



BULB LOG 06.....9th February 2011



Garden view

The garden is looking much better and ready for the spring now that we have got most of the leaves up and the mulch from our compost heaps spread on the beds. Previously this view would have been dominated by a Cotoneaster tree just behind the raised bed until we took it down two years ago. This greatly opened up the beds below the tree and also revealed how big the Hamamelis had grown.



Hamamelis

We have two Hamamelis in the garden one yellow and one red and it is always a joy to see their flowers adding valuable colour to the winter garden.



Hamamelis

While the red Hamamelis has a good shape which I hope to improve on in coming years by careful pruning. The yellow one has always been heavily over grown by both large Rhododendrons and trees so it has very straggly sideways growth which will never be improved so we just have to enjoy the flowers as they reach out to the light.



Cyclamen coum

A single flower rises from a seedling Cyclamen coum in a gravel area: it is one of the many hundreds of seeds that I have scattered in my attempt to find a form of this great plant that will thrive in our garden providing us with its floral display in late winter and early spring.



Eranthis hyemalis

Eranthis hyemalis are now visible in many of the beds, pushing their way through the newly spread mulch, revealing their cheery yellow faces. I will have to wait a while longer to see if any of the less hardy *Eranthis cilicicus* have survived this winter.



Eranthis pinnatifida

I think the most beautiful of all this genus is *Eranthis pinnatifida*, it is such a wee beauty. It is perfectly hardy as it lives in an open plunge exposed to the elements all year round and I only bring it into the glasshouse so that I can enjoy it better when it comes into flower. I do have some seedlings coming along and when they are ready to be potted on I intend to plant them into some troughs and raised beds.



Eranthis pinnatifida

Many stems have two flowers which when they first appear have poorly formed petals see left above. This is not a problem as the petals continue to form over time- not in the protection of a bud as in other plants but in the open so we can watch them slowly reaching their mature beauty.



Eranthis pinnatifida

Getting in close shows what a perfect arrangement of form and colour this flower is with its combination of yellow, violet and white. The only other Eranthis that comes near to this for beauty is Eranthis stellata which has to date eluded me – if anyone has spare seed that they might like to swap I would be delighted to hear from you as this is one of the plants on my wants list.



Iris histrio and Narcissus

The last few days have seen an explosion in the flowering in the bulb houses. I was away for the day on Saturday so I missed one day but it seems that they have come into flower quicker than I was expecting. Having said that most are well behind the time they have flowered in recent years and as I always think that seasons have a way of catching up with themselves so it should not surprise me to see this sudden floral display.



Iris vartanii

This is a strange little flower on this rare member of the reticulate Iris from Israel. For some reason it has not formed properly this year it will be interesting to see if the other bud opens the same. To see the fully formed flower, check out [Bulb log 5209](#)

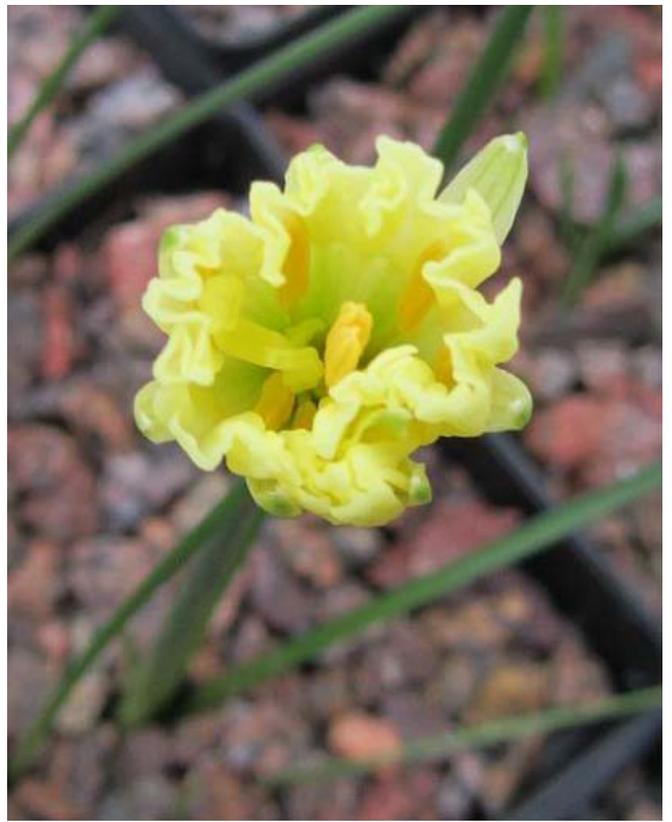


Narcissus flower opening

It is the mass of Narcissus flowers opening just now that I am spending a lot of time studying and photographing. How to best capture the details of the flower photographically is always a challenge especially in the low light levels we get. To get a sharp picture without camera shake when hand holding the camera needs a shutter speed of at least 1/30th of a second exposure with a relatively wide aperture so the depth of field is always going to be shallow – this can be seen in the picture above where only a few scattered points at equal distances from the lens are in sharp focus the rest of the image is fuzzy. This can be a nice effect if used artistically to isolate parts of the flower against the out of focus background or foreground but for the purposes of these portraits of the flowers I want to see the detail.

To get as much of the image as possible to be sharp I need to close the aperture down to its smallest setting, (highest f number) and this means using either a very slow shutter speed or using flash. I chose to use flash for the next series of pictures and you can compare the effect with the picture on the right which is the same flower as above this time photographed using flash.





Narcissus flower and bud

This is an interesting seedling of *Narcissus romieuxii* – I noted when it first flowered last year that the outside circumference of the corona was so large that it could not open fully. I was curious to know if this feature was stable and now I can see that it is as it has done the same thing this year and looking at the number of pleats in the bud of the offset it looks to be the same. This is not a desirable feature in my view so if the bud does open like this then it will be the end of the road for this clone.



Narcissus romieuxii

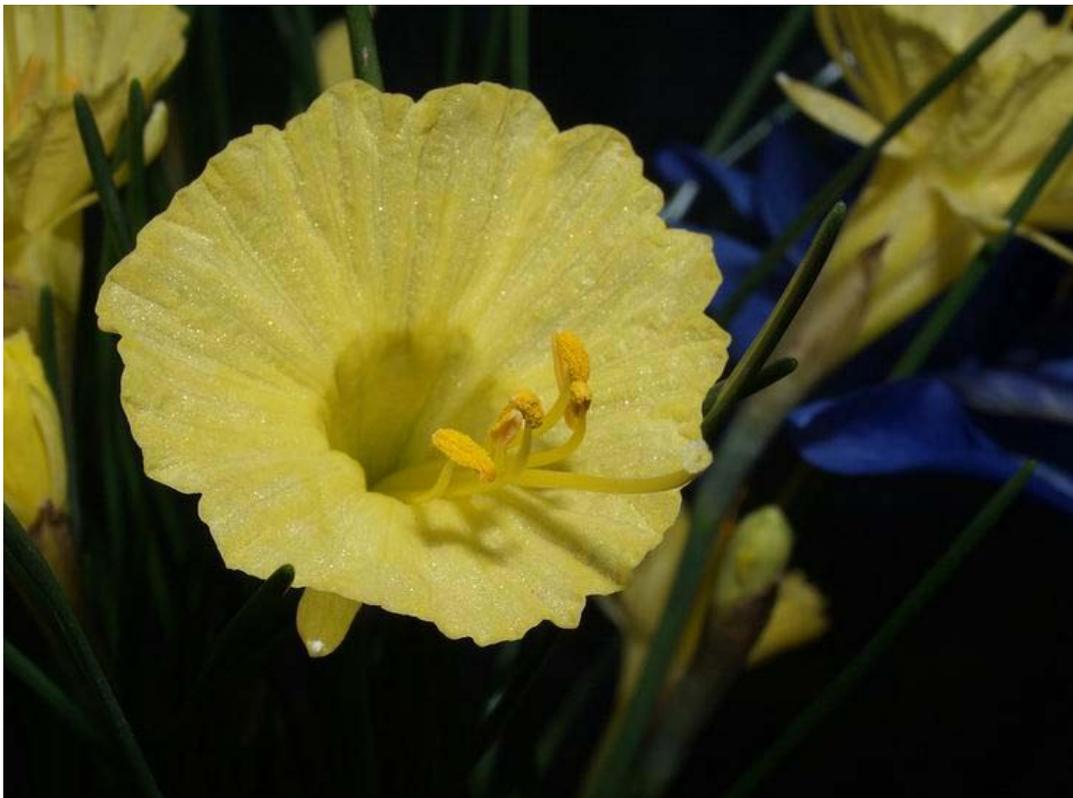
It is quite common to find a lot of widely flared, almost petunioide, forms of *Narcissus romieuxii* where the corona flares widely from the point where the petals join it.

The rest of this week's bulb log is a photo essay of just a few of the many and various forms and hybrids involving *Narcissus romieuxii*, *N. cantabricus* and *N. bulbocodium* seedlings that we have in flower just now all raised from our own garden collected seeds.



Narcissus romieuxii

The first few are, I think all forms of *Narcissus romieuxii* but as they are very promiscuous and we have so many species and hybrids growing together it is difficult to be 100 percent sure.

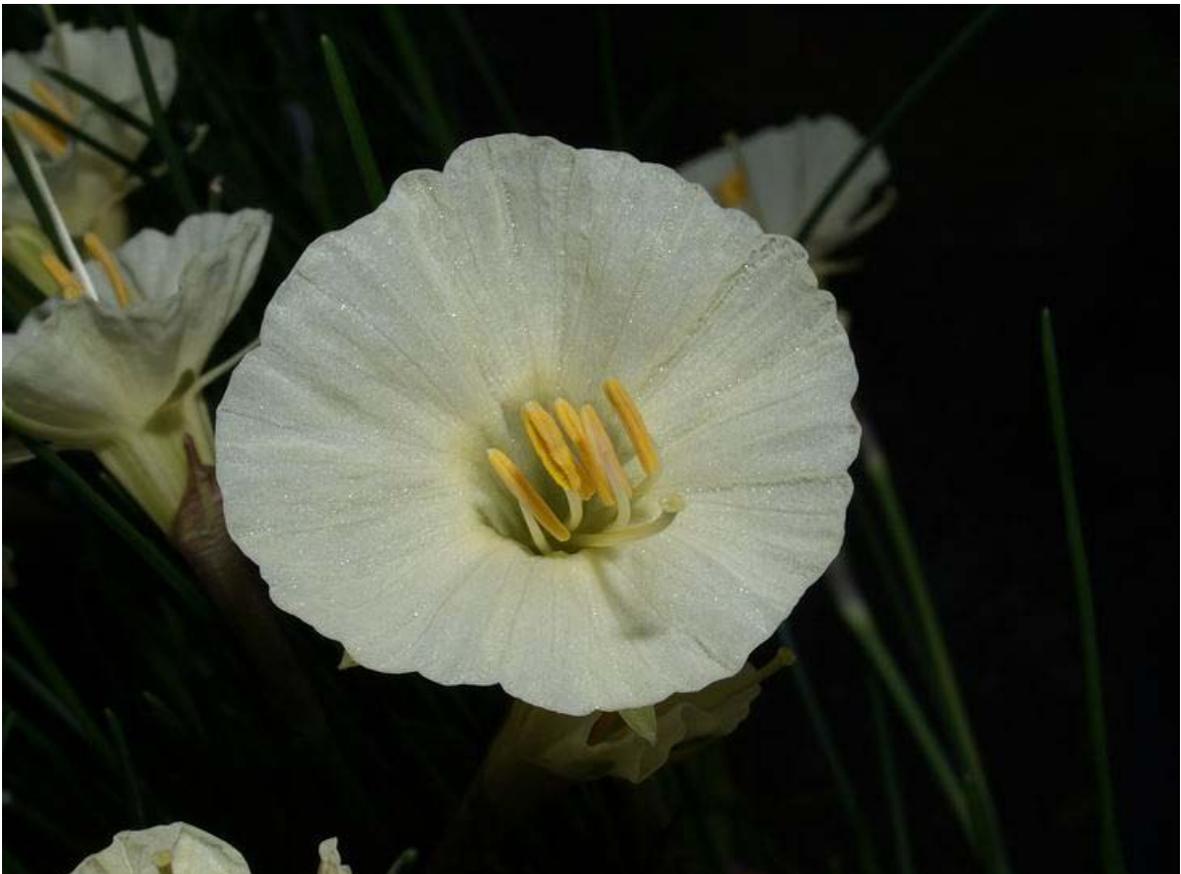


Narcissus romieuxii

What you will notice on all these forms of *Narcissus romieuxii* is that the filaments and style are more or less the same colour as the corona - that is to say that they are never pure white.



Narcissus romieuxii



Narcissus romieuxii

Narcissus romieuxii

This is one of the lobed corona group and I got this as Narcissus 'Joy Bishop'.



Narcissus romieuxii

As I mentioned above I think that all the pictures to here have been forms of the species *Narcissus romieuxii* which shows you how variable it can be – and I could easily show you the same number again of more variations. It is difficult enough in the wild to put a specific name on many of the hoop petticoat *Narcissus* as the botanists would testify but when they come into contact with other species in cultivation anything can and does happen. If you want to see some wonderful pictures of many *Narcissus* species growing in the wild and correctly identified then check out some of Rafa Dominguez' fantastic pictures in the [Narcissus pages](#) in the forum where you will also find plenty other forumists have posted fabulous pictures from the wild and cultivation



Narcissus seedling

The white filaments on this flower separate it from *Narcissus romieuxii* and suggest to me that this one is allied to *Narcissus cantabricus*. Again the flower below has pure white filaments and style and a more funnel shaped flower.



Narcissus seedling



Narcissus seedling



The back view of another seedling



Side view of another



Narcissus

I will finish off with this one which I am not sure about - it has yellow filaments and style and may involve *Narcissus bulbocodium* and *N. romieuxii*. Most of these seedlings came out of the sand plunge and that is why I do not even know the seed parent with any certainty.