



BULB LOG 39.....23rd September 2022



Crocus pulchellus



Being dyslexic I have always faced a struggle with writing and reading. The way I cope with, and help remember, plant names is to learn the meaning or origin of the binomial names but that can also sometimes lead to confusion and they don't always come out right. Last week I invented a new species when I mistakenly wrote *Jeffersonia biflora* instead of *Jeffersonia diphylla*. I am sure you can see where the confusion in my head came from with one meaning two leaves and the other two flowers.

Thanks to regular reader Dana Cromie from Vancouver who informed me of my slip which by early Thursday morning I had corrected.

Problems of knowing or remembering the names of plants should never come in the way of growing them in our gardens where we can study or simply enjoy them for their all beauty. Plants don't worry about their names, their purpose is to flower, set seed and send their genes into the next generation. It is groups within the human population that want to establish an order by classifying everything. Sorting out the species in their natural habitat, where the plants are mostly geographically separated, is one thing but in gardens, where we grow many closely related species together, there are many more opportunities for hybridisation and confusion. The important thing for gardeners is to discover the plants that want to grow in your garden then concentrate on establishing these. The most adaptable autumn flowering Crocus in cultivation, that seem to tolerate a wide range of garden conditions and certainly grow well for us, include the following species: *Crocus kotschyanus*, *pulchellus* and *speciosus* which have also resulted in a population of garden hybrids. I will also add *Crocus nudiflorus* to that list of relatively easy adaptable species.



The flowers of ***Crocus kotschyanus*** and ***pulchellus*** are superficially similar and in many ways they serve the same decorative purpose in the garden. This is a mixed group where you can compare directly the differences between their flowers.

Note the central yellow blotch of the front left, *Crocus pulchellus* flower, comparing it with the 'M' shaped yellow zone of *Crocus kotschyanus* on its right.

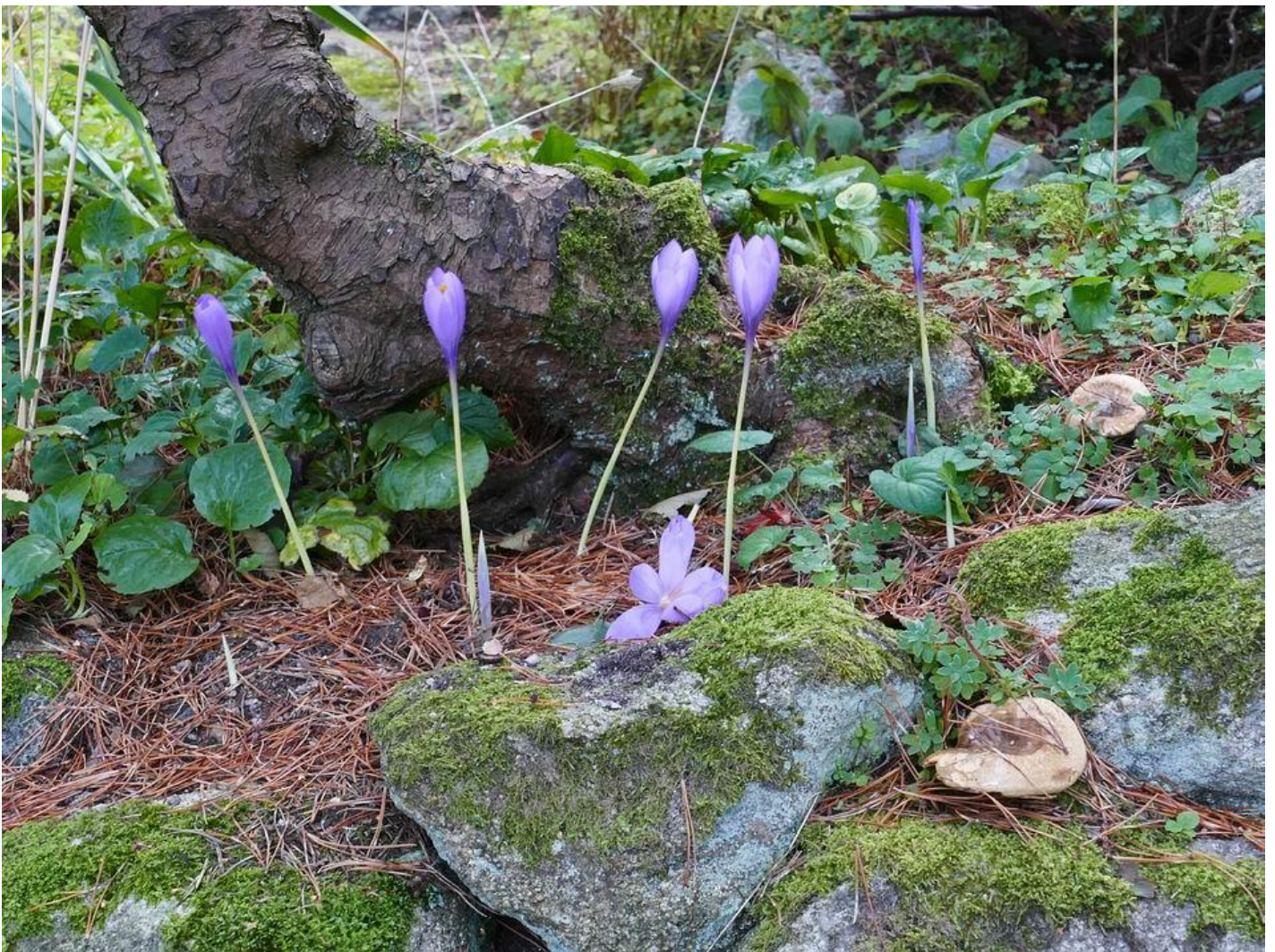
If you see colours well you will also notice that the *Crocus kotschyanus* flowers are slightly more violet with a bit more red.



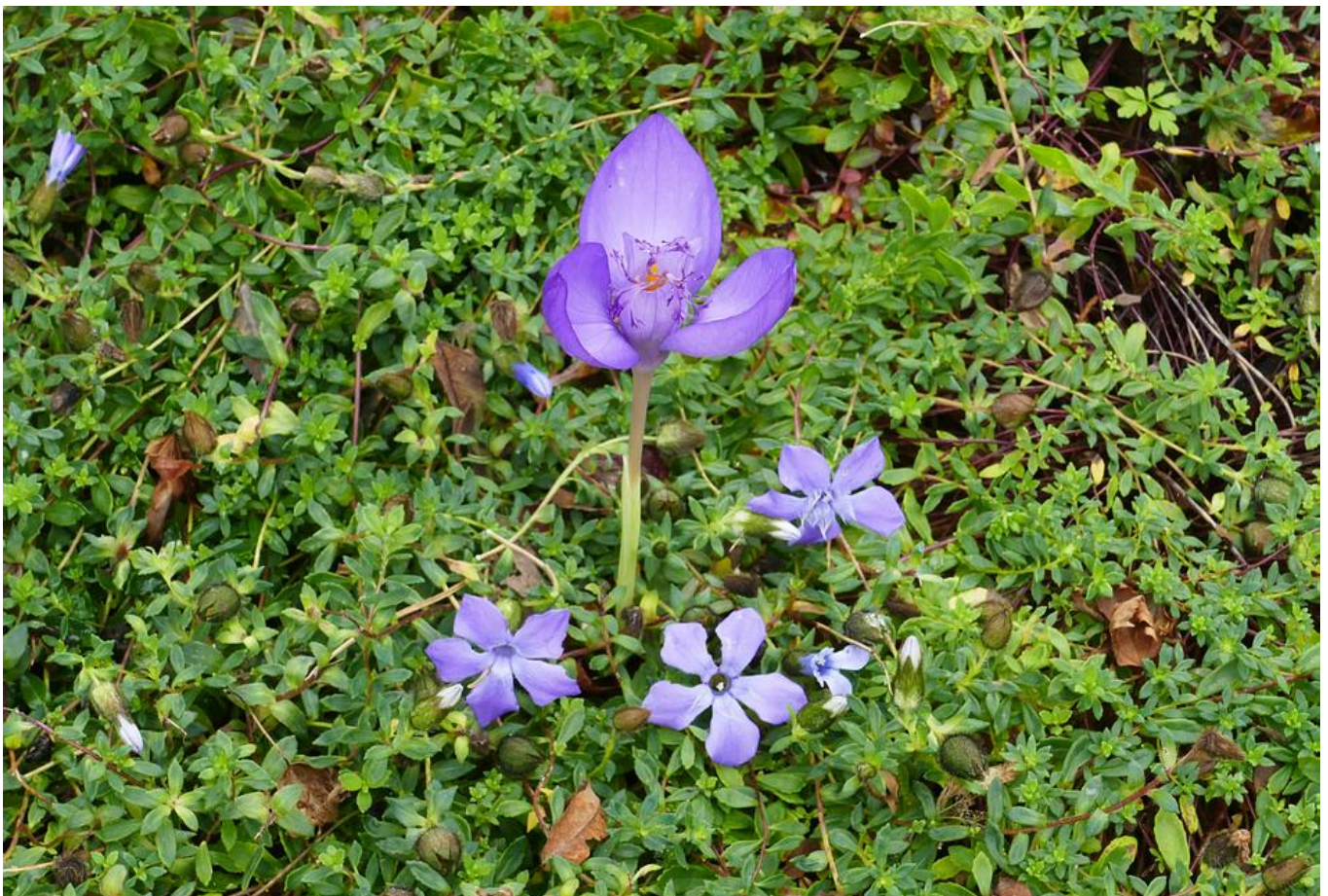
Crocus kotschyanus



Most of the forms of **Crocus speciosus** we have grow quite tall making the flowers susceptible to falling over but they will still open in the warmth from the sunshine.



Crocus nudiflorus spreads around by stolons as well as seeding.



Other species growing well and seeding around in our cool moist northern garden, are **Crocus banaticus** here shown growing through a carpet formed by a Himalayan *Cyananthus lobatus* hybrid.



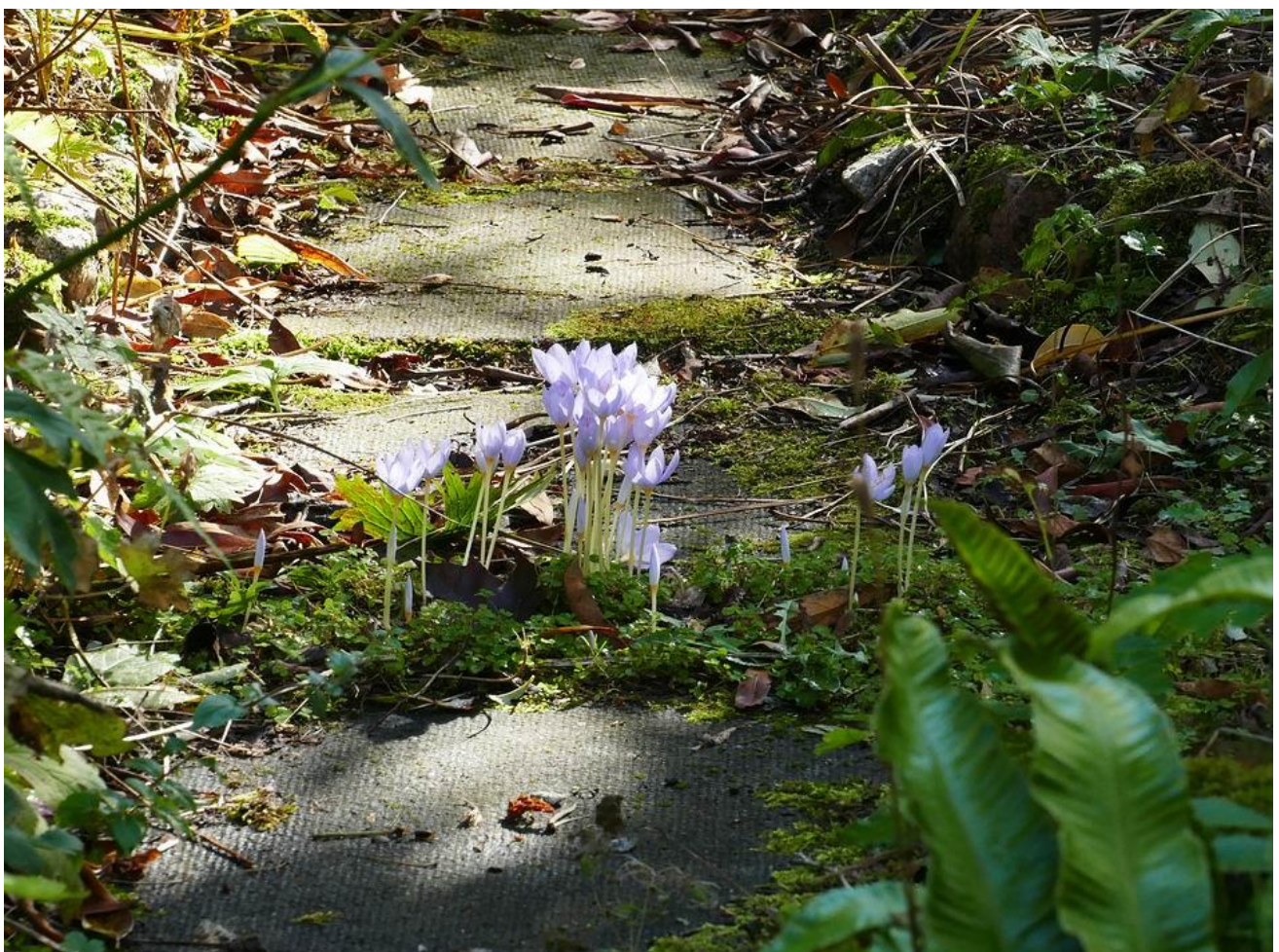
Crocus vallicola - this one appeared in a trough with a New Zealand companion of *Celmisia argentina*. The following foto essay gives a snap shot of these species and hybrids in our garden which changes by the day..



Crocus flowers are popping up everywhere this group is increasing every year growing in the tiny gap between the slabs where a seed must have fallen. I think this is one of the garden hybrid Crocus.



There are a number of species and hybrids growing in the small cobble bed.

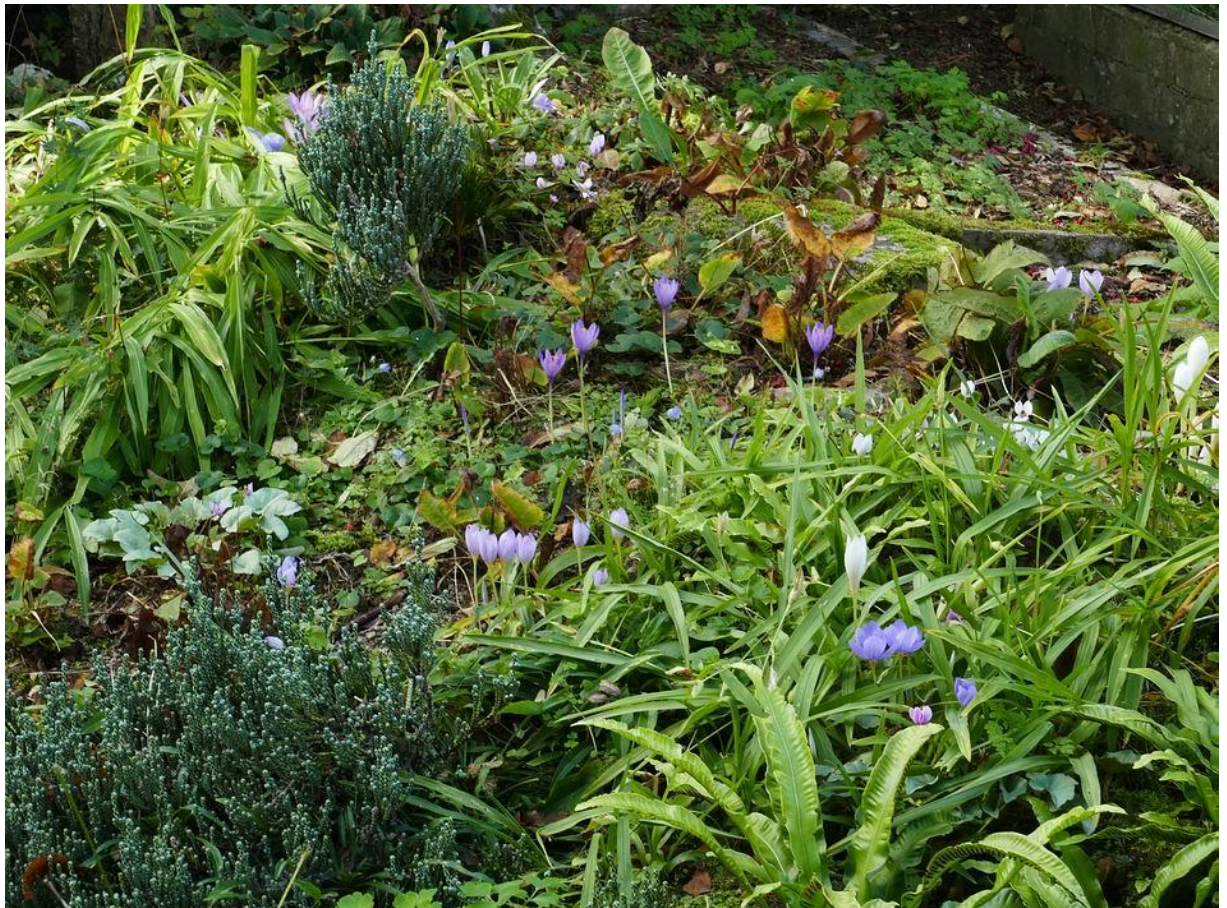


The crocus seed is most likely to germinate and establish when it falls onto some of the many gravel surfaces around the garden including between the stepping stone of slabs that make up the paths.



Every day I go round photographing the crocus flowers and every day there are more so be warned there will be plenty more images of them appearing in the coming weeks.

The late winter and spring Crocus appear very early in the season, their flowers often appearing before many plants are in growth then as the season advances the crocus leaves disappear under the layers of larger greenery as growth gets going and the garden becomes a summer jungle. Now the autumn flowering Crocus are rising through those very layers of growth which are collapsing and dying back having come to the end of their season.

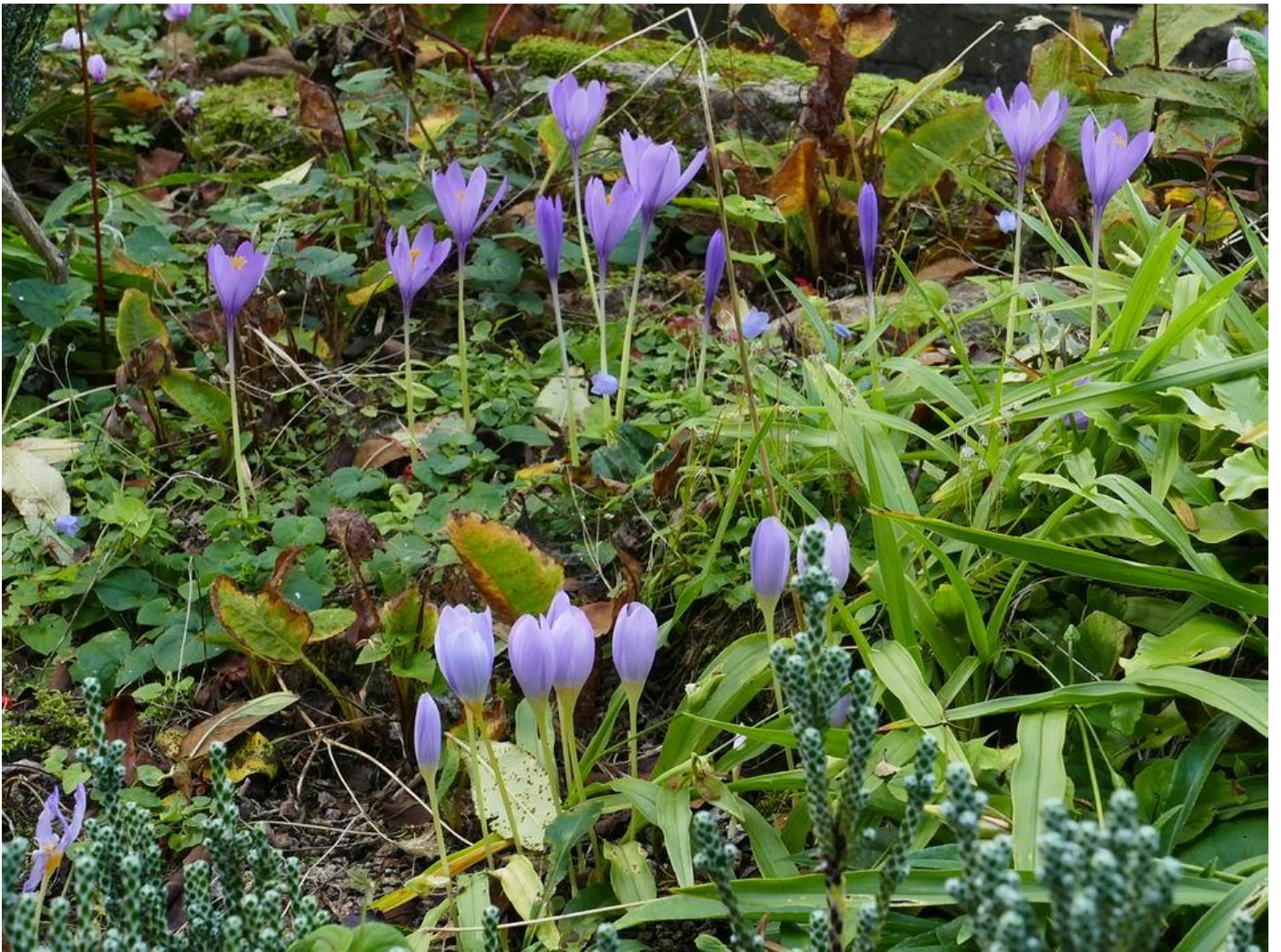




The striking white flowers of **Colchicum speciosum album** contrasting with the violet flowers of **Crocus nudiflorus**. Because of their larger leaves we have to be more careful about where we grow the colchicum than we do with crocus species, all of which have small narrow leaves that will not shade out other plants.



The trilogy of autumn flowering bulbs - Colchicum, Crocus and Cyclamen feature across the rock garden bed.



A line up of violet coloured **Crocus nudiflorus** with a mixture of *Crocus kotschyanus* and *pulchellus*.





The pictures above and below show **Crocus speciosus** growing with **Colchicum davisii** a species whose leaves are that bit smaller than many of the autumn flowering colchicum.





It is like a scene from beauty and the beast with the crocus flowers representing the beauty as they poke up through the collapsing old growths only to get battered by the beast of the wild autumnal weather.



A white *Crocus speciosus* cultivar and *Crocus pulchellus* growing through the *Roscoeas* foliage.



Moving on to the raised slab beds where there is a growing population of Crocus hybrids - this group started many years ago when I scattered a few of the Crocus seeds.



Regular readers will be familiar with my pet Dandelion that has grown in the corner of this bed for thirty plus years. This is its third crop of leaves it has grown this year as I remove them through the season if they get too large.



Crocus and Dandelion





The Crocus flowers bring interest to the small Erythronium plunge bed. We originally planted a basket of **Crocus 'Orla'**, a white selection of **Crocus nudiflorus albus**, which has since spread out by stolons which, along with seeding around, has resulted in a range of colour forms from the more typical violet through various degrees of white.



The sun is also casting light on some *Colchicum* and *Crocus speciosus* flowering in the background..



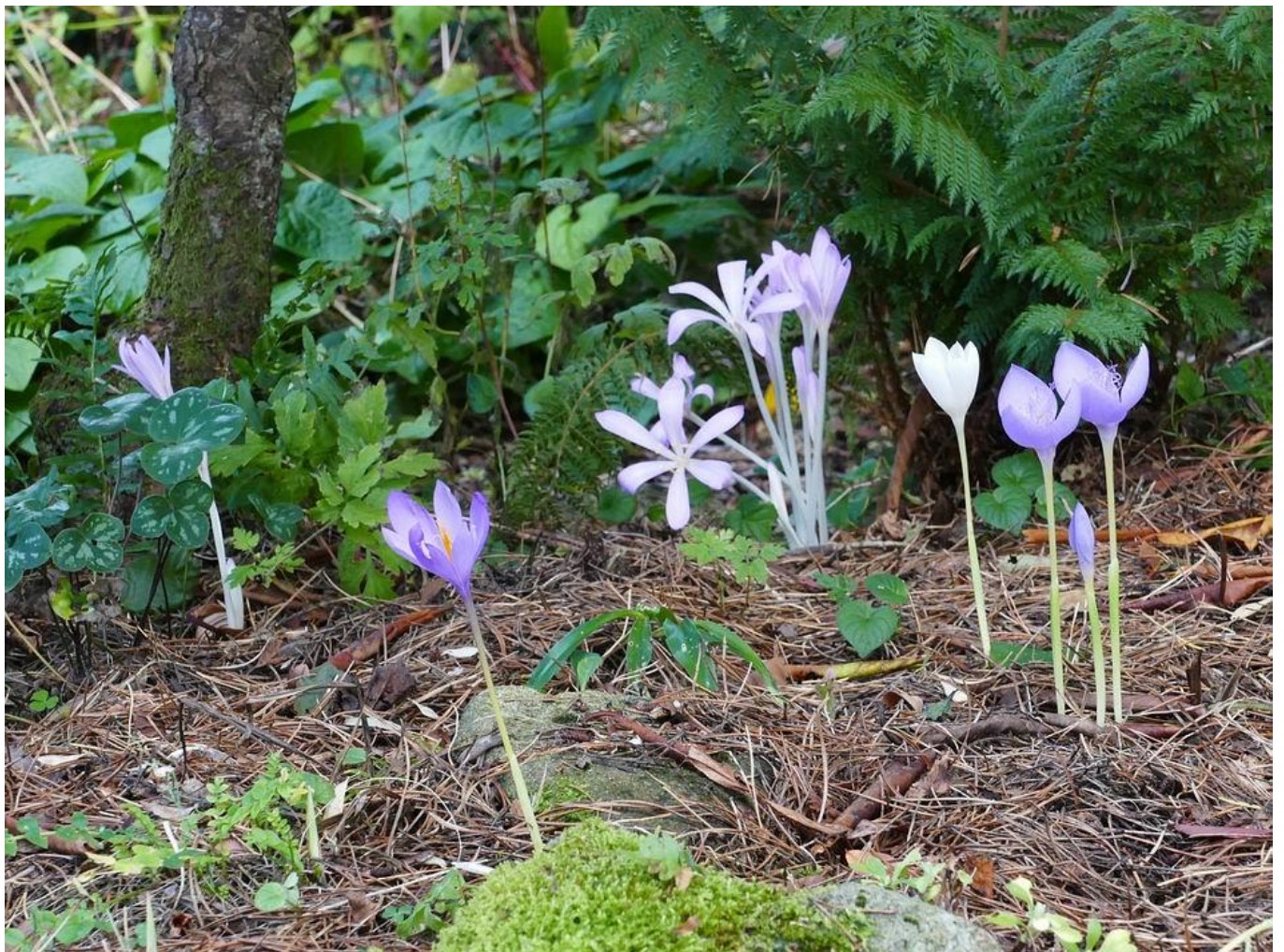
Crocus nudiflorus albus



While it may be problematic identifying many of the crocus there can be no doubt when it comes to **Crocus banaticus**. This species has the unique feature of the inner three floral segments being shorter than the outer three.

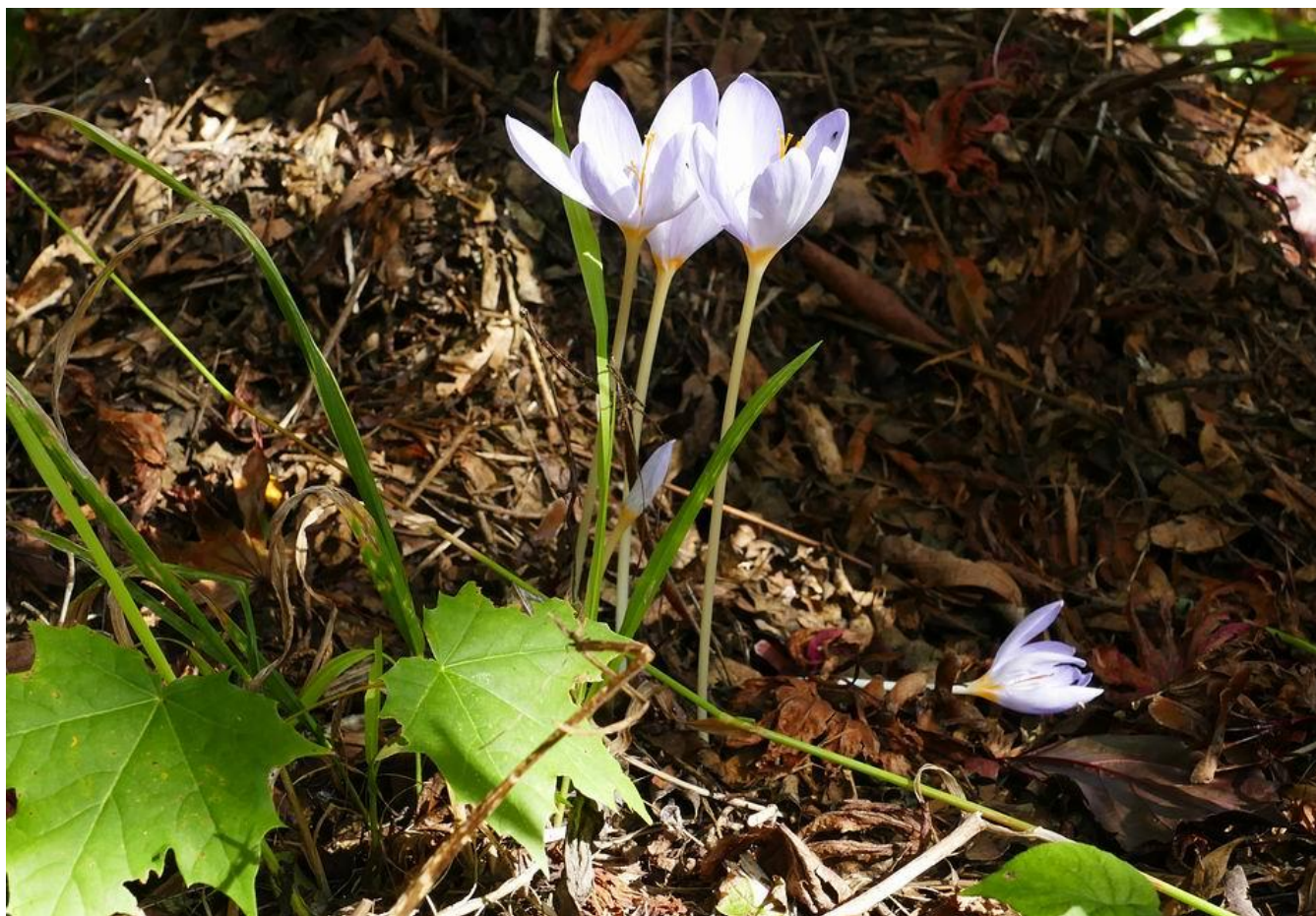


Crocus banaticus loves the cool moist habitats in our garden here it grows with **Crocus nudiflorus** and **Colchicum 'Pink Star'**.





I love the way that these **Crocus nudiflorus** are starting to spread with some flowers appearing between the rocks down the face of the wall.



The autumn sun highlights these Crocus flowers making them stand out from the shade.



I am captivated by the combination of the autumn flowers, **Crocus nudiflorus albus**, and the autumn light.





Colchicum



I will leave you with a group of dark **Colchicum speciosum** and a single **Crocus speciosum**.....