



BULB LOG 0715th February 2006



Iris histrioides major

I remember when *Iris histrioides major* was common place and everyone had quantities of it, then in the course of a few years, it practically disappeared. How pleased I was to receive a tiny bulb on one of my last visits to the late Eric Watson's garden; it took a year or so to flower and now there are two flowers – I do hope that we can keep it going. This is sadly the case with many plants, not just bulbs, one year there are masses then something happens, be it a disease or climatic conditions and it is gone from our gardens. This is a good warning to us not to take for granted plants that appear to be common place - if you do not pay them proper attention they could be lost to cultivation.



Erythronium leaves

The leaves of *Erythronium multiscapoideum* have been showing for some weeks and now others are appearing in the frames. The chewed holes in these fresh greens reminds me to get some slug pellets down soon.



**Narcissus
bulbocodium x
romieuxii**

Back under glass I am pleased with my hybrid between *Narcissus bulbocodium* and *N. romieuxii*. As you can see from the picture it is intermediate between its two parents and I think it is a promising plant – I just have to wait and see if it will increase well and early indications suggest that it will. It has a very big flower 4cms wide by 5.5cm long on a relatively short

(10cm) flower stem. The short stem is always one of the features that I try and select for in the winter flowering narcissus as they do have a tendency to etiolate in our poor light levels, so, the shorter it is to start with the better.



Narcissus pots

Here is a group of mostly *Narcissus romieuxii* forms showing the variation in flower colour as well as the long stems that they develop as a result of low light and of course, it is not helped by the way I grow them so tightly packed together. Notice in the foreground the third pot from the right has a very short form (5cm high) just starting to open. I will show it later when it is in full bloom but this is the shortest form of *romieuxii* I have ever raised. It is in a pot of mixed bulb seedlings lifted from the sand plunge two years ago and it contains mostly *N. rupicola* plus this short *romieuxii*, I must clone it out this year.



Pots of crocus and narcissus

Another view with 7, 8 & 9 cm pots of crocus and narcissus. I have no regrets in my decision to change over to plastic pots and also to keep the size down so I could fit more in.



Crocus abantensis

A well flowered 9 cm pot of *Crocus abantensis* is all you need to appreciate the species - in many ways a single crocus flower in a 7cm pot is simple perfection. However I do also like propagating bulbs so will always tend to pack my pots with as many bulbs as I can get in them even if it means that the flowers overlap each other when they open in milder sunny conditions.



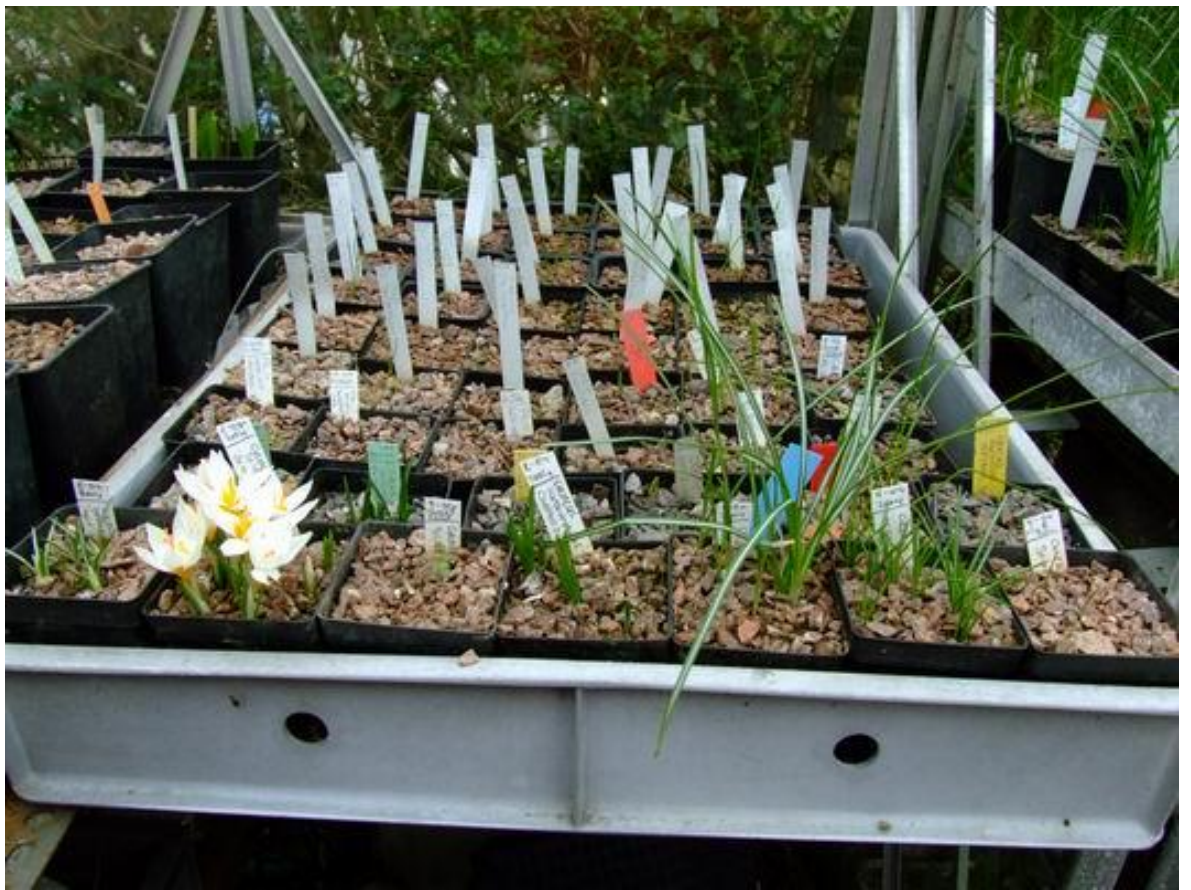
Crocus sieberi sieberi

I think that this form of *Crocus sieberi* ssp. *sieberi* is among the most dramatic colour variants that I have seen. It was given to us by another of the great names in the alpine plant world, the late Harold Esslemont. For years I struggled to please this form, it was one step forward when I thought I had cracked its cultivation then and two steps back as I was reminded never to become nonchalant when looking after your plants.



Crocus sieberi nivalis

Crocus sieberi ssp. *nivalis* is quite a short form and offers no problems in cultivation as it is steadily increasing and next year I will try some outside in a trough or a raised bed.



Crocus pots in tray

Last year I cobbled together this extension tray in the Gothenburg annex and it can hold up to 63 7 cm pots – as you can see it is full already with pots of crocus seedlings.



Crocus alatavicus

This form of *Crocus alatavicus* came from Janis Ruksans and is increasing well vegetatively, however the petals are a bit narrow and it has not set seed for us yet. How often is it the case that the best increasers do not have the best flowers – the other form we raised from Gothenburg seed has beautiful full flowers but it has not made any offsets- it however does set good seed. I have, of course, been cross fertilising the two forms in the hope of combining their best features to give me the perfect plant.



Crocus gargaricus

We have no trouble increasing *Crocus gargaricus* which spreads well in the garden making great patches of the egg yolk yellow flowers - I only wish I could get eggs with yolks that colour nowadays.



Colchicum luteum x kesselringii

A similar colour to my *Colchicum luteum x kesselringii* that is now fully out and looking good.