



BULB LOG 37.....14th September 2011



Dianthus alpinus

I was disappointed that our *Dianthus alpinus* had not flowered earlier in the year but they are making up for it now with a lovely display. I have a number of seedlings from the same stock and they are all flowering later than normal. We speak all the time about the weather, seasons, flowering etc being different from normal but what is normal? It is my view that there can be an average season but not a normal

one - the plants will flower when the conditions are suitable.



Fragaria vesca

Eagle eyed viewers will have noticed the strawberry plant growing by the trough above. We have a number of self seeded strawberries around the garden some from the wild, 'Alpine' strawberry and some from the many cultivars that are around. This one is towards the alpine variety with small but delicious fruits.



Actaea alba berries

While looking at fruits I discover some unusual combinations that appear in the garden: the white berries of the "Dolls'Eye" Actaea poke through the leaves of Paeonia lutea.



Another unusual combination is this *Glauucidium palmatum* leaf and fruit overlaid by a *Corydalis* leaf which are growing under the giant fruiting stem of a *Cardiocrinum giganteum*. To give the impression of the scale I have to reach up to grab the seed pods as the stem towers over me.



Rhodohypoxis baurei

Some of the troughs with *Rhodohypoxis baurei* are still in good flower while others are now passed. This could be down to a combination of different seed raised clones and the fact that these troughs were first watered two weeks after the others.



Fritillaria bulbs

Having watered the bulb houses with the Crocus, Narcissus etc I am now working my way through repotting the Fritillaria so I can water them at the end of the month. Some like this pot of Fritillaria tubiformis which lives outside is already well rooted and needs to be handled carefully. I would normally repot these as soon as they go dormant in July but wet weather has prevented that and now I am too late – I will leave the other pots of this species until next year.



Fritillaria crassifolia bulbs

Some bulbs just do not like our conditions and I struggle to keep them going.

I have grown this form of Fritillaria crassifolia crassifolia for many years but only manage to get it to flower every three years or so. It is very susceptible to rotting if the compost is too wet as it enters its summer dormancy and you can see that it did not like this summer in Aberdeen. Other forms

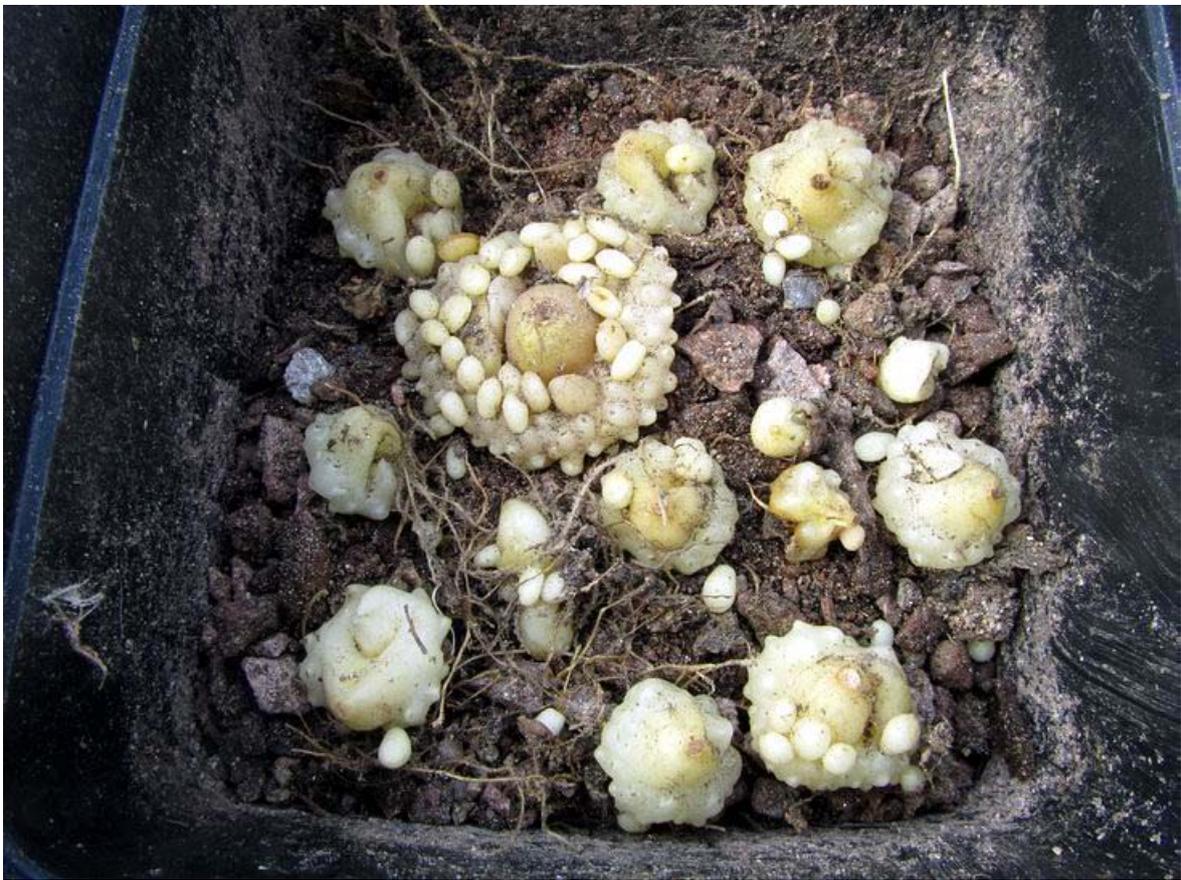
of Fritillaria crassifolia grow very well for us and it is only because this one has a very attractive flower that I persist with it.



***Fritillaria pudica* bulbs**

Here I have separated the larger sized *Fritillaria pudica* bulbs from the masses of detached rice grains.





Fritillaria pudica bulbs

I have repotted these large bulbs and after a bit of work have separated the rice grains out from the compost to grow on separately with some surplus left over for the small bulb exchange at the Discussion weekend. For preference I like to grow the rice grains on separately from the full size bulbs so that I can give them a more intensive feeding regime which consists of dilute liquid feed every time I water them when they are in leaf. However I often have to compromise because of space and grow them all together.



Fritillaria bulbs

With some of the Frits that I repotted last year I am just doing a health check by tipping the compost out so I can see the bulbs before replacing it with the addition of a small pinch of bone meal.



Fritillaria purdyi bulb

A single bulb is all that I managed to raise from a seed exchange and it had taken itself right to the bottom of the pot. It seems to flower every second year and, as the fat bud that is already extending between the two scales indicates, it will flower next spring.



Fritillaria reuteri bulbs

With the exception the middle bulb these Fritillaria reuteri bulbs are immature with only one scale and so will take two more years to flower.



Narcissus fly grub

This is a very unwelcome sight in our garden and not one that I have been faced with, except from an introduced bulb a few years ago.

We did think we spotted some Narcissus flies around this year and that is now confirmed as I discovered this in a pot of *Narcissus cyclamineus* bulbs.

The centre has been completely eaten away to feed the fat grub which I guess would have lain dormant for the winter before emerging next summer to spread its genes – not this one.

I have not thrown the bulb away as I am hopeful that what is left of the scales will produce some growth buds.



Caterpillar

I discovered that something had been eating the petals on some of the *Crocus vallicola* and after a search found the culprit. I am not so worried about a caterpillar that has a chew at a flower and leaves the bulb intact.



How used we are to colour pictures. I had been using the black and white setting on my camera and forgot to change it for this Crocus picture - as soon as I realized, I retook it in full glorious colour.



Crocus speciosus* x *kotschyanus



Aberdeen is noted for its wide range of cloud formations; sticking out into the North Sea with the mountains to the west of us apparently leads to these glorious effects. Of course we get the weather with it.