



BULB LOG 01.....6<sup>th</sup> January 2010



**Bulb houses**

Here we are at the start of another New Year still in the firm and icy grip of winter and little prospect of any change soon.



**Bulb house**

While it is all white outside it is white to yellow inside the bulb house with the Narcissus still flowering despite the harsh cold. All the plunges in this glasshouse have a soil warming cable running through them to help minimise the risk of the compost in the pots freezing all the way through.



### **Narcissus 'Camoro' and 'Craigton Clanger'**

On the left is a pot of Narcissus 'Camoro' which you can see is a good white, I would describe it as milk white and to the right is Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger' which is a slightly deeper yellow than this picture suggests.



### **Narcissus 'Camoro' and 'Craigton Clanger'**

I selected 'Craigton Clanger' from a batch of seedlings because it has a good size of bell shaped flowers, it increases well and it has a reasonably strong yellow colour – one of these fugitive colours that is difficult to capture photographically.



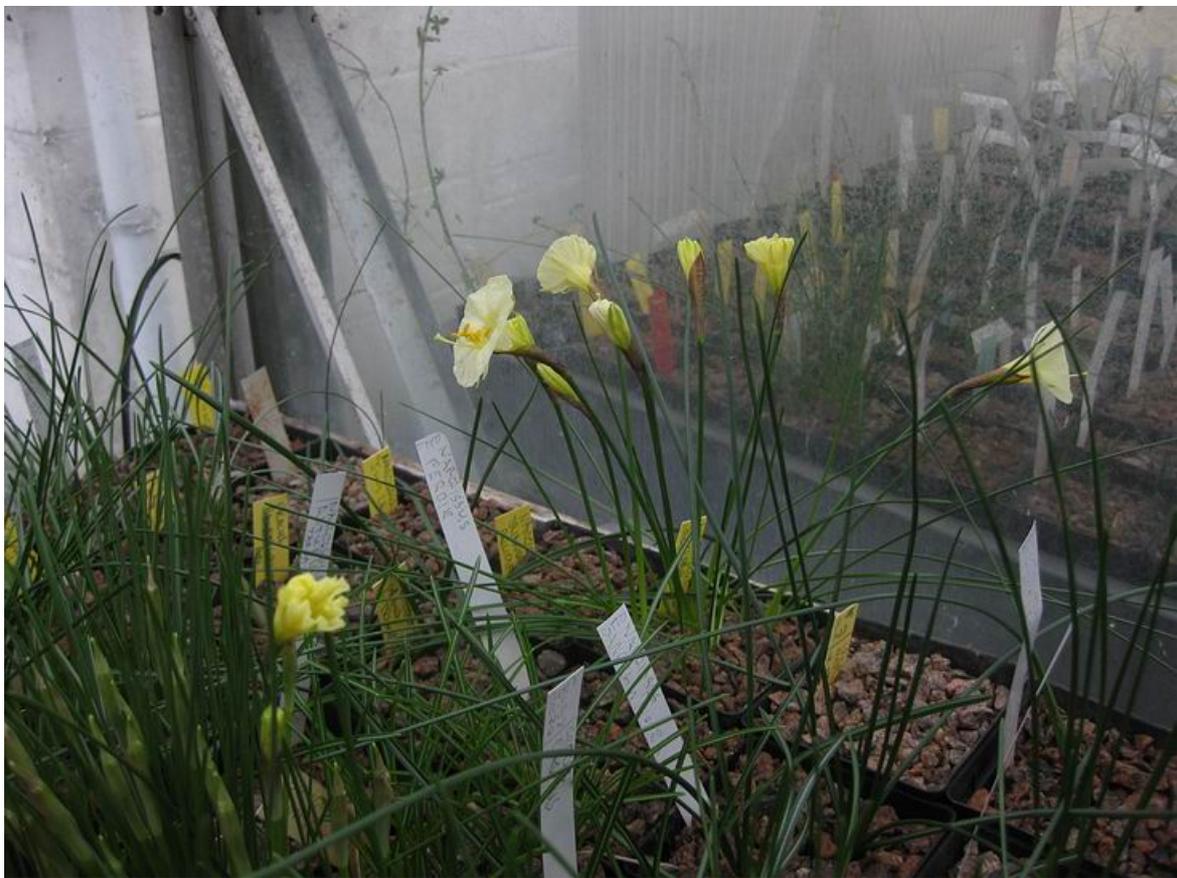
**Narcissus seedling**

This is another *Narcissus romieuxii* seedling raised from our own seed so its pollen parent could be anything else that is in flower just now. It is similar to 'Craigton Clanger' but this one has a slightly lobed corona - as this is the first year it has flowered I will mark the label with a + to let me know to re-assess it next year. When you raise these plants from seed you get lots of variation some are very distinctive while others only deviate slightly so it is important that we do not name too many or we could soon have thousands of named forms.



**Narcissus romieuxii**

This is a form of *Narcissus romieuxii* that I got from the (late)Kath Dryden many years ago – it is a good plant but nothing very distinct.



**Pot of *Narcissus romieuxii***

This pot of *Narcissus romieuxii* shows one of the other variable features of this species – that is the shape of the corona.



***Narcissus romieuxii***

The one on the left has a very flat faced corona – almost petunioide as in *Narcissus* ‘Julia Jane’ but this is a smaller flower. In contrast the sibling seedling to the right has a shallow, funnel shaped corona.

I never water the bulbs in these freezing and very cold conditions. They have done most of their above ground growing; there is no evaporation and little transpiration so they are unlikely to need water. To water in freezing conditions would greatly increase the risk of the frosts damaging the bulbs so I am happy to wait until conditions improve and the temperature rises considerably above freezing even if that does not happen for another month. The stems and leaves will flop over as the water is locked up as ice but as the frost lifts the stems will stand upright again. On the other hand I will be ready to water quickly if (and when) the weather suddenly turns mild as the bulbs will then need water.





**Grey Mould**

I have enough trouble with grey mould forming on the dead crocus flowers without providing it with yet another host.



**Narcissus albidus**

This *Narcissus albidus* is one of the pots that is in the plunge that has no warming cable below so it has been subject to the full force of the frosts we have had and these have been down to -10C. It is not so much the extreme low that does the harm as most years we will dip to -10 or -12C but only for a very short time – maybe only for an hour in the middle of the night. It is the long period perhaps weeks of freezing that allows the frost to penetrate deep into the compost and damage the basal plate of the bulbs – this group of *Narcissus* are particularly sensitive to this. If you have not already noticed; look how out of focus the nearest flower in this photograph is - due to the low light levels hence a wide aperture and resulting shallow depth of field.



**Narcissus albidus take 2**

Look how much better this picture is because the nearest flower is now in sharp focus and the ones behind are out of focus. I should point out that all the photographs this week were taken on my little compact Canon IXUS85IS – an excellent pocket sized camera. Because both the light and temperature was low I decided to just use the compact this week and grab some pictures quickly before I froze. Provided you learn how to use these compacts you can get remarkable pictures with them – I would not be without a compact in my pocket, in fact I never am. As I described in a recent Bulb log I set the metering system to spot metering to get the best results with these subjects.



### **Narcissus albidus**

A few weeks ago I spoke of the flange to the corona on the Narcissus albidus that we grow. Now this flower is starting to go over the flange, at the end of the corona, is perhaps more obvious as it starts to roll backwards. If you were not clear what I was speaking about hopefully you will now be able to go back and see the flange in the flowers when they were still fresh.



**Mystery Narcissus seedling**

Above and below are two pictures of another mystery seedling that I rescued from the sand plunge. The features that make it interesting to me are the filaments are relatively short so the anthers are deep in the throat and the tube is very long and elegant. In some aspects it is similar to *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* but I am not yet convinced it is that species; perhaps it is a hybrid between that and another. Here is another case for + on the label and a watching brief over the next few years.



**Mystery Narcissus seedling side view**



**Narcissus sp?**

I was given this as a bulb again by Kath Dryden as Narcissus sp? And I have never quite worked out what it is. Unusually for Kath she could not remember where she got it from so the mystery will continue.



**Square Narcissus**

Another update is this square Narcissus which I showed previously and I wondered if it was just that shape as the corona unfurled but as you can see it has retained the square flower look. Another + on this label please.



## **Narcissus 'Joan Stead'**

The good news from the last week is that this pot of seedlings which is my only one that contains the form I named 'Joan Stead' has at least sat up after being so deeply frozen in the unprotected plunge. The flower towards the back left is the one I named 'Joan Stead' because of the deep lobbing to the corona and I was intending giving some away last year but not all the flowers had the same degree of lobbing

and I need to be sure that I do not distribute a number of clones under the same name. It could be that the lobbing is transient and will vary from year to year or it is simply that I have more than one clone which will need to be sorted out.



## **Narcissus 'Joan Stead' pot**

All the flowers in this pot are very attractive with their very exerted style and stamens and I like them all so I would be very disappointed to lose them because of the freeze. While these early signs of recovery are encouraging I remember previous big freezes when I thought the bulbs had recovered only to witness them collapse some months later as the bulb rotted due to the damage caused by the frost. The flower stems had stood back up because they were still getting a supply of moisture from the bulb just like being cut and placed in a bowl of water however the basal plate was destroyed.



**Narcissus hedraeanthus**

The tiniest of the daffodils is *Narcissus hedraeanthus*. This is my favourite form; one I only recently raised from seed and I think last year was the first year it flowered.



**Narcissus  
'Cedric Morris'**

The ever reliable *Narcissus* 'Cedric Morris' with its cheery yellow trumpet flowers always cheers me up in the winter.



**Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'**



**Snow scene**

If you want to capture the sensation of a snow shower force your camera to use the flash – you should find settings on most cameras to switch the flash on and off as well as the normal automatic setting.

The forecasters are predicting the cold spell is to last for at least another week and some are saying that it will stay throughout January so log in next week to see what has changed and find out how the bulbs are surviving.