



Back to the plants this week after last time's sculptural detour. The autumn-flowering bulbs have been giving a great show such as these *Colchicum speciosum*:



Several of the trees near the Rock Garden have *Colchicum* planted under them:



Colchicum speciosum 'Album'



Colchicum 'Waterlilly'

Colchicum 'Premier'



The *Crocus* on the meadow have also rapidly appeared over the last week. Most of them are *C. nudiflorus* :



There are also some smaller patches of *Crocus speciosus*:



Before leaving the subject of bulbs, I promised to report back on the cause of the rot on some of our *Fritillaria* bulbs. Our Pathology department have identified a *Penicillium* fungus as the only pathogen present. This usually gets into bulbs via a wound – which may be caused by anything from rough handling during potting, to insect bites or even a puncture by a sharp bit of grit. Cold, damp conditions favour this fungus so I can only assume that the weather this year has played a part in giving us the problem.



Abundant wildlife is one feature of Wisley that deserves more mention than it often gets. Causing great interest to visitors this week was this grass snake sunbathing just inside a hedge:



In the Display House there is plenty of colour now:



Providing a bit of height is this *Nerine peersii*
I am not sure of the status of the species name for this plant as I believe some people regard it a synonymous with *N. humilis*. From a growers point of view it looks distinct with particularly “spidery” flowers. It is one of the winter-growing Nerines, flowering now right at the start of its growing season. You can see the leaves just starting to grow. These will persist through the winter and spring before dying down for the summer dormancy.



Also in the house just now are a couple of nice *Petrocosmeas*:



Above: *Petrocosmea iodoides*
Below: *Petrocosmea sericea*



On the Rock Garden there is one bed that is some distance from any path so if we put small plants in, no-one would be able to see them. Instead I planted a group of tall *Ipomopsis rubra*:



Although a little battered by the unusually strong winds of late, they still provide some welcome late colour. I was surprised to see a few yellow ones as I have only encountered the red forms before. Both types have wonderfully marked petals.



The plant comes from central and eastern Texas in the USA and the tall flowering stems can get to 180cm. Usually a biennial, they can be treated as annuals in cultivation if required, flowering from seed in their first year if sown early. If the spent flowering stems are cut back they will often re-branch to give a late second flowering.