



BULB LOG.....28-12-2005



Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'

Growers in the South always said it was in full flower for Christmas and now, with our milder autumns, we also have Narcissus 'Cedric Morris' in full flower under glass. The plants in the garden are coming through the ground now and I can just see the flower buds nestled deep down in the leaves.

Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus  
The other star performer of December is Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus; that very reliable free flowering cultivar which never fails to give us a great display of flowers in the dark winter months.





### Camera

I have added another new gadget to my armoury, a very nifty wee tripod (wee = Scottish word for small) that I saw in a well-known camera shop, wait a minute, this is not the BBC: it was Jessops. I have found it very difficult to get my camera close enough to the flowers with my normal tripods without moving the pots out of the plunge. I do not like moving the pots around as many of the bulbs root down into the sand and moving them will do some damage to the roots.



### Small tripod x3

As you can see this wee tripod is very adaptable – it goes from flat on the ground to a height of 22cms when the three part telescopic legs are fully extended; the ball and socket head means I can lock the camera in any position from vertical to horizontal. I have been considering getting a Digital SLR but when I think about

it, the LCD viewing screen with its tilting action makes it very easy to compose pictures, both like this and at ground level, without me having to be a contortionist to get my eye to the viewfinder. Both SLRs and fixed lens digital cameras have their good and bad points – I will work away with what I have just now.



### Narcissus cross

The thing about having this wee tripod is now I can hold my camera steady for the long shutter speeds required for an exposure with the lens shut down to its smallest aperture of f 8, which gives me the maximum depth of field and sharper pictures.

*Narcissus romieuxii*  
close up

This picture was at 1/10 of a second at f 8 with a focal length of 11.9mm and before I had this wee tripod I either had to move the pot to the camera on my normal tripod or make some adhoc support, mostly from empty plastic pots, to sit the camera on in the hope that it would remain steady during the exposure. I should also add that as my digital camera does not have a remote shutter release, I use the self-timer to trip the shutter so that I do not cause any vibrations when I push the button.



*Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Gem'

The first flower on *Narcissus romieuxii* 'Craigton Gem' has also opened early – I do not know why this individual flower has opened way ahead of the rest.



*Fritillaria agrestis*

The first frit to show itself this year is as always one of the American ones but this year it is *Fritillaria agrestis* that has beaten *F. biflora* which is normally the first to appear above the ground.



*Ipheion 'Alberto Castillo'*

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere these are the darkest days of the year and the ancients used to look for the signs of re-birth and renewal in the hope that the sun would rise up again and that is what I have been doing in the garden. *Ipheion 'Alberto Castillo'* is a real harbinger of a season to come as it starts into leaf in August or September and you can also see the mass of self-sown seedlings in the foreground. I cannot wait to see what the flowers on these seedlings will be like.



Trillium chloropetalum

The fat buds of *Trillium chloropetalum* also give us something to look forward to next season as they ‘stick their toe in the water’ and wait for it to warm up enough before they start to extend. All these pictures were taken with the aid of my new wee tripod which, being pocket sized, will remain with me at all times.



Bulb Fields

Looking back over the year two highlights were trips I made; the first to the Dutch International Conference in March where I met up with many of you and we had a very good time at lectures, meals and in the bar, chatting about our shared love of plants. The day out to the bulb fields will forever be in my memory, I have seen pictures of them many times before, but nothing can compare to being there.



Arctous alpinus

The second highlight was a trip back to Tromso in the far north of Norway where the ground on the hills was also bright red, not with tulips but the seasonal colour of the Arctous alpinus shown to good effect against the snow. In past years I have asked if you wish me to continue the bulb log for another year but many of you have already been in touch by card, email or through the forum and I thank you all for your kind comments – yes, the Bulb Log will be back next year.

I would like to thank Fred Carrie for all the “behind the scenes technical work” he does to put the bulb log onto your screens, my wife Maggi who checks through and corrects what I have written each week and all of you who read the log and make it all worthwhile.

I leave you with another view taken near Tromso, Happy Holidays.

