



BULB LOG 08.....19th February 2014



Bulb house

For the most part the troughs in front of the bulb house are still in a winter state of rest although there are some Saxifrage flowers with colour that I will show you in the coming weeks but inside is a very different picture. Still in a winter state but this time it is of masses of winter flowering bulbs – mostly Narcissus.



Prop-house

The 7cm pot plunge in the Prop-house is equally colourful again with the majority of the colour coming from the hoop petticoat Narcissus.



Bulb house plunge

There are literally thousands of Narcissus flowers, some starting to go over while new ones are still opening on a daily basis. There is so much growth that it is easy to overlook some plants: *Colchicum coustourierii* is in full



flower hiding under a canopy of taller Narcissus leaves. I will have to make some notes about the order the pots are placed in. When I stacked the pots back into the new plunges last summer I did try and keep some system to try and avoid this clash of the smaller plants being hidden but I am making some notes to reposition the likes of this *Colchicum* so that it will not get lost.

Colchicum coustourierii



Narcissus bulbocodium and Narcissus romieuxii JWB 8913

The larger flowers in this picture are *Narcissus bulbocodium* and the smaller ones are the lovely yellow form of *Narcissus romieuxii* JWB 8913. These are very closely related and will hybridise freely; some may even say they are a continuous polymorphic species. In the wild isolated populations can stabilise and become 'species' but where there is the chance of cross pollination, such as a bulb house, then they will inter-breed.



Narcissus bulbocodium seedlings

Here is a pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium* seedlings from my own seed and I suspect that these have hybridised.



Narcissus perez-chiscanoi x cyclamineus

I raised seedlings from our pot of *Narcissus perez-chiscanoi* – a name which has been retired and replaced with *Narcissus confusus* – and as you can see from the swept back petals of the right hand one it has hybridised with *Narcissus cyclamineus*.



Narcissus cantabricus

It is difficult to choose favourites in fact I find it impossible but I do have a particular fondness for the pure crystalline white flowers of *Narcissus cantabricus*- this is a relatively small flowered form on short robust stems.



699.850 : NARCISSUS CANTABRICUS var. PETUNIOIDES * Selfed seed from the original clone, described by Fernandes from material grown by John Blanchard's father. (It should have had a *clonal* name.) All will be white but only some will have the distinct, flat, round corona of the parent. The name can be applied legitimately only to these. (10+) **E**



I got this plant from Jim and Jenny Archibald and above is Jim's description from one of his numerous and informative seed lists. These lists and Archibald's writings are a wonderful source of knowledge from this great Plantsman and are freely available through the [Archibald Archive](#) on the SRGC website.

Narcissus cantabricus var. petunioides

One of the most sought after forms of *Narcissus cantabricus* is the petunioid variety. When the flowers first emerge they appear to have a typical corona but then the edges turn back to form this great flat disc.

As Jim states not all the seedlings will have this feature so they need to be rigorously selected only applying the varietal name to petunioid forms.



Narcissus 'Don Stead'

A hybrid between *Narcissus cantabricus* and *N. bulbocodium* raised by the late Don Stead is a very good plant – it



has been stated in the forum that the flowers are typically squashed. All the hoop peticoat Narcissus flowers continue to grow and expand after they emerge from the bud and it is this early stage that gives the flattened look. The flowers do open fully to form a very distinctive shape with a constriction around the corona where the petals are attached . If you are interested in these plants you should visit the [Narcissus pages](#) in the SRGC Forum

where you will find a wealth of pictures and information. The [Forum](#) is open to be viewed by every one but if you register you will be able to join in the discussion with the thousands that form the biggest most active international group of the SRGC.



Narcissus sp. ex Morocco

Very similar in many ways to *Narcissus cantabricus* is this unknown species from Morocco – it is another that came from the Archibalds. It has small flowers with pale cream pollen – below you can compare the size of the flowers with those of *Narcissus eualbidus* which, as those who grow it will know, is not itself that big a flower.



Narcissus eualbidus and Narcissus sp. ex Morocco



Bulb house sand plunge

The bulb house sand plunge that I started a few years ago and re- did last summer has a lot of Narcissus flowers. It is great to give the bulbs the freedom of the plunge and see how they grow when not contained in a pot. I am very pleased how the plants are doing, allowing them to self-seed and also scattering other seeds into the sand. I do plan to renew this staging along with replacing the old staging in the Frit-house this summer so it will be disturbed again but reinstated as a free sand plunge.



Partly due to the lack of close competition the flower stems are much shorter in the sand bed. If you want to hear a great talk on raising and hybridising these dwarf Narcissus Anne Wright is speaking at the [‘World of Bulbs 5’](#) in Birmingham this Saturday 22nd February . Anne is a great grower who also runs a small specialist nursery, [Dryad Nursery](#), offering dwarf Narcissus and others. I am also giving a talk there: ‘Bulbs from seed to the garden’.



At last the temperature in the prop-house was warm enough for the Crocus flowers to open. I did pull the door shut for a few hours when the sun shone to help get the temperature up.

This picture shows a number of pots of collected seed raised Crocus most of which are turning out to be *Crocus chrysanthus* and *Crocus biflorus*.



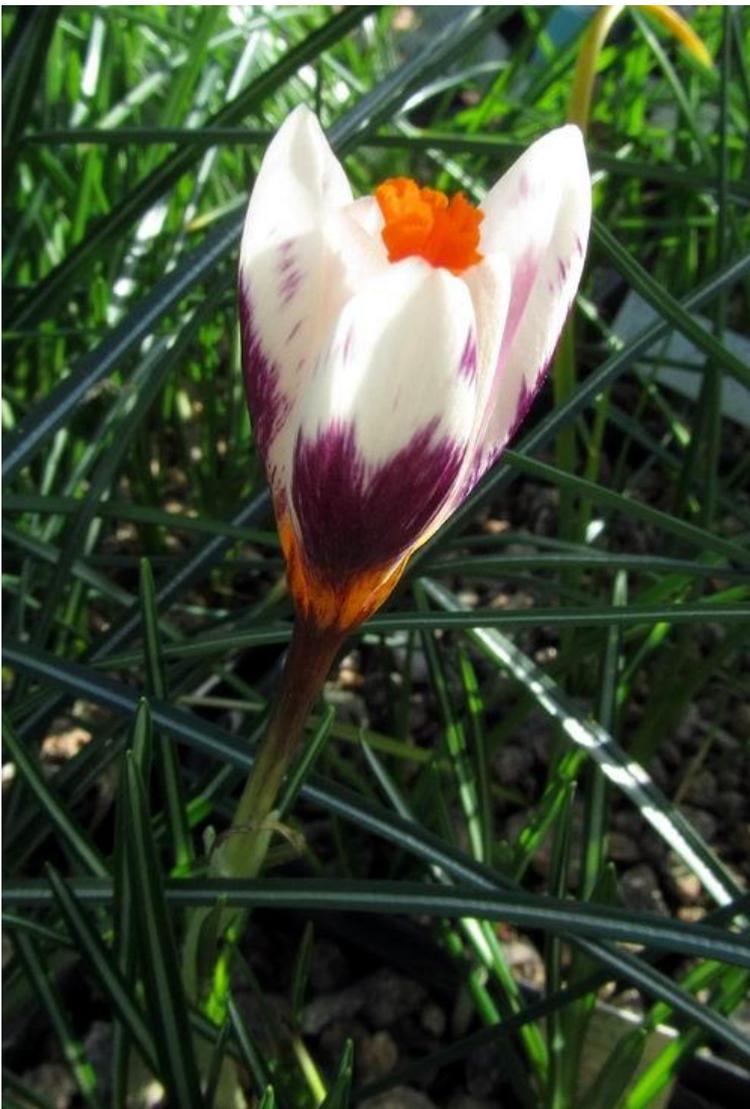
Crocus 'EA Bowles'

A few years ago I was sent a corm of what is possibly the true Crocus 'EA Bowles' a plant that had almost disappeared from cultivation or certainly its whereabouts were unknown to the Croconuts. Along with a few others I have to try and build it up so it can be spread around again.



Crocus x 'Jessopae'

Crocus x 'Jessopae' is another plant with a connection to EA Bowles – with me the flowers always hide down in the leaves.



Crocus sieberi subsp. sieberi

The first of the *Crocus sieberi sieberi* flowers are opening – as they are seed raised there is quite a variation in colour and the shape of the style.

My favourite combination is a flower with nice dark markings on the outside and the frilly tip to the style seen on the left.

Once more I will direct you to the [SRGC Forum](#) pages. If you have not seen the [Crocus threads](#) you do not know what you are missing there you will find a wealth of information and pictures posted by new and experienced gardeners including some of the world's greatest Crocus experts.

As if that was not enough we also have the updated [Crocus pages](#) - an alphabetical listing of species, pictures and descriptions including many of the latest species to be named.

Crocus sieberi subsp. sieberi



Crocus biflorus ANCR 11026

A particularly dark form of *Crocus biflorus* from the Belpinari pass, Sakarya, Turkey. I collected some seed from it last year which I sowed back in with the parent corms - you can see the seedling leaves rising through the gravel – something to look forward to.....