



BULB LOG.....11-10-2007



Fritillaria rice

While sorting out some *Fritillaria rice* to take to the bulb exchange at the Discussion Weekend I noticed that some of the grains were already growing - you can see clearly the small new shoots emerging from the bulbils. Also note the purple spots often seen on some forms of *F. affinis* and *recurva* – these are rice grains of *F. 'Craigton Cascade'* which is most likely a hybrid between these two species.



Crocus and *Colchicum* battered

Despite the nice weather while we were in Glasgow many of the *Crocus* and *Colchicum* are well battered by the rain and wind. They have not been helped by the plague of slugs and snails we have in the garden either – they often chew the flower stem at ground level dropping the flowers like a lumber jack felling a tree. I do not like using slug pellets in the open garden but I have had enough and am using them sparingly in an attempt to bring these pests under some sort of control.



Crocus speciosus

I had photographed some of these *Crocus speciosus* before the weekend and this picture allows you to compare exactly the same clone pictured in shade and sun. It is incredible how different the colour comes out because we do not see it that way. Our brains look at the colour of the source of light and make adjustments to our colour perception to take that into account. However, when we look at a photograph our brains are not able to detect the temperature of the light source and so we see very different colours. It is possible to adjust the white balance on most digital cameras and if I did that and told the camera I was photographing in strong sunshine it would adjust the balance so the two pictures would be nearer in colour to each other.



Crocus nudiflorus 'Orla'

Our *Crocus nudiflorus* 'Orla' has taken a bit of a battering by the weather and the slugs have felled most of the flowers that were not knocked over by the wind and rain.



Crocus nudiflorus white forms

I am even finding that the slugs and snails are in the bulb house and have chewed one of my white seedlings raised from seed taken from 'Orla'. The majority of seedlings revert to the normal purple colour of *Crocus nudiflorus* but out of perhaps a hundred seedlings I have raised two white forms. *Crocus nudiflorus* 'Orla' is on the left in the picture above and the best of my two whites is on the right.



Crocus nudiflorus white seedling

Here it is in a jar of water – it has fuller petals than 'Orla', also 'Orla' has a slight pink flush when it first opens before fading to white while this seedling opens pure white.



Autumn crocus flowering

When we left on Friday morning these crocus were only just showing through the gravel and now after the weekend of sunshine some flowers are just past their best.



Crocus hadriaticus and niveus

The shorter flowers in the foreground are *Crocus hadriaticus* and the larger *C. niveus* is behind it - they are both superficially similar but can be easily identified by a few key features.



Crocus bracts

Notice the bracts – these are the papery sheaths that the flower tube rises from – are quite different. *Crocus niveus* on the right has well-extended green striped bracts that are very obvious while the bracts of *Crocus hadriaticus* on the left are much shorter and less noticeable.



Crocus hadriaticus

I took this picture this morning when the sky was quite grey with heavy low cloud and the temperature was on the low side. By the afternoon the sun broke through the clouds and the temperature started to rise opening all the crocus flowers so I can now show you the different styles of these two species.



Looking into *Crocus niveus* flower

Also the styles of the two species are quite different above is a picture showing the styles of *Crocus niveus*.



Crocus hadriaticus flower

Here are the flowers of *Crocus hadriaticus* – you can see the difference in the style shape.



Crocus hadriaticus lilacinus

To add to the confusion we get a lilac form of *Crocus hadriaticus* but look at the style and you can quickly identify this species. I have forms of *Crocus hadriaticus* lilacinus with various degrees of lilac this is one of the paler ones.



Crocus niveus

This is an interesting, very short, lilac colour form of *Crocus niveus* that I got from Tony Goode. Even though it is smaller than the other large white *C. niveus* I have just showed you, by looking at the bracts and the shape of the style we can see it is *niveus* – I like this a lot.



Crocus in bulb house

Crocus flowers are also appearing in the bulb house and as the warm conditions are set to continue for the next few days – so the weather man says – more will appear.



Removing dead crocus flowers

It is very important to remove the dead flowers when they have collapsed. The reason for this is that in damp weather they quickly become attacked by grey moulds such as botrytis and that can spread to infect the leaves and even the corm if they are not removed.



Crocus oreoreticus

I will finish this week with *Crocus oreoreticus*; another wee beauty and the promise of many more crocus pictures in next week's log.