



BULB LOG.....30-01-2003

Ever wondered why we Scots are always going on about the weather ? Well, on Sunday we had (summer) clear blue skies and a temperature of 17C, Monday (spring) blue skies and 12C, Tuesday (autumn) 60mile per hour gales and driving rain the chill factor making it seem much colder than the 3C and on Wednesday (winter) -4C and snow.



Snow Jan 4

Four seasons in four days it is not only the poor bulbs that do not know if they are coming or going.

Frame cover with snow

Here is the plastic cover I showed in log 4 in action stopping the emerging seedlings from being damaged by the heavy wet snow.



The high temperature of Sunday made the bulbs shoot up, some Crocus that were not even showing on Saturday were in flower by Monday.



*crocus biflorus isauricus*



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*crocus biflorus isauricus*

Crocus biflorus isauricus

No need to take *Crocus biflorus* ssp *isauricus* into the warm kitchen for the flowers to open they were fantastic in the bulb house. The centre picture (above) is the left hand pot, now open, while the one on the right shows the variation even within sub-species.



*C. alexanderi* & *C. alatavicus*

*Crocus biflorus* ssp *alexanderi* is another of the many sub-species of this beautiful crocus. They are fairly easy to grow but are better off under the protection of glass because they come into flower so early.

Beside it, I show *C. alatavicus* the crocus with the most eastern distribution, occurring in Central Asia and China. This is the first year that we have flowered this species and this is the largest flower of the three forms that we have. It is related to *C. michelsonii* shown in in log 4, 2003.



*Crocus danfordiae* & *paschei*

No particular association between these two except they grow beside one another in our bulb house.

We are continually adding to the number of bulbs that we grow but our space is finite so we are growing more and more bulbs in square plastic pots for the simple reason that more fit into the same amount of space. Also we are tending to use smaller pots, 7cm to 13 cm, so we can have the widest range of species and forms rather than the biggest pot full of a single clone.



Crocus gargaricus

We grow Crocus gargaricus in the garden (where they are just peeping through) but these were a few corms left over from our surplus list that got stuck in a pot and how beautiful they are up close. The reason many people fail to get their bulbs to flower is because they do not water and feed them enough. It seems to go against the grain with many growers to water and feed plants in the depth of winter, but this is their growing season and they need that food now. I started feeding this weekend by spreading some sulphate of potash, a white powder, directly onto the gravel of the pots.



Potash on pot

Sulphate of Potash packaging



This was followed by a good watering which takes this soluble feed down to the roots. A level teaspoon of the powder on a 9cm pot will ensure that the plant will be fed for several more waterings before I need to add more. Sulphate of potash is easily found in most garden centres under various brands and I believe that it not only helps your bulbs flower the following year but it also strengthens their resistance to disease. I start adding this feed to bulbs as their flowers are just fading and to young plants that have not yet reached flowering size.



Below staging 29.01

Below the staging we have Crocus that flowered last autumn as well as seedling bulbs of varying types all of which were fed this week.

A first for us was these flowers on *Eranthis pinnatifida*, this beauty is the sort of reward that you get after years of raising a bulb from seed. The challenge now is to try and get it to set seed for us and complete the cycle and to this end I have been out with the paint brush pretending to be a bumble bee.



*Eranthis pinnatifida*