



Corydalis 'Beth Evans' and 'Craigton Red'

After a relatively bright and sunny few days the Corydalis are taking over the mantle of adding the colour from the Eranthis. Pale pink Corydalis 'Beth Evans' is in the foreground with 'Craigton Red' towards the back of this scene.



What was bare ground only a few weeks ago is now barely visible hidden by the extensive spring growth of bulbs. If your garden does not look like this in early spring it could do; if you start to sow some *Corydalis solida* and *C. malkensis* seeds around - once they are established they will self sow especially *Corydalis malkensis*.



Corydalis in the bulb house

In my experience all the forms of *Corydalis solida* grow much better in the garden where they enjoy our moist humus rich soil but I still grow a number of the related species under glass. Although some of the species require a drier summer rest I suspect that most of the ones I grow under glass will also grow well outside. Now my stocks are building up is my intention to plant at least half of each form outside and watch to see how they grow. I know that some will be fine as they have appeared in the beds where I have spread the discarded gravel top dressing when I do the summer repot and obviously there were seeds mixed into that gravel which are now flowering – I am just finding it a bit difficult to work out what species these seedlings are.



Corydalis paschei

Let me share my identification problem with you. This is *Corydalis paschei* that I got originally as a bulb from Gothenburg Botanic Garden the home of *Corydalis* studies. After fertilising the flowers with a paint brush I have on several occasions successfully collected seed from this plant and the resulting seedlings are flowering freely.



Corydalis paschei seedling

Here is one of the pots of *Corydalis paschei* seedlings but they look different to the seed parent and do not key out very well. I suspect that what I have in these seed raised plants is a whole lot of hybrids between the closely related species that I am growing.



Corydalis: wendelboi, paschei, nudicaulis and oppositiflora ssp kurdica

From left to right the top row is the flower of the actual species and the bottom row is the seedling with that species as its seed parent. The only one of the seedlings which I think may still be a species, although I am not 100% convinced, is *Corydalis oppositiflora* all the others seem to show signs of hybridisation with the bottom row of flowers looking very different to the top row. *Corydalis wendelboi* seems to have crossed with *Corydalis paschei* and vice versa – see what you think.



***Corydalis oppositiflora* ssp *kurdica* seedlings**

This is my pot of *Corydalis oppositiflora* ssp *kurdica* seedlings which look to me to fall into the parameters that describe this species. I am not sure if I will try this one outside because as the name suggests it comes from an area where it would experience drier summer rest than we can offer it outside in Aberdeen.



Corydalis nudicaulis

The flowers of *Corydalis nudicaulis* are distinctive with the dark brown outer parts of the flower contrasting well with the white spur and I also love the metallic violet highlights. This one I will try outside as its habitat is described as 'humusy soils near streams and among shrubs'. If you look back to the comparison picture above you will see that the seedlings I raised from this species are nothing like the parent so have definitely hybridised.



Corydalis schanginii* ssp. *ainae



Another very distinctive and beautiful species is *Corydalis schanginii* ssp. *ainae* which again has a very nice contrasting stripe of colour towards the end mouth of the flower.

I did try this species outside many years ago when I first got it but lost all my stock in the first year.

I do not consider this sort of failure as a complete loss because I have gained experience from the loss of this plant and will hopefully not make the same mistake again.

I only got it back a year or so ago when a kind friend gave me a few bulbs. I will not rush to try this species outside until I have built up some spare stock.

However when I have spare stock I will try it outside but mindful of my first experience I will be more selective in the place I plant it.



South facing bulb bed

This very narrow south facing bed at the base of our kitchen wall is where I often scatter the gravel topdressing at repotting time and you can see a fine clump of *Corydalis* has established there. As this is probably the hottest driest bed we have to offer in our garden we grow a number of Tulips there. While a few have not flourished many are establishing quite well and are flowering every year.



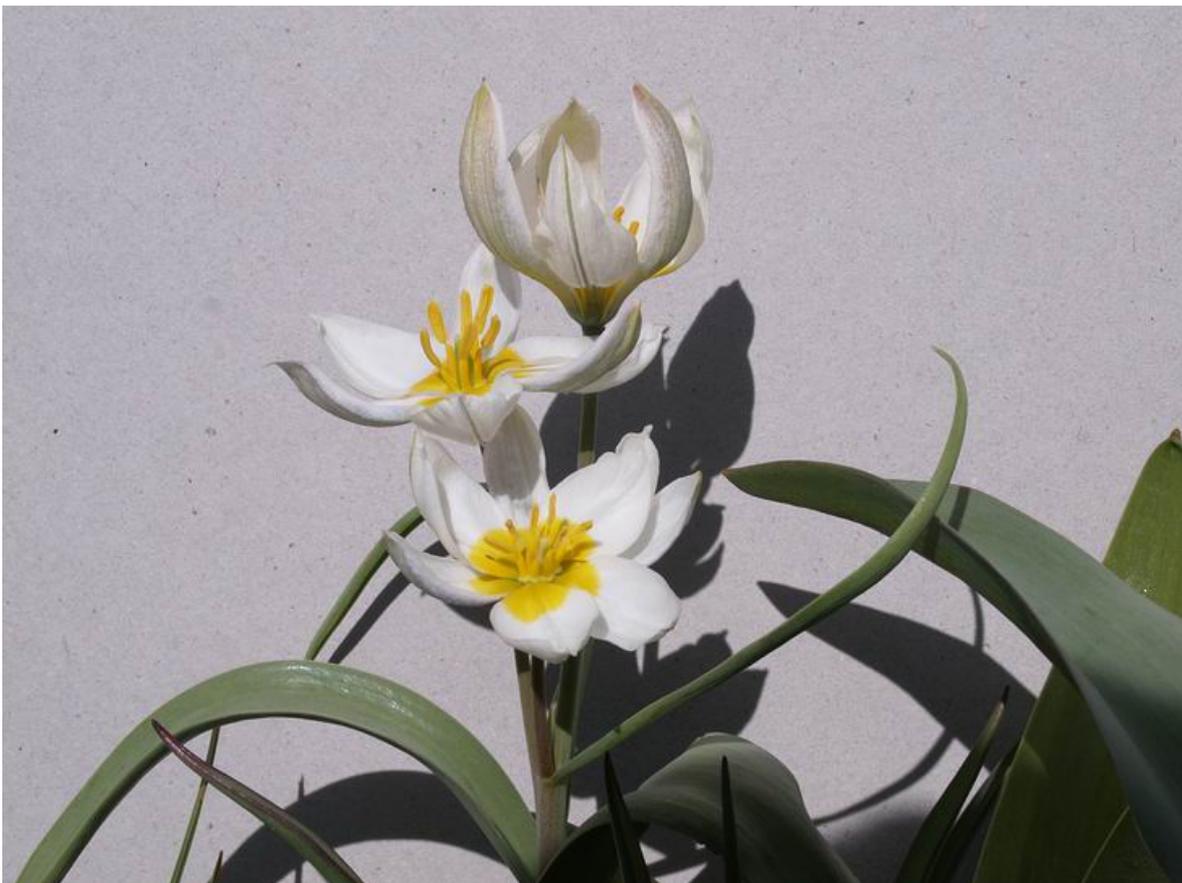
Tulipa bifloriformis

Perhaps because it is very 'Erythronium like', *Tulipa bifloriformis* is one of my favourites and really shows when the flowers reflex in the sunshine how closely these two genera are related.



Tulipa bifloriformis

I am always pleased to see beneficial insect life this early in the year. This hover fly has been attracted out by the warmth of the sun and the chance of a tasty feed on pollen and nectar. One of the numerous benefits of growing lots of bulbs is that many of them tend to flower very early or late in the year taking advantage of the habitat when the main flush of plant growth has not started or is starting to shut down and by so doing provide insects food at what would be difficult times of the year for them. So it is not just the gardener that they bring pleasure to but they also help increase the biodiversity of our gardens.



Tulipa biflorus

Another successful inhabitant of the same south facing bed is Tulipa biflorus a lovely short stemmed plant with relatively large white flowers which reveal a golden yellow centre when they open in the sunshine.

It often has more than the two flowers that the specific name would suggest per stem.

This species is most often offered in the trade under the synonym Tulipa polychroma.



Ornithogalum species



Ornithogalum lanceolatum

Back in the bulb house I have a number of *Ornithogalum* species flowering again for the second year since a kindly friend sent me a few bulbs just over a year ago. I do not know the specific name for the first one above but the one immediately above is, I think, *Ornithogalum lanceolatum*.



Ornithogalum lanceolatum – close up

There are a number of *Ornithogalum* species that are established as perfectly hardy in the garden and some around quite freely I would love to think that these almost stem less forms would also take to growing in a well chosen situation on the rock garden – as soon as I have spares I will be trying them.



Ornithogalum sp.

This is a real beauty and it has increased well from the single bulb that I potted just over a year ago. I did not re pot it last summer but I will certainly have to this year as the bulb growth is swelling the sides of the pot already.



Narcissus 'Mitimoto'

Gifts of bulbs from kind friends seem to have become the sub-plot of this week's bulb log as this beautiful hoop petticoat Narcissus 'Mitimoto' was also sent to me as a gift.

If you just think it looks like another of those funnel shaped daffodils look again – and this time look more carefully at the petals/perianth segments.

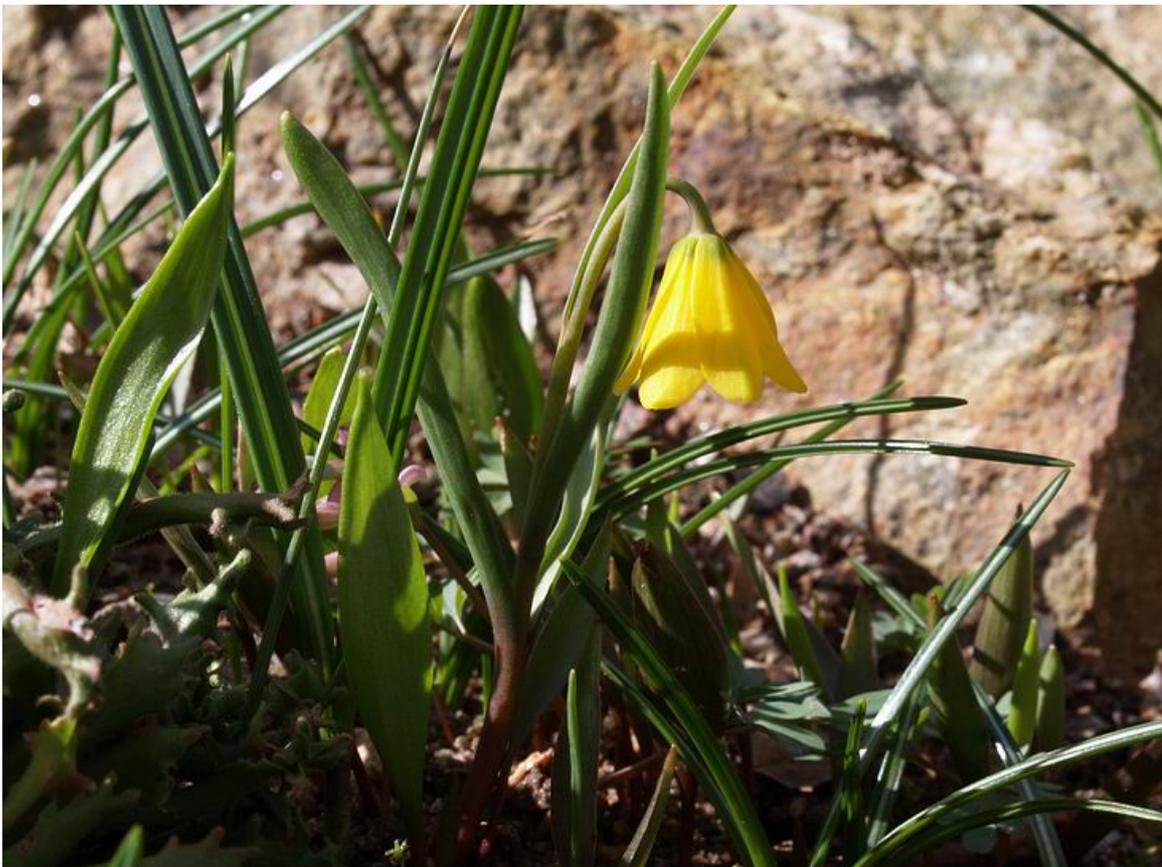
It is a bicoloured form with pale almost white petals that contrast well with the lemon yellow corona.

It is a hybrid between Narcissus 'Nylon Group and Narcissus bulbocodium conspicuus and was made in Australia where they have a lot of very skilful and enthusiastic growers of Narcissus.



Crocus veluchensis

This *Crocus veluchensis* is growing happily in the new small sand plunge I made a few years ago to accommodate stray bulbs and to experiment with planting bulbs outside that I have only previously grown under glass. This one comes under the stray bulbs as it was the only one of the five seeds that I originally got that reached any size and as I had just completed this bed when I repotted it I decided it was not worth wasting a pot for a single corm so out it went.



Fritillaria pudica

Also at the time of construction of this sand bed I planted a lot of bulbils from the rice grain forming *Fritillaria*.

This *Fritillaria pudica* is among the first to reach flowering size having taken just two growing seasons.



Liverwort on Uvularia seed pot

One of the many jobs that I am trying to catch up with is tidying up the seed frame area and I will show you more of this in future logs but for now I am removing the liverwort that has colonised so many of the seed pots.

It is a relatively easy task to clean up bulb type seeds that germinated last year. As the bulbs will be below the gravel layer I can simply pick it off complete with the offending liverwort without disturbing the seedlings then re-top dress the pot with fresh clean gravel.



Uvularia seedlings

I did disturb a few that were growing right at the edge of the pot and thought you might like to see how they are taking themselves down into the soil so their 'crown' will be protected.



Now I will round off with a few more pictures of the garden wearing its spring colours.



With some of my stock boxes of *Eranthis* 'Guinea Gold' and *Corydalis* cultivars I could start a new fashion in checkerboard rock gardening!!



As a post script I took these pictures over the weekend and through Monday when I was for some of the time down to my short sleeves but as I write this bulb log it is blowing a gale intermixed with snow, sleet and rain giving the garden a very different look.



Snow and gales on 31st March

Log back in next week to see how these delicate looking plants have survived.