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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 39.....25th September 2019



Crocus vallicola



It is a busy time for me both in the garden and travelling around to give talks -I am just back from giving a talk in Belfast and will soon head across to Uppsala in Sweden for a weekend of talks on bulbs from an international list of speakers. While I am travelling the autumn bulbs are coming into flower in the garden and as many of the blooms are delicate and last only for a short time, especially in the wind and rain, I am missing seeing some of them at their best.

In the frame ***Crocus vallicola*** is flowering in a number of pots, some are in their own pot, others have decided to join their neighbours by self-seeding in with some of the other bulbs.



Crocus vallicola



Our weather with cool moist summers provides just the sort of growing conditions that allows *Crocus vallicola* to thrive however those same conditions also favour slugs and snails of which we have plenty, and they chew through the floral tube felling the beautiful flowers like a lumberjack would a large tree.



We do go around hunting molluscs, especially the snails, which we can find and dispose of, but at this time of year I reluctantly revert to using a small amount of the slug pellets. I literally drop the small blue pellets one by one near to susceptible plants – it only takes one pellet to catch out the culprit which I can then dispose of safely. You can see evidence of the chewing molluscs in the majority of the images in this week's Bulb Log.

Two species of white crocus are currently flowering in the new bed by the pond, **Crocus nudiflorus** and **Crocus vallicola**.



These two are very easily distinguished by the shape of the flower - **Crocus vallicola** has the typical thin wispy tips to the tepals while the **Crocus nudiflorus** flowers have an open wine goblet shape.

Crocus nudiflorus albus, like the typical purple colour form, multiplies by pushing out stolons with small corms forming at the tip. Through the years these small corms have been spread across the garden as I scatter old potting compost on the beds. The white form of this species always flowers just before the typical colour form appears.



Cyclamen hederifolium flowers rise up from the large woody corm and will soon be followed by the leaves as the surrounding foliage of other herbaceous plants starts to turn yellow in preparation for a winter underground.



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen hederifolium



Colchicum speciosum



Colchicum speciosum



Here various *Colchicum* cultivars put on their colourful display, picked out in the autumn sunshine.



On checking I find that the autumn flowering is slightly behind last year's timing with many of the crocus still to make an appearance.



In the foreground, and below, are the flowers of ***Colchicum* × *agrippinum*** a plant which some think is a hybrid between *C. variegatum* and *C. autumnale*.



We have more than one form of ***Colchicum* × *agrippinum*** this is the one with the most defined tessellation.



Other plants that extend the flowering season into the autumn include ***Veratrum fimbriatum***.





Roscoeae 'Harvington Imperial'



Roscoeae purpurea, 'Red Gurkha' bearing the scars of munching molluscs continues to give a colourful display.



Gentiana asclepiadea





Cyananthus microphyllus

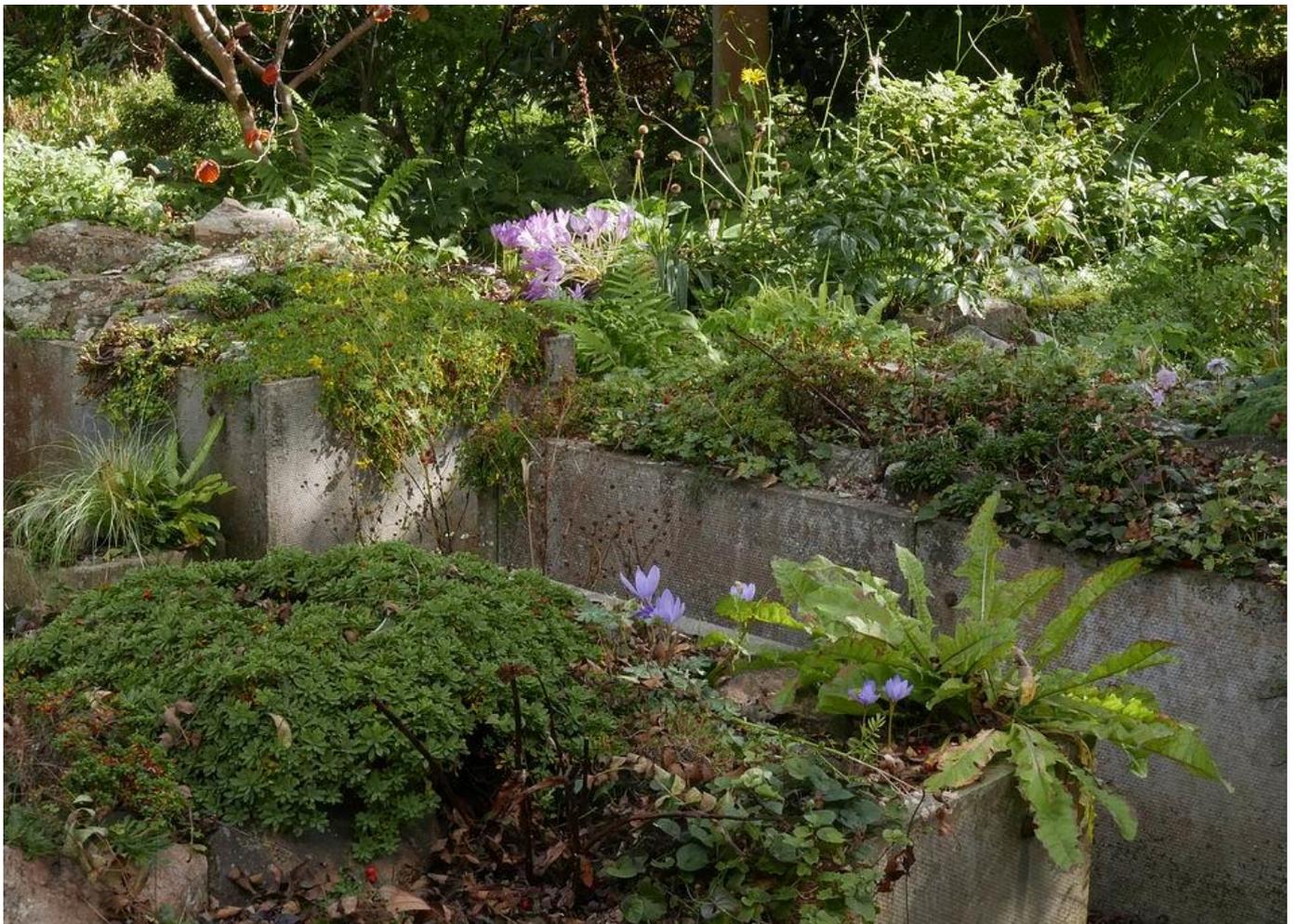
The Cyananthus growing in the slab beds have been constantly covered in flowers for some weeks already and are showing no signs of slowing down yet.



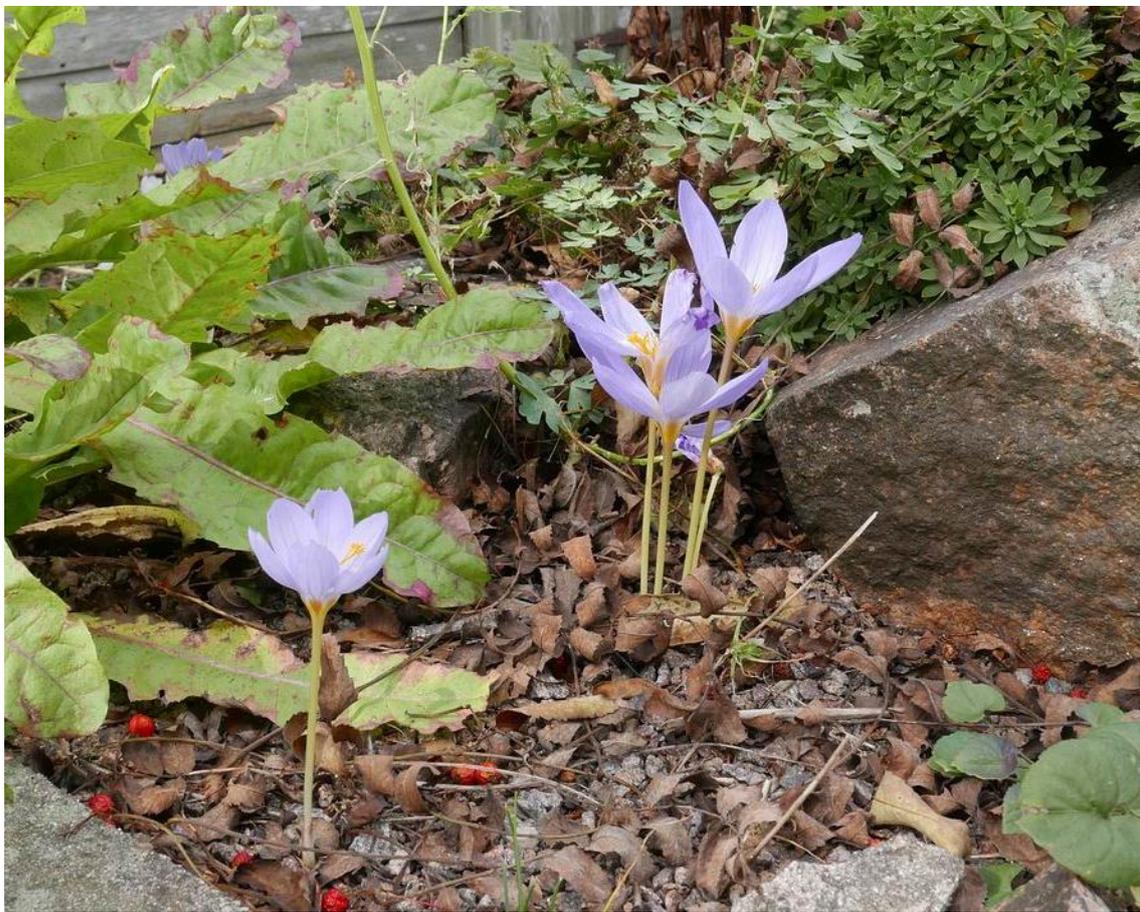
Cyananthus lobatus



Hypericum reptans, also growing on the slab beds, is another of the plants that doesn't start to flower until July but once it starts it just keeps on flowering until the winter freeze arrives.



Slab beds with Crocus in the foreground and Colchicum in the background



Here I show a group of Crocus, some of which are hybrids, raised from our own garden seed collected from what used to be classified as *Crocus speciosus xantholaimos* but is now described as a distinct species.

You can read all about the classification of different species of this wonderful genus plus all the information you need to grow them in [Janis Ruksans](#)' excellent book **The World of Crocuses** ISBN: 9789934191251 Be sure to get your copy while it is still available.



***Crocus xantholaimos*.**



Autumn crocus among the autumn foliage photographed in the autumn light, **Crocus nudiflorus albus** and **Crocus banaticus**.



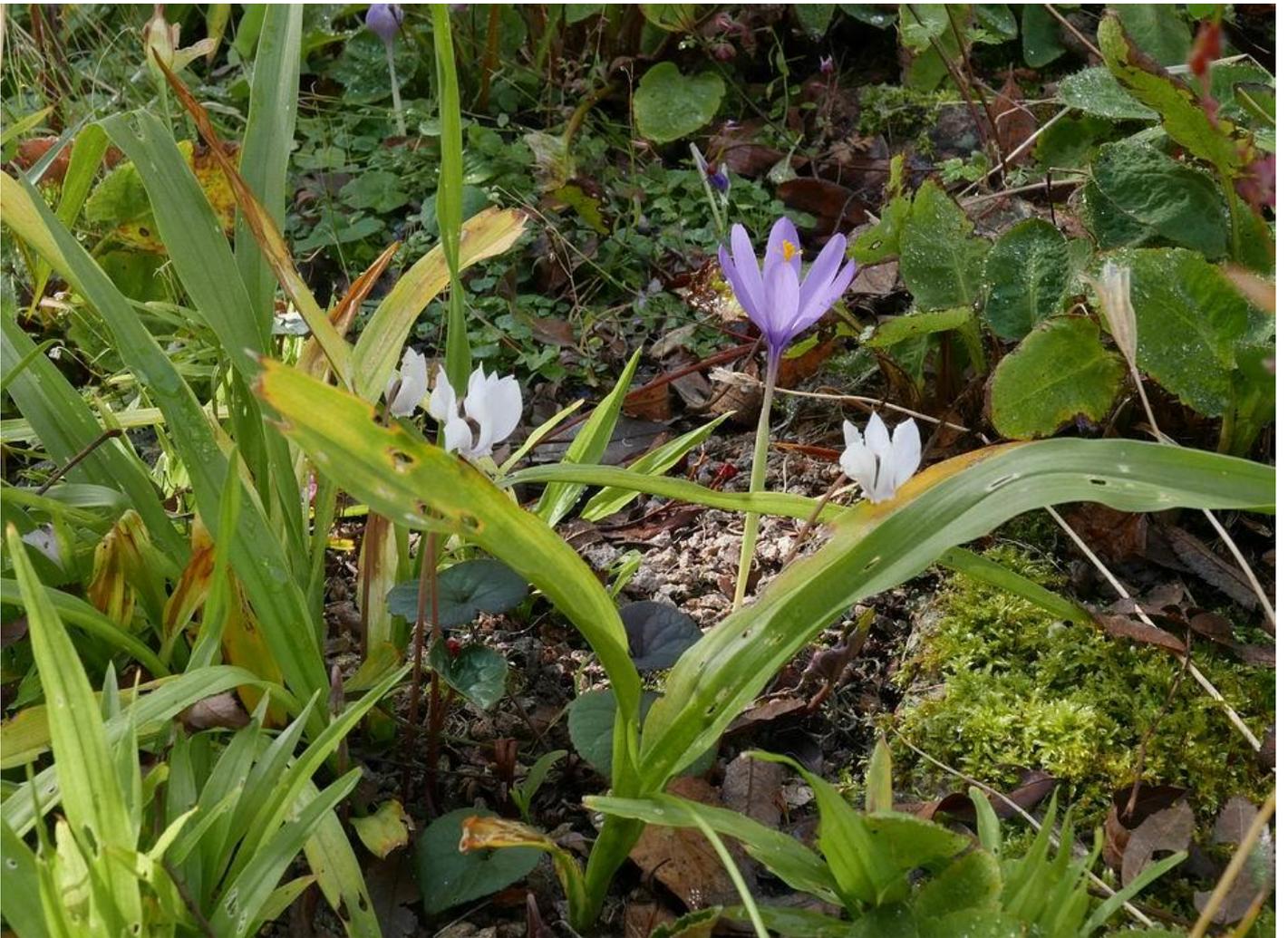
Crocus banaticus and **Crocus nudiflorus albus**.



**Crocus
banaticus.**



A large white **Crocus speciosus hybrid** and **Crocus pulchellus** peeking through the yellowing Roscoea foliage.



Above and below I show images of the typical colour form of **Crocus nudiflorus**.



Crocus speciosus



One of the many Crocus hybrids that we have raised by collecting and sowing our own garden seed.



I will round off this week with some of the crocus growing happily in the moss covered sand bed.....