



BULB LOG 38.....19th September 2018



Autumn Colchicum



I feature a portrait of *Colchicum agrippinum* on the cover to show how the autumn flowering colchicum can flower without water; in fact they do not even need to be planted to know when to flower. I would not recommend this as the ideal treatment but it is fun to observe the growth like this. I will plant this as the flowers fade and the roots will grow when they detect water. I have more than one form of *Colchicum agrippinum* - this planting is the same clone as the one shown on the cover and it is more prolific in its rate of increase than the other

form which, in my view, has the better marked flowers.



Colchicum agrippinum



Note the paler, less distinct tessellations of the *Colchicum agrippinum* flowers above compared to the form below which also has dark style, filaments and pollen this form also has more rounded tips to the petals. It is suggested that *Colchicum agrippinum* is a hybrid between *C. variegatum* and *C. autumnale* and it is entirely possible that there is more than one such hybrid.



Colchicum agrippinum



Colchicum tessellated hybrid

The naming of cultivated forms of colchicum, as with so many plants, can become confused and you will find lots of very similar looking plants being distributed under different names.



While I understand the need for order I have a relaxed attitude to cultivar names and if I like a plant I am happy to grow it without the need to know its name.

Many years ago we were given some colchicums from a very old garden which included this lovely tessellated hybrid but nobody knew any names. As the picture show it is a fine plant with good sized, well marked flowers and it also increases well forming clumps.

I like to divide clumps regularly re-planting the bulbs individually – within a year or two they will produce multiple flowers.

Colchicum tessellated hybrid





Colchicum tessellated hybrid



Colchicum agrippinum in the foreground with various cultivars behind.



These mixed *Colchicum* cultivars catch the sun and even though they were blown over in the rain and strong winds they still manage to open their flowers and make a colourful display.



Colchicum speciosum





Colchicum speciosum album



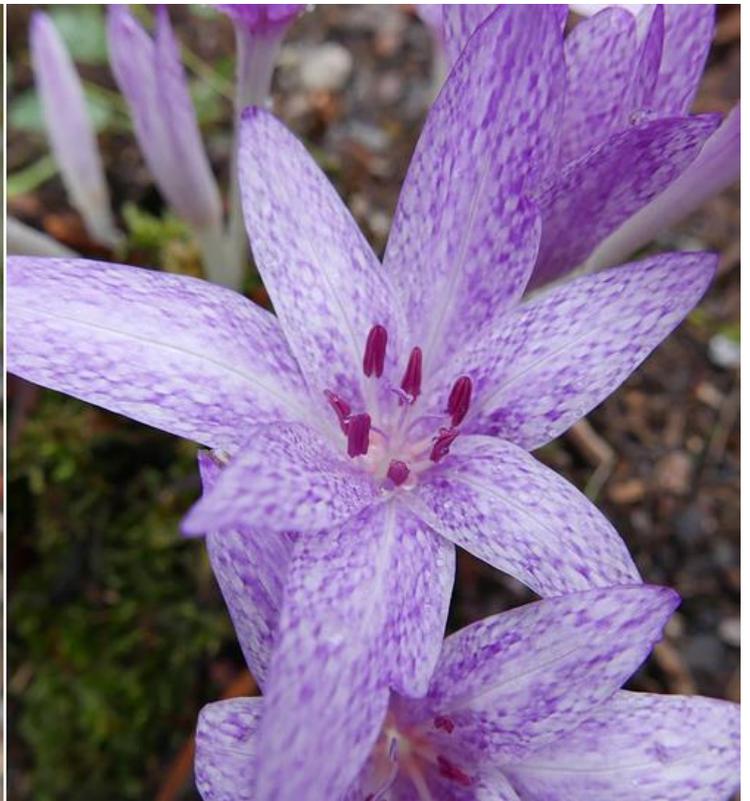
Colchicum cultivars.



Autumn Colchicums are flowering in the background with autumn flowering *Crocus pulchellus*, which has self-seeded between the slabs of the path, in the foreground.



Crocus speciosus



Colchicum agrippinum

For the less experienced who are not sure if you are looking at a Crocus or a Colchicum the best way to tell is to count the pollen bearing anthers, Crocus have three while Colchicum have six.



As well as the Autumn Colchicums we have Autumn Crocus flowers appearing all around the garden – here purple and white forms of **Crocus nudiflorus** on the left and a **Crocus banaticus** on the right.



Crocus nudiflorus



Crocus banaticus



This picture shows the difference in size **Crocus nudiflorus albus** and **Crocus xantholaimos**.



The pebble bed started as a sand bed where we had a lot of Crocus - however the mice found it too easy to dig down in the sand and eat the corms. A few years ago I covered the sand in pebbles which greatly restricted the ability of the mice to dig down to the corms and crocus flowers are now returning.



The Crocus in flower just now include *kotschyanus*, *pulchellus*, *speciosus* and *xantholaimos* among which we seem to have a number of hybrids.



Crocus xantholaimos



Note that these sister seedlings from *Crocus xantholaimos* have white pollen (chewed away on the right) indicating hybridization.



Crocus nudiflorus albus



These two forms of *Crocus nudiflorus* are growing in one of the *Erythronium* sand plunge beds, there is a plunge basket in the bed shown in the previous picture that was originally planted up with *Crocus* 'Orla' a white form of *Crocus nudiflorus*. While I try and keep 'Orla' separate, over the years it has escaped from the confines of the basket by both stolons and by seeding into the sand, so now we have a mix which includes a number of white clones as well as the typical purple coloured forms.



This is the box where I grew some of the double form of *Sanguinaria canadensis* which I used to replant every year to speed the rate of increase however in recent years and despite the best of intentions it has not been split.



Regular readers may remember that somehow a bulb of *Galanthus nivalis* got into this and has since multiplied to produce large numbers of flowers early in the year before the *Sanguinaria* gets going. Looking down you can see how the growth of the *Sanguinaria* rhizomes is distorting the sides of the polystyrene box.



Sanguinaria rhizomes pushing out the sides of the polystyrene box.



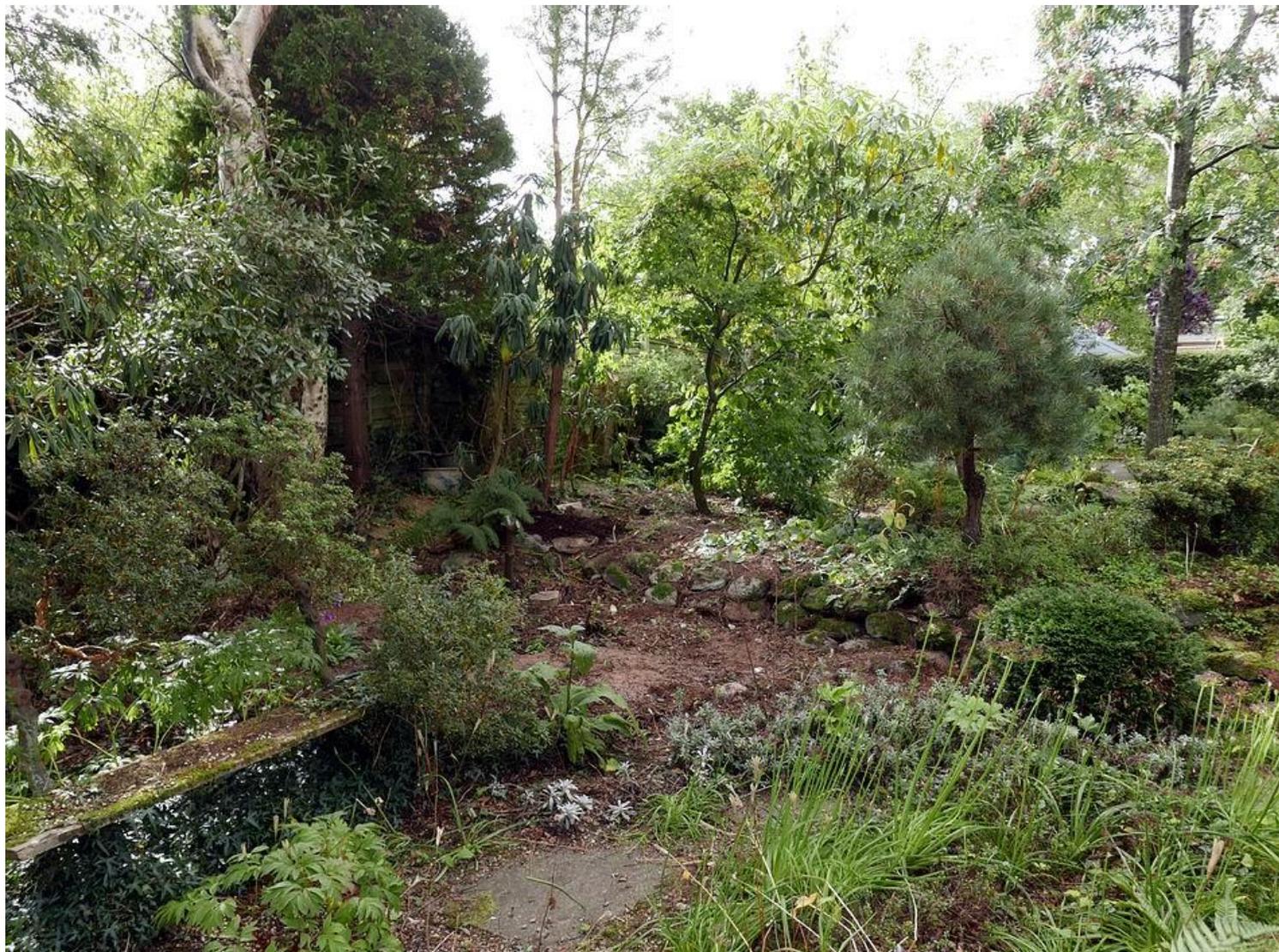
Some of the *Galanthus* bulbs have also made their way to the surface.



Most of the Galanthus bulbs, which are already in root, were growing a few centimetres below the Sanguinaria.



Taking care not to damage the roots I replanted some of the Galanthus bulbs, covered them with a layer of compost before planting some Sanguinaria, the box is now topped off and will be good to grow on for a number of years before I will have to repeat this process. As a result I have a quantity of both the Galanthus and Sanguinaria to plant elsewhere in the garden.



Molly surveys the top of the garden and suggests this area where I have continued the process of cutting back some of the overgrowth opening up the ground level planting – an ideal place to replant some of the surplus *Galanthus* and *Sanguinaria* from the box.



Sand Bed



Crocus, Colchicum and Cyclamen flowers are also starting to feature in the sand bed since it was watered at the beginning of the month.



Cyclamen mirabile



Looking down on the *Cyclamen mirabile* through the flowers to the pink zoned leaves.



Crocus speciosus



Colchicum montanum* and *Cyclamen cilicicum



Cyclamen coum and Cyclamen hederifolium with a Crocus hybrid and a white Crocus vallicola.



I never cease to be fascinated how these bulbs know when to flower without water or even being planted