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Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 05.....2nd February 2022



Eranthis pinnatifida

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Eranthis pinnatifida is a very appealing, desirable plant and I know that many are trying to bring it into their gardens so, to those people that are unable to find it on offer, I say be patient and keep looking because when it is offered it sells out quickly. It will gradually become more available as general and commercial growers build up stocks.

The original form that we got first flowered in 2005 and the actual plant is shown left. It is beautiful with green leaves, white flowers and the stunning boss of colour in the centre - sadly it failed to set seed the first year it flowered for us.



Some years later we received seed of some different forms from a friend in Japan: these are plants raised from those seeds and with their pink washed flowers and foliage I think they are even more beautiful than our original form.



I find it difficult to capture the true colour of the form on the left but you can see from the darker leaves that it has more pink pigment than the one on the right. I cross pollinated between these forms and the original plant which depending on our weather resulted in a good seed set some years – any seed was sown immediately, usually in May, resulting in the two pots of seedlings shown below.



These are the two pots of second generation seedlings with a third generation germinating behind them. I have gradually been trying to establish this Eranthis in the open garden and I hope to plant out more of these later this year. Before I commit more to the garden however I need to confirm the ones we planted two years ago are growing well; however they have not appeared yet but they do come into growth a bit later than those in pots and they are under a mulch of pine needles so I am hoping to see something soon.



We also received seed of a close relative **Eranthis byunsanensis** which is native to Korea, those seeds resulted in this pot from which we managed to get just a few seeds last year.



Ove the last four weeks, despite all the severe weather, I have watched these fully exposed Eranthis stems pushing the flowers upwards as they continue to slowly develop until their full beauty is revealed for another year.



When you do get **Eranthis pinnatifida** to flower it is important that you do everything that you can to encourage it to set seed and that includes pollinating with a paint brush. Look carefully and you will see the first of the purple/blue anthers are bursting open to reveal ripe white pollen and for as long as the flowers hold I will daily cross pollinate between our different clones in the hope the weather is conducive to getting some more seed.



Over this past weekend we have been hit by two storms first on Friday Storm Malik raged with 80mph winds crashing through the garden – on Saturday the winds were so strong it was too dangerous to go out. On Sunday all was calm and I walked round the garden where there was little damage accept the leaves ripped off of some of the larger Rhododendrons

then I spotted a reticulate Iris cultivar flower, looking so delicate, had survived while giants had been toppled.



Sunday started calm after Storm Malik had passed but then in the evening Storm Corrie moved in and our shrubs and trees were once again getting thrashed around by the swirling winds. This time this *Rhododendron yunnanense* was a casualty getting blown over with half of the root ball ripped out of the ground.



In an attempt to save it I reduced the top growth by about half, propped it with a suitable forked branch, firmed in as best I could then watered the root ball: now I have to hope it will survive.

Post script - we got more strong winds the following day and although not classified as a storm they were strong enough to blow this Rhodo over again. Now I will have to

revert to plan B which may involve cutting it back to see if it will regrow from lower down the stems or possibly to remove it completely.



Despite the winds raging above at ground level the snowdrops such as **Galanthus woronowii** were flowering.



I do not concern myself with all the names applied to snowdrops: everyone is special to me and I love the random ways they push through the leaf litter mulches as they form small clumps.



Once more the annual white wave of Snowdrops is gradually flowing across the garden - each year it gets bigger.





With hundreds more trees brought down across the region, roads and railways closed, thousands without power we were fortunate not to have more damage from the storms.





Apart from some panes of glass the bulb houses survived to protect the hoop petticoat Narcissus.



Broken glass



A pane of glass blown out allows me to take a picture of the sand bed from a different angle.



The flowers were blown around a bit- some now have a sideways lean but no lasting damage has been done.



Now for my weekly jump through the hoops with some hybrids.





Narcissus bulbocodium



A new one to us which we received from Anne Wright of Dryad Nursery is **Narcissus 'Tethys'** a hybrid between *Narcissus cantabricus petunioides* x *romieuxii* subsp *albidus* SF110)).



We get so much pleasure and interest from the Narcissus in the bulb houses through the winter but I really love this time of year when the plants in the garden are waking up. Among the first are the **Cyclamen coum**: shown here is a self-seeding population we have established in a moss covered sand bed.





It is when we see plants self-seeding around like these **Cyclamen coum** that I feel we have properly established them in the garden.



Most of the garden is now tidied, mulched and ready for the waves of colour that the early flowering ground plants will bring.



Narcissus cyclamineus grows and seeds around in a number of different habitats such these in bud under a small pine, above, and below more are appearing among the crevices on a raised slab bed below.





The early signs that the bulbs in the cobble bed are waking up are evident among them the yellow Eranthis.



Eranthis hyemalis.....