



BULB LOG 39.....29<sup>th</sup> September 2010



**Aircraft**



**Peter Korn**

I seem to have spent a lot of time in airports and aircraft this last week or ten days as I travelled between Gothenburg, Amsterdam, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Cork and Limerick giving talks and meeting lots of people.

While in Gothenburg I stayed with Peter Korn who had organised the well attended bulb day I was talking at which had enthusiastic delegates from Norway and Denmark as well as from Sweden.



**Crocus corms**

I did not suffer any withdrawal symptoms from lack of bulb potting while I stayed with Peter because we spent one wet afternoon repotting a small part of his extensive bulb collection. I worked on his crocus species some of which showed growth at an advanced stage even though no water had been applied. It is clear from these pictures that these crocus have evolved to flower within certain time windows using the reserves in the corm if no moisture is available. The root tips were evident in many of the corms I repotted, probing in search of any moisture and they will enter a phase of rapid growth as soon as water is available to them.



**Crocus corm with rot**

In one pot I found some corms that had been attacked by a rot with the top of the corm including the main bud completely eaten away while others in the same pot were completely healthy. It is not clear to me why this localised attack happens but it is reassuring to all growers to know that we are not the only ones to suffer from this type of loss in our bulb collections.



### **New buds**

Now the good news – the loss of the dominant bud on a corm does not mean the loss of the corm. Corms are compressed stems and we all know that if you want a stem to branch out you remove the tip with the dominant bud allowing the other side buds to initiate into growth. The picture above shows clearly that now the main bud has gone from this corm a number of side buds are growing and by the end of the growing season next spring this damaged corm will be replaced by a number of small cormlets.



### **Peter's Garden**

I have been visiting Gothenburg for many years now with the Botanic Garden being the big attraction – now there are two major attractions as the wonderful garden that Peter Korn is creating from a forest takes shape.

Cut out of a forestry plantation this massive garden now offers a diverse range of habitats to suit the many thousands of plants that Peter grows.



**Rock Garden**



I know of nobody who has the drive and energy of Peter, who mostly single handedly, has dug down through two meters of hard packed subsoils to expose these magnificent bedrock formations, see picture above, which from the structure of the rock garden. The excavated material has been used to raise up other wetter parts of the garden creating magnificent ponds and wetland habitats.

Hundreds of tonnes of sand have been brought into the garden to form great mounds which are then planted up with tens of thousands of plants mostly raised from seed by Peter.

If this is not the biggest rock garden in the world then it must come close – I know of none bigger.

Peter has also pioneered new ways of growing the alpines by creating mounds of sand that have their base in slowly flowing water providing a range of habitats from very wet at the base to dry and cool at the top of the mound. Most alpines can find a niche to suit them in this type of bed where their top growth can be dry while their roots penetrate deeply to the cool moist conditions below.



**Peter Korn's Garden**

The stumps of some of the hundreds of trees that Peter has felled form a feature in a moist small mound of sand at the edge of this pool of water where a number of plants are thriving. Peter is soon off on a five week Speaking Tour in North America from San Francisco to Calgary and my advice to you if you are near any of those venues is not to miss the opportunity to be fascinated and learn from Peter Korn who in my mind is one of the major figures in modern day Rock Gardening.



**Crocus autranii**

Just before I left on my travels I was delighted to photograph the first flowering of my pot of *Crocus autranii* seedlings- raised from seeds I received from Gothenburg and sowed on 30/04/2002. You never lose the thrill of seeing the first flowers from a pot of bulb seedlings especially when it is the first time that you have flowered that species.

Two more pictures below show details of this great beauty that is sadly still very rare in cultivation.



**Crocus autranii**



**Crocus autranii**

During my brief visit to Gothenburg Botanic Garden I was, as always, drawn towards the bulb collection where my pride in my single flower on *Crocus autranii* was put into perspective by this magnificent show, the source of my seeds in their collection. Despite the few flowers that had passed their best and that there was no warmth or sunlight to encourage the flowers to open, it was a fine potful.



**Crocus gilanicus x autranii**

As if to rub salt into my damaged pride the next pot in the plunge was the lovely hybrid between *Crocus gilanicus* and *C. autranii*.



**Colchicum bivonae**

I spent a lovely hour studying the *Colchicum* collection many of which were in full bloom like the lovely tessellated flowers of *Colchicum bivonae*.



## Colchicum at Gothenburg



There were hundreds of flowers out and I was fascinated by the collection as I find many of them very difficult to distinguish but there were some very attractive plants there.

There were large and compact flowering variations that would suit a wide range of positions in our gardens from troughs and raised beds to the larger rock gardens.

### **Colchicum variegatum**

Colchicum variegatum on the left is one of my favourite species and two colour forms can be seen here.

I will leave the beauty of the plants in the next few pictures to speak for themselves.



**Colchicum cilicicum**



**Colchicums**



## **Peter Korn and Henrik Zetterlund**

On my all too brief visit to Gothenburg Botanic Garden I was delighted to meet up with many of my friends there including the legend that is Henrik Zetterlund pictured here with Peter Korn.

## **Patrina sp.**

Henrik was keen to show me some of the recent introductions he has made to the garden including two superb forms of an as yet unidentified *Patrina*. One form was more compact than the other and was forming a clump with young growths appearing from stolons while the other, slightly larger form pictured here, demonstrated what a valuable introduction this could turn out to be. Henrik told me that it had been flowering since the summer and still it made a fantastic display with the acid yellow flowers over green and red autumn coloured foliage.

I was always lured to Gothenburg by the attraction of this wonderful botanic garden and especially for me the bulb collection, now with Peter Korn's Garden there are two powerful reasons to make a trip to



Gothenburg – I would highly recommend that you make it one day.



**Bulbs for sale**

Passing through Amsterdam Airport I am reminded of the large scale commercial interest in bulbs and just how important they are to all our gardens.



**Colchicum variegatum**

I will close this week with another picture of perhaps my favourite Colchicum species Colchicum variegatum which I do not grow but can enjoy in my garden through it being the parent of the more widely grown Colchicum x agrippinum.