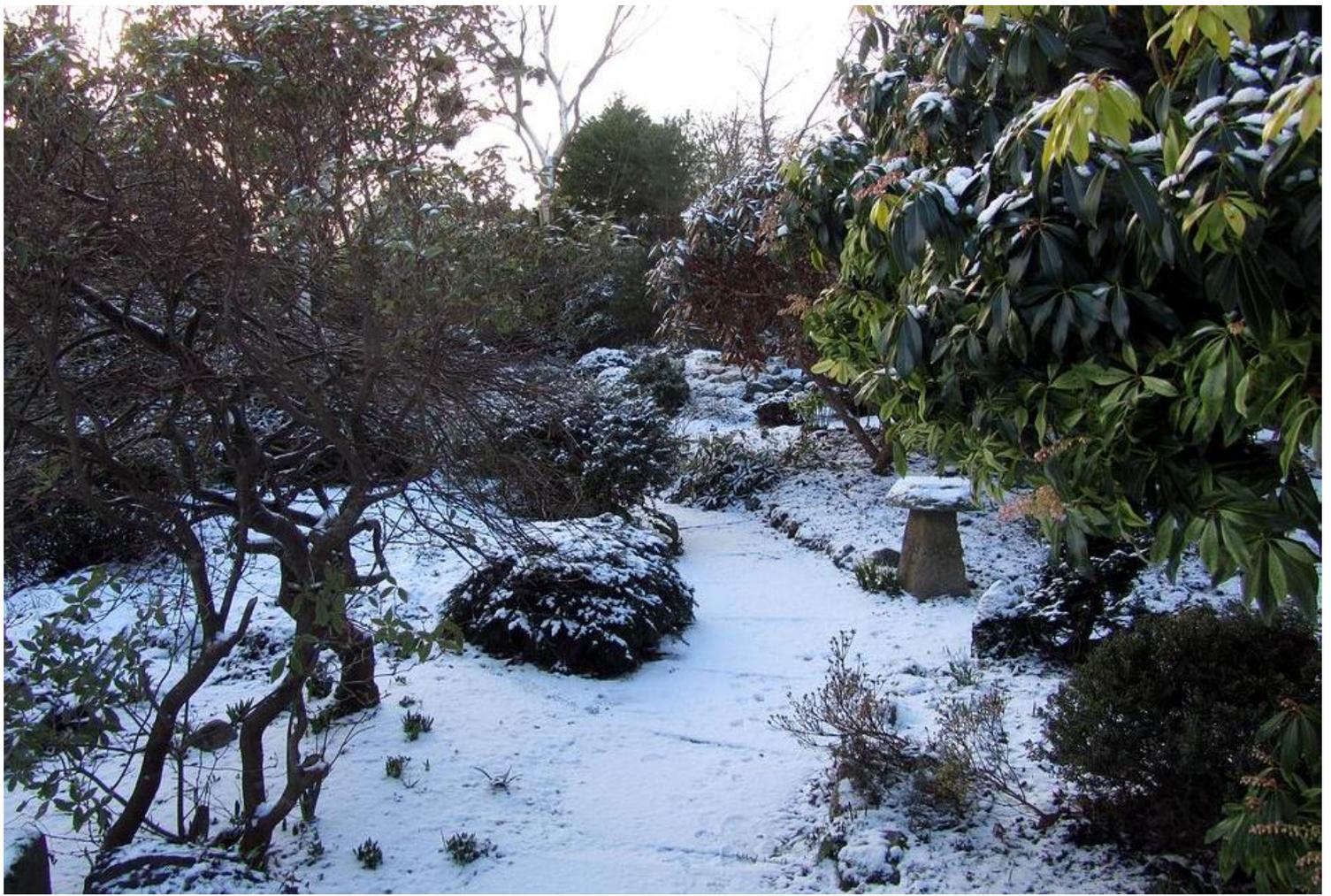
I have a good vantage point from this seat looking out to the east (left) I see the bulb houses with the line of troughs.

Looking ahead (see picture below) there is another grouping of troughs which with the snow highlights look even more like distant mountain ranges.



**Troughs**

Building the trough landscape up well above the edges brings many advantages not least that they still look interesting when under snow like this.



The structural plants such as the trees and shrubs stand out even more when the beds are covered in snow and walking around in these conditions allows me to see better where I need to do a bit of pruning or cutting back over the season. Some of the conifers will get a light trim just as soon as I can find time as will the Pieris in the top right foreground.



A few steps further on and turning to the right I get a view across towards the bulb bed near our Chinese style lantern.

The earliest flowers on Galanthus, Leucojum, Crocus, Eranthis, Iris, Narcissus and Corydalis are all just starting to show colour and indicating the start of the flowering bulbs in this bed.

See some more of the bulbs flowering through the snow in the latest [Bulb log video diary supplement](#).



**Iris 'Sheila Ann Germaney'** is a sister seedling to 'Katharine Hodgkin' and in my view has a much cleaner, more appealing colour.



**Eranthis hyemalis** are perfectly adapted to snow as they hold their flowers tightly closed to protect the reproductive parts.



The pots of **Eranthis pinnatifida** spend most of the year in the open frame beside the bulb house –it is only when I see the signs of the new growth appearing, often in late January, that I move them under glass.



***Eranthis pinnatifida* pink form**

I have a number of reasons for moving these pots under glass not the least of which is so that we and the flowers can enjoy a bit of protection from the inclement weather - it also makes it easier for me to hand pollinate the flowers with my paint brush. In addition the protection and slightly warmer temperatures in the bulb house gives them a better chance of setting seed. As the seed pods swell and the outside temperatures start to improve I move the pots back to the outside frame where the cooler conditions encourage the plants to grow on longer than they would if I left them under glass – generally the seed, if it is set, ripens in late April -May and the plants die down shortly after that.



These *Eranthis pinnatifida* seeds were sown as soon as they ripened in early May 2015 and now that single seed leaf is appearing as they start to germinate. These seeds were collected from the pink form and I can see that even the seed leaves have a reddish tint giving me hope that the

flowers will also be pink. To see how I collect and sow *Eranthis* seeds check out [Bulb Log 1814](#). Unlike all the other *Eranthis* which have two seed leaves this eastern group only has single leaf and so some botanists have split it into a separate genus of *Shibateranthis*. I do not feed the germinating seedlings immediately; I have found that the seed roots are susceptible to being damaged by chemical feed in the first few weeks. After 3 to 4 weeks the young roots will have hardened up and I will start to add a tomato-type liquid feed at around half the recommended strength every time I water them. Like the mature plants they will stay in the bulb house until the temperatures under glass gets warmer – if it gets too warm the seedlings will go dormant very quickly so I move them back to the outside frame where the cooler conditions means they grow well into May. The longer the growing season I can give them the sooner they will reach flowering size.



**Second year leaves on *Eranthis pinnatifida* seedlings.**

These seeds were sown in May 2014 and germinated this time last year – now they are in their second year the leaf they produce is more typical for this species. These will get fed with a half strength tomato feed every time they are watered and I hope to get the first flowers next year which will be three years after sowing.



### ***Eranthis pinnatifida***

The plants in the pot to the left were raised from seed I collected from the centre pot then sowed fresh in May three years ago – now a few of the seedlings have their first flowers.



### ***Eranthis pinnatifida***

You can see here the white grains of pollen revealed as the violet anthers start to dehisce- this indicates that it is time for me to get out my paint brush.

*Eranthis pinnatifida* is self-compatible so it is perfectly possible to get seed setting even if you have only a single form however you will always get a better seed set by cross pollinating between different clones.

**Eranthis  
byunsanensis**

This pot of Eranthis byunsanensis is now in its fourth year from seed. While I got the first few flowers last year they were not fully formed - this year I have good fully formed flowers and with carefully pollination I hope to get some seed.



**Eranthis byunsanensis**

There is a wonderful edition of the International Rock Gardener (IRG) with a survey of [Eranthis by Wim Boens](#) that is well worth reading.



## **Fritillaria tortifolia**

Growth is starting to appear in the Fritillaria house and Fritillaria tortifolia is always among the first to appear.

It is one of the species where the stem bends over where it comes through the ground; I have no idea why it should do this.

Although it is among the first to emerge complete with flower buds it will not flower until around mid-April.

Below is a pot of seedlings raised from our own garden collected seed – it took me 7 years to get the first flowers.



**Fritillaria tortifolia**



**Narcissus romieuxii hybrid**



**Narcissus romieuxii**



**Narcissus eualbidus**



**Narcissus romieuxii hybrid**

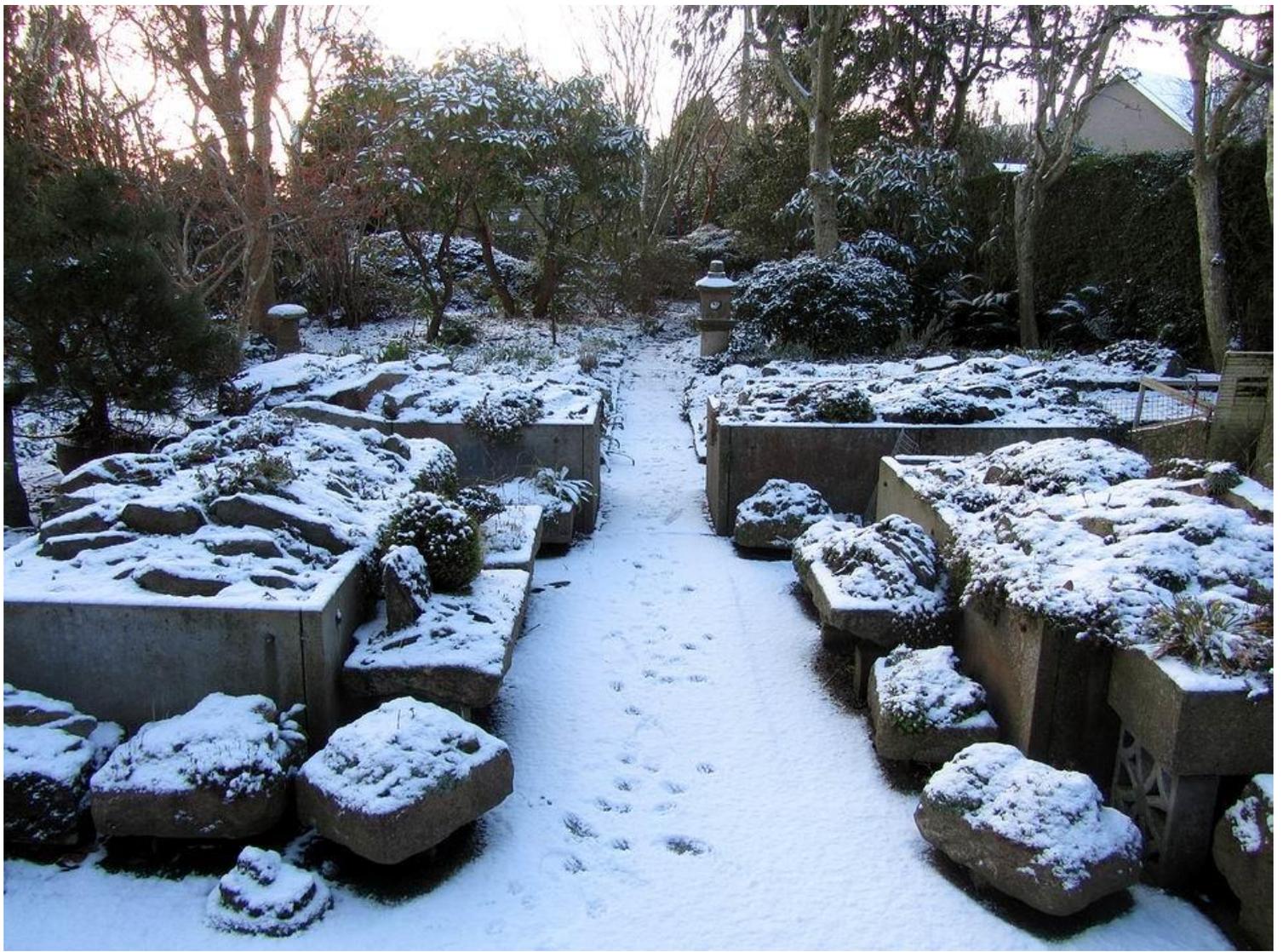
Because I have been concentrating on writing on the Erythroniums this winter I feel that I have rather neglected sharing the bulk of the Narcissus flowering with you however here are a few including one of my absolute favourites, *Narcissus eualbidus*. If you want to see some more of our Narcissus you can always check back though the previous years of the [Bulb Log](#).



Having stopped off to check in the bulb houses I continue on my walk around the snow covered garden. This light covering of snow is not expected to last for long but I am glad of the colder conditions which will slow the growth of the plants down a bit.



**Snowdrops living up to their name.**



The troughs and slab beds provide interest all year around.





I am not alone in the garden as Fieldfares feed on the last of the Cotoneaster berries.



My short walk round the garden brings me to another arrangement of troughs and bonsai trees then back to where I started. Can you see Megan and Molly by my chair watching for me?.....