



BULB LOG..... 01-04-2004



Narcissus jonquilla & *N. cordubensis*.

I am back among the *Narcissus* this week trying to make up for the ones that I missed out on showing in last year's log.

N. jonquilla (above left) is a species that, in the wild, grows in sites that are very wet in Spring, they are commonly found growing along river banks. I have seen pictures of them growing in water with just the top of the stem and the flower sticking out. This is a big clue to their requirements in cultivation, plenty water in spring and drying out towards summer - as with all bulbs in cultivation, a well drained compost is essential.

N. cordubensis (above right) is very similar to *N. jonquilla* only differing in botanical details that are so small that you need to look in great detail to stand any chance of distinguishing them.



Narcissus henriquesii

N. jonquilla var *henriquesii* is another of this very similar group perhaps a little shorter than most forms of *N. jonquilla*.

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Narcissus wilkommii

The last of this group is *N. wilkommii* which some writings say is difficult to flower. We have never had any problems in getting it to flower in both the garden and in pots, in fact we raise it from seed which it sets most years. If we mixed up all the bulbs of the preceding *Narcissus* I would have a very hard time separating them out again as they are so similar to each other. I should also say that they all share a wonderful sweet scent.



Narcissus fernandesii & *N. assoanus*

Still in the same section of *Narcissus* and a bit more distinct is *N. fernandesii* (left) it has a smaller flower on a shorter stem than the previous four. *N. assoanus* (right) usually has two flowers per stem and it has a flower that, to me, looks similar to those of *N. rupicola*.



Narcissus rupicola & *N. watierii*.

N. rupicola ssp *marvieri* (left) is like a larger flowered version of *N. rupicola* with a larger corona and it is very like a yellow version of *N. watierii* (right). An interesting feature of the *rupicola* narcissus is that three anthers are retained in the tube and three extend into the corona - you can see them clearly in this picture.



Narcissus x *susannae*.

This is one of our own crosses between *N. triandrus* and *N. cantabricus*, we separated it from the others as it appears to be more robust producing three flowers to a stem.

A continuous job in the bulb houses and the frames is pollinating the flowers, this is essential to ensure the best chances of getting a good seed set. We must remember that when these plants we grow were collected in the wild,

the insects that pollinate them were left behind (probably a good thing). When they flower early in the year in our gardens there are not so many insects about and those that are around may not be capable of transferring the pollen, so it is up to the gardener and a paint brush.



Pollinating corydalis

It is often mentioned that corydalis are not self compatible, that is to say that you need two different clones before you will get a seed set. I have not found this to be the case with the ones that we grow, I think that there is just no suitable insect around in Aberdeen to do the job. We started off with just one of many of them and by pollinating by hand we got seed, now as a result of regular hand pollinating, and sowing the resulting seed as soon as it is shed, we have good mixed populations. To pollinate, carefully hold the spur of the flower and pull the brush down across the lip which will part, revealing the anthers and stamen, this downward motion is all that is required to transfer the pollen.

Crocus sativus escaping

While moving the pots around I found this *Crocus sativus* escaping through the bottom of the pot into the sand plunge. I wonder if these corms need to be planted deeper than we think - always worth a try.





Fritillaria eduardii

Fritillaria eduardii is just coming out in the sunshine, it is intermediate between *F. imperialis* and *F. raddeana* and makes a nice plant for a sunny bed in the garden where you can enjoy the striking orange striped flowers without the foxy smell associated with *F. imperialis*.



Erythronium dens-canis

Yes the erythroniums are starting to flower and I suspect you will see a few more of them in the coming month. *Erythronium dens-canis* comes in shades from white to deep pink and there is a form called 'Old Aberdeen' that is

described as a very dark pink but it is pale in comparison to a form that we have, that grows in an old church yard in Aberdeenshire.



Erythronium dens-canis dark.