



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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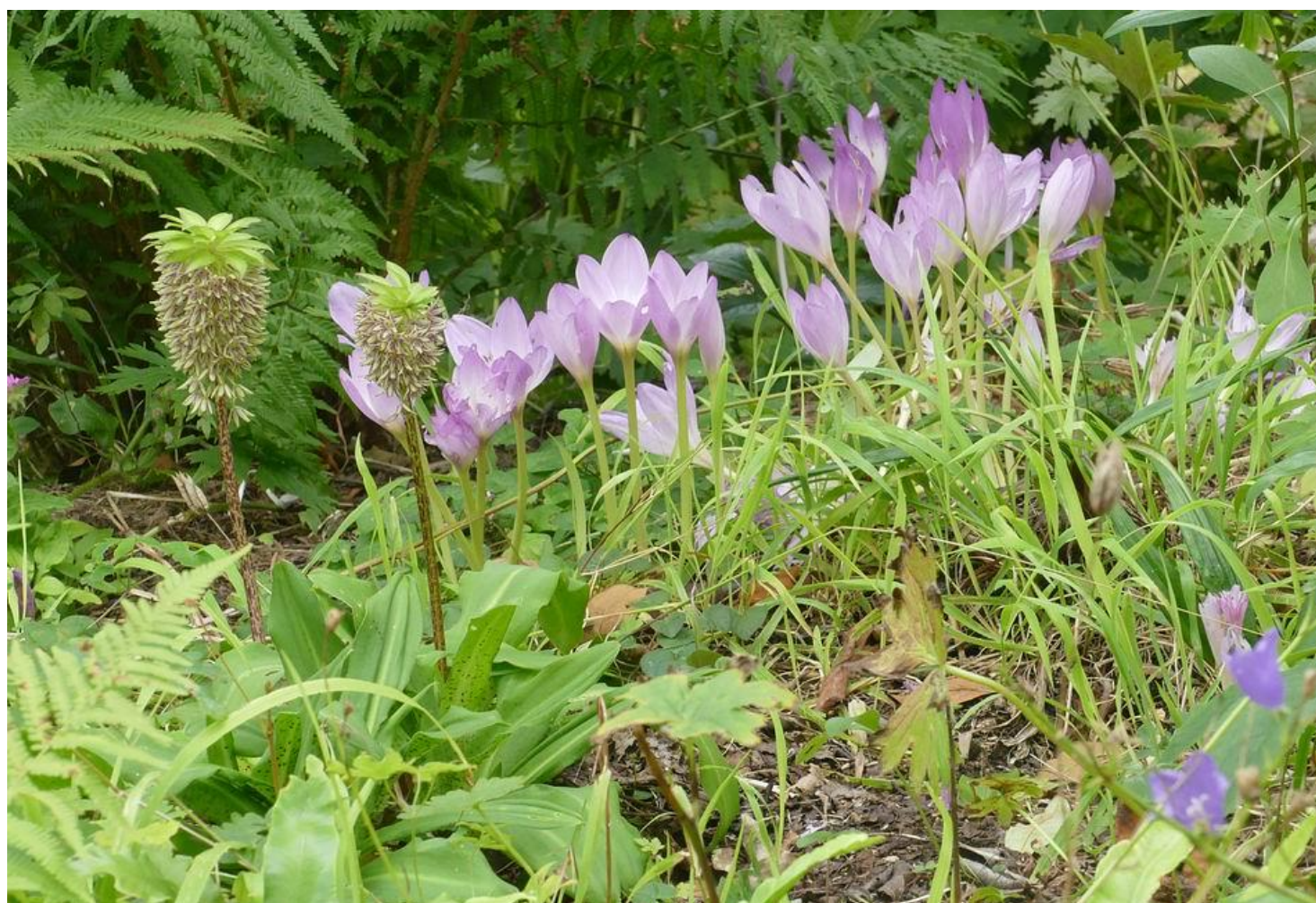
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BULB LOG 10.....14th October 2026





As I predicted last month it is the Autumn flowering Crocus that are the outstanding plants in the garden in this Bulb Log, Before I show some of the Crocus, here are a few of the autumn flowering Colchicums that are still in flower.



I love the way these Colchicum cultivars, and the Crocus, flowers poke up through the now tired and collapsing summer foliage of the surrounding plants.



Colchicum x agrippinum



Colchicum 'Pink Star'

There is something special about these flowers, fragile as they are, they still open and close when lying on the ground just the same as they do when standing erect.



Now for the Crocus but as I go I am diverted into look at what is flowering in the sand plunges in the Bulb Houses after I watered them last month.



Sternbergia sicula

I love looking at pictures of the *Sternbergia* flowering in other people's gardens but despite many attempts they will not flower or even survive when planted in our open garden. However, they are growing and flowering reasonably well in the sand beds. There is much discussion about what specific name we should be using for these beautiful plants, previously I have written and recorded my thoughts on that subject, but for now I am happy to lump them together as ***Sternbergia sicula*** and just enjoy their presence and beauty



Sternberger sicula





This version of *Sternbergia sicula* is distinctly different on flowering on a very short stem.



You will also notice the first *Narcissus* and *Ornithogalum* foliage is appearing and on close inspection I could see the very tips of the first *Narcissus* flower buds at the base of the leaves just growing through the sand.



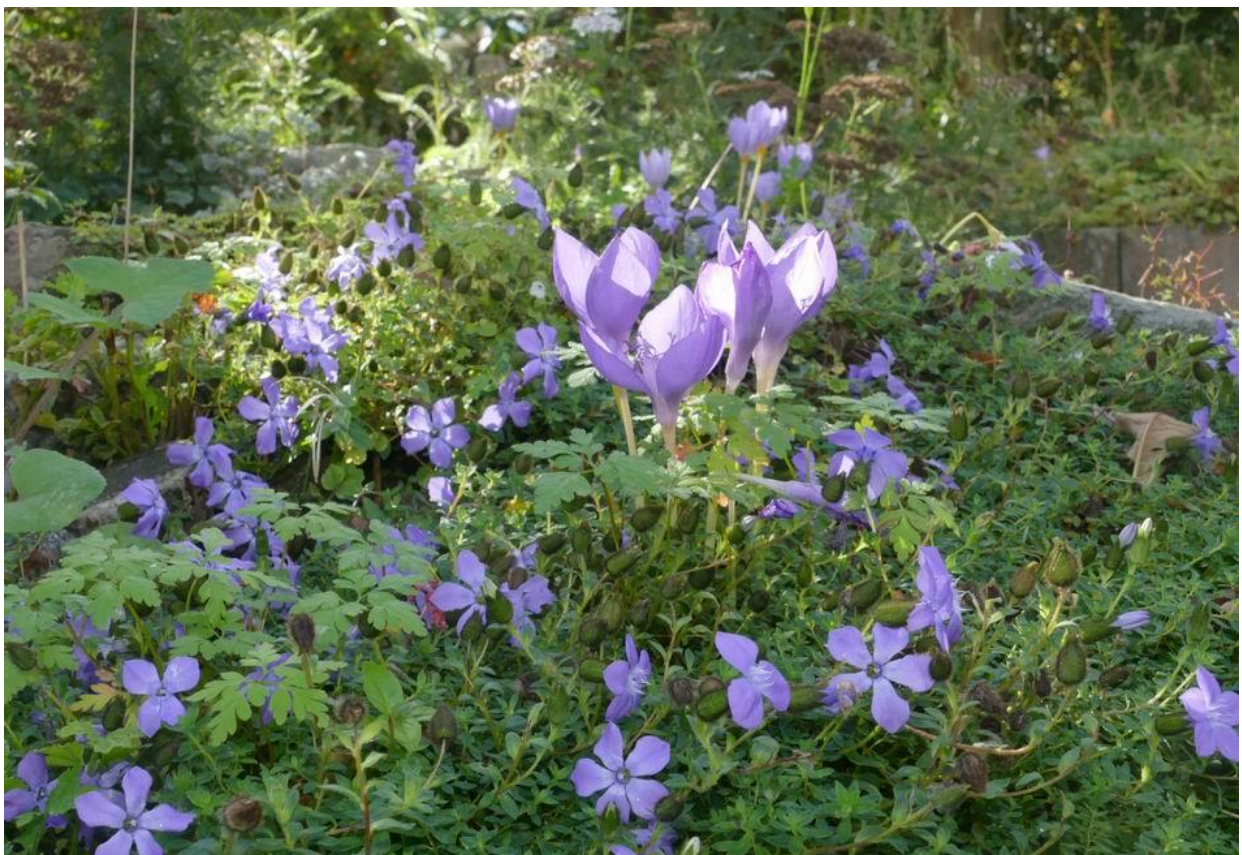
Almost everywhere I look in the garden I see Crocus and Colchicum flowers, like these **Colchicum x agrippinum**, trying to attract the hover flies to pollinate their flowers



Colchicum speciosum album



These outstanding late flowers, Crocus, Colchicum and Cyclamen, blend in and grow well with the wild nature of our garden. We tend to refer to them as the late flowering bulbs when in fact they are the earliest of the bulbs to flower. It is the others that hold on to their flowers until the late winter moving into spring before they bloom.



From our sitting room we can look across to the slab beds where a high light of the afternoon sunshine spot lights these **Crocus banaticus** growing through the matt of a **Cyananthus lobatus hybrid** which having started blooming in July is still covered in flowers.



Crocus banaticus with its short inner three flower segments is the most distinctive of all the species and one of my favourites.



Also growing there are some of our own garden hybrid Crocus that came from the slabs, see below, This flower has extra segments, making it semi-double, which will be a temporary and fairly common mutation. Next year the flower will have the typical six floral segments.



You are always best to try and grow your plants from seed. Seed raised plants are more likely to adapt to your garden conditions resulting in a more fertile population with a number of different clones to cross fertilise. You should get a constant supply of seed to further increase your populations. These Crocus have grown from a single seed that, many years ago found its way between the slabs where it has grown and increased significantly. It is also increasing by corms some of which

have been squeezed out of the narrow gap onto the slabs. When I find the corms on the slabs I have replanted them into the raised slab beds such as the multi-petaled one shown above.

When I was young I was advised to grow the plants that grow well for you but being young I wanted to try everything for myself and so through the years we have grown and lost many hundreds of plants. In recent years as I approach the age of my old mentors I understand and put their advice into practice by allowing the plants the freedom to seed and grow.



Following on from my initial planting of seed raised populations **Crocus banaticus** and **Crocus nudiflorus albus** are among those that seed around forming beneficial associations and communities with the other plants.



Cyclamen hederifolium has the added feature of providing attractive foliage through the winter months, some clones flower before their leaves grow, others flower with the leaves.



Cyclamen hederifolium and **Crocus nudiflorus albus** which, as well as seeding, runs about by stolons.



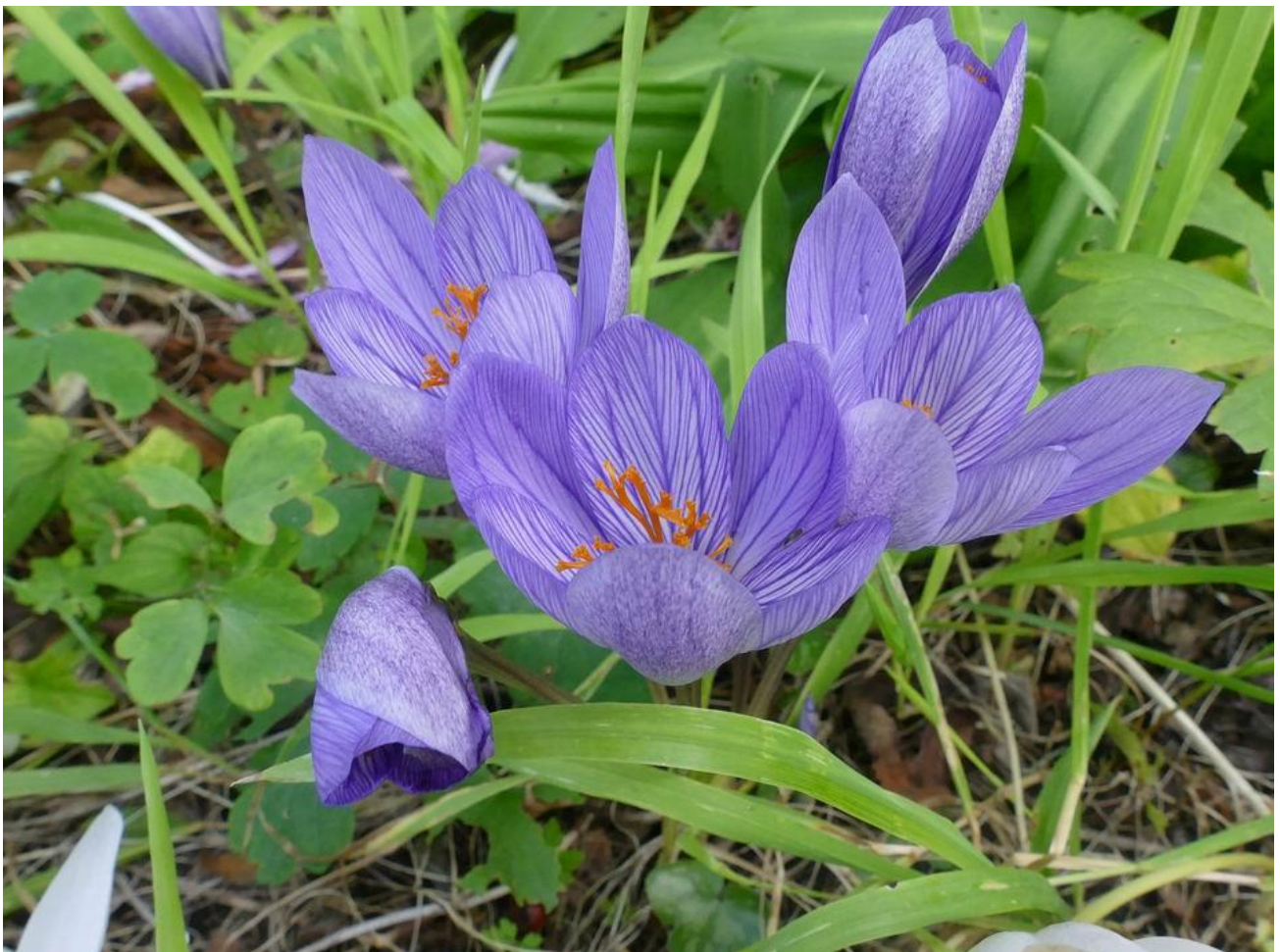
Crocus and cyclamen growing in a natural manner.



A similar scene of Crocus flowers is repeated around the garden like here in the cobble bed.



Another good growing species for us is **Crocus speciosus** and its white hybrid.





The majority of flowers here are **Crocus banaticus** and **Crocus nudiflorus albus** both of which increase vegetatively as well as by seeding.



It is not an accident that the Crocus that grow well for us are those that favour cooler moister growing conditions it is a matter of natural selection and I hope that by allowing them to seed around our future garden populations can adjust to better tolerate our changing climate.



For years I desired the white forms of *Crocus banaticus* and we did receive a corm of a couple of forms that were going around but sadly they did not survive our garden. However, allowing the plants to seed has resulted in a small percentage of white forms appearing.



It is a natural occurrence that you will get a range of forms in a seeding population of ***Crocus banaticus*** and we now have several whites that have seeded into our garden and are growing well.



Crocus banaticus



Crocus banaticus



These fragile beauties get chewed and battered by the wind and rain but as I stated earlier the flowers still open and close even when fallen on the ground and as each corm will send up more than one flower, we are assured of a display.



The garden hybrid growing in the slabs.



Looking down into the flowers.



Crocus garden hybrid and (right) *Crocus pulchellus*.



This bed that gives so much through the seasons may look devoid of flowers but looking carefully through the old foliage you will pick out a fine colony of **Crocus speciosus**.



Crocus speciosus



Crocus speciosus is the only bulb currently flowering in this narrow bed which has so many other bulbs flowering through the season.



Crocus speciosus



Crocus speciosus



For years we were disappointed that the white forms of **Crocus banaticus** we got did not survive but patience and allowing our plants to seed has resulted in us now having at least four white clones: this one has lovely wide outer floral segments. I cannot emphasise enough that growing plants from seed is best and most satisfying.....