



Cyclamen coum

It is good to see the bulbs speeding into growth now we are out of the big freeze. The one worry in this part of the world is that we could return to the cold any time through the next three or four months. Cyclamen coum is a winter flowering species and is not in the least fazed by the cold especially if it has the protection of cold glass like this plant is enjoying.



Ornithogalum sp.

I always suspect that a plant which holds water in its leaves like this one plant does, is not used to much overhead water or else it is used to hot conditions which would cause the water to evaporate quickly. This water has been there for a week as I was interested to see if it would slowly trickle down to the bulb below. Some bulbs in low rainfall regions do employ this strategy where water is funnelled to the centre of the plant by the leaves then it trickles down to the bulb and roots. This Ornithogalum sp. from Turkey is just likely to get an infection of wet rot where the water is sitting so I will now remove it with a bit of absorbent paper.



Fritillaria carica

Since I watered the frits last week a number of fat shoots of the early flowering species are breaking through the gravel top-dressing. This form of *Fritillaria carica* is always among the first to break ground even though it will not flower for another four to six weeks in our weather. In the wild they would come into flower much quicker as they would come through the ground to much warmer day time temperatures and sunshine then this one gets in Aberdeen.



Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'

The flowers and foliage of *Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'* have sat up again, unscathed after having been laid flat during the cold. The clumps in the garden are not looking so good as they were also weighed down by the deep snow and ice which snapped some of the flower stems. They will not suffer any long term damage but I suspect that we will not get to enjoy their flowers this year now. I will watch and see how they recover.



Narcissus jacetanus

The sensible bulb would wait until spring before putting its head above the ground like this pot of *Narcissus jacetanus* which has just poked through this week. This is a close relative to *Narcissus asturiensis* which is the species of which 'Cedric Morris' is thought to be a large form.



Narcissus sp.

Just after I showed this plant a few weeks ago, the [Forum](#) had some wonderful pictures of *Narcissus albicans* from the wild. Rafa Diez-Dominquez showed photos from his friend, Angel Sánchez and posted description details re *albicans* and *cantabricus*: I was struck with the similarity to this unknown species that I received some years ago.



Narcissus sp.

Looking into the flowers you can see that the anthers are held quite far back in the corona even though they are now fully developed. I must do some more research and see if this could be *Narcissus albicans*. Some of the many names considered synonyms of *N. albicans* : *N. graellsii* var. *granatensis*, *N. nivalis* var. *granatensis*, *N. x litigiosus* var. *granatensis*, *N. blancoi*, *N. cantabricus* subsp. *luteolentus*, *N. x neocarpetanus* nothovar. *romanensis*, *N. x magniantonii*, *N. cantabricus* x *N. tenuifolius*, *N. x barrae*.



Narcissus seedling

Once brought together in cultivation these promiscuous plants produce an almost endless variation of forms as they freely hybridise with each other. This is another pot that I have been cloning up from a single seedling bulb found in the sand plunge selected as a neat wee plant that retains a short stem even in our poor January light levels.



Narcissus twin flowered

Around this time last year I was excited to share with you pictures of a pot of Narcissus seedlings that all had twin flowers. I said then that I would have to wait and see if this was a fixed feature or just an aberration occurring in a single growing season - now I can update you on the progress. From the pot of seedlings only one stem has produced the twin flowers this year. I am encouraged by this and believe that these forms have a genetic trait towards twin flowers. I did not replot them last summer and it could be that when grown well and replotted every year these forms are likely to produce twin flowers.



Crocus biflorus ssp tauri

Only a lone flower has appeared so far in this pot of Crocus biflorus ssp tauri – I do hope that there are more to come as I have recorded on the label that there are 6 corms in the pot.

It could be that the other flowers will follow or that the other corms have no flower buds so they will not show up until their leaves start to grow.



Crocus mathewii

Every one who was at the SRGC Discussion weekend last year was allowed to choose a few packets of seeds as part of the registration package and I was lucky enough to get a packet of *Crocus mathewii* in my selection. I sowed them at depth- half way down the pot- as soon as I got home in October and placed them in an open frame to take all the weather. When checking the seed frames this week I discovered that two seeds have germinated so far so I have now moved this pot under glass to give the new seedlings some protection from our very changeable weather and to keep them away from any hungry slugs.



Crocus michelsonii

I will never cease to advise people to grow their plants from seed because I believe it is the best way to get strong healthy plants that display a good variation in both form and tolerance to different climates. This pot of *Crocus michelsonii* shows some variation in the flower colour especially the one in the centre which has much paler floral segments.



Crocus pulchellus seedlings

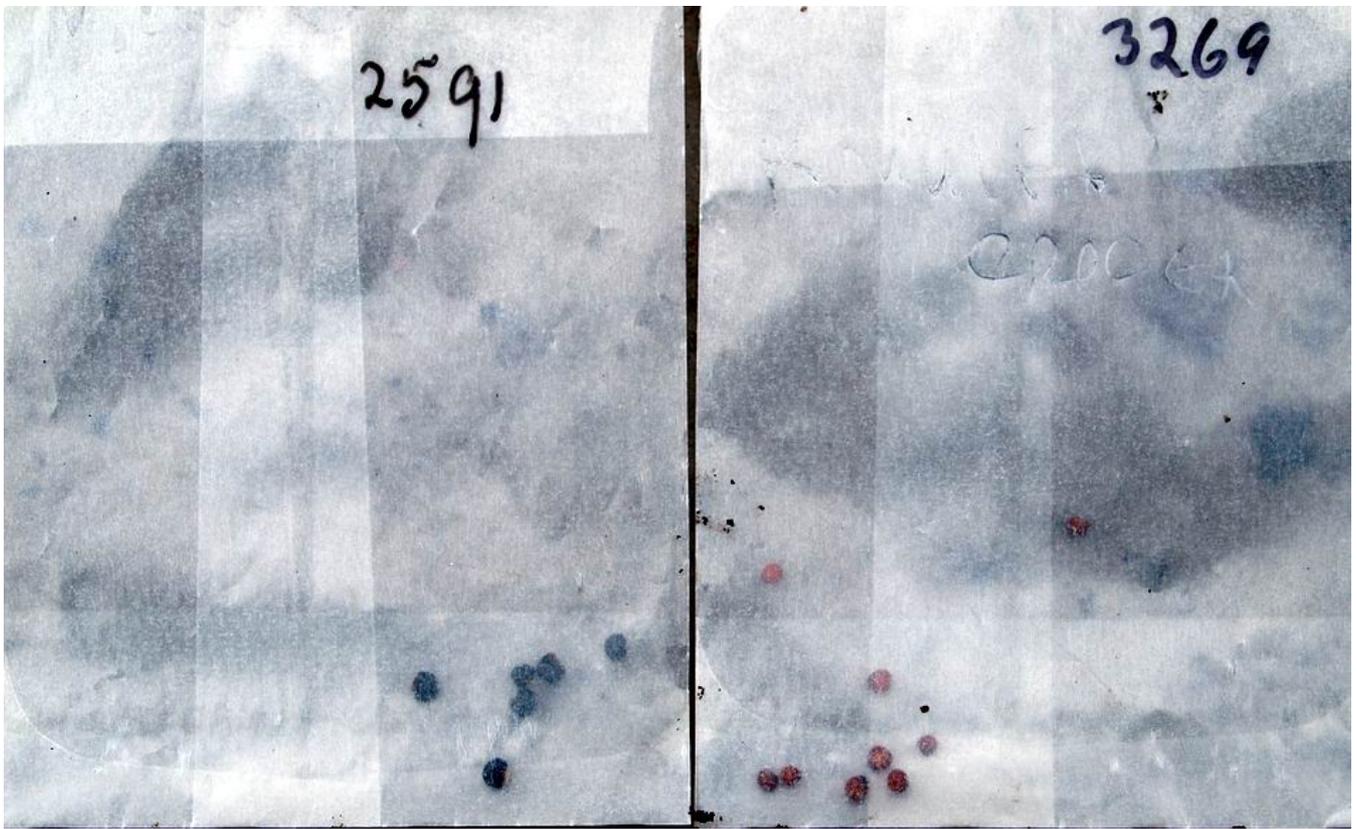
I have sown all my Crocus seeds deeply for well over ten years now with great results. These strong young leaves are only the second year of growth on this pot of Crocus pulchellus seedlings which were sown in October 2008. Because the seeds were sown deeply the young corms did not have to expend the energy taking themselves down into the compost and with proper feeding and a good growing season some may be big enough to flower next year.



Lilium mackliniae seeds

I would normally sow most of my Lily seeds around the turn of the year but as my compost was all frozen then I have had to wait until now. Many of the lilies do not require a cold period to stimulate germination and if you sow them in the autumn they are very likely to germinate before the onset of winter. I made the mistake of sowing some Lilium nanum seeds in the autumn, I showed them in previous bulb logs; these germinated and have now perished in the cold. I have this week got all my Lilium nanum, L. oxypetalum, L. mackliniae and Nomocharis seeds sown and hope for a good

germination as the temperatures climb towards spring. Some lilies do have complex germination so to get the best results for them they should be sown in the Autumn thus it is not possible to state one regime that best suits them all. However the worst that will befall the ones that have a delayed germination or need a cold period to germinate is that you will have to wait a year longer to get them to flowering size while to sow the ones I mention above in the autumn can be fatal – witness my Lilium nanum disaster.



Seeds

Most serious gardeners run out of room sooner or later so it is essential to use efficiently that space you have. Often when you are getting seeds from the seed exchanges you may only get five seeds in a packet as the seeds have to be shared around and I felt that it was not the most efficient use of space to only have five seeds in a seven cm pot so I started to sow multiple taxa of bulbs in the same pot. The rules for this co-habiting are simple: first the adults must be easily distinguishable, above is a Narcissus (bulb) and a Romulea (corn) and secondly they should have the same growth cycle and watering requirements. I have discovered that this method not only makes my use of space more efficient but the bulbs seem to thrive better than they would if there were only five small seedling bulbs in the a pot. Once the bulbs have reached flowering size they can be easily sorted out and moved into their own pot if you want or you may discover that sharing a pot is the better way forward if you get the correct combinations.



Eranthis pinnatifida

Some seed is best sown fresh as it does not like drying out at all and I include *Eranthis* among those.

Here is a pot of seed of *Eranthis pinnatifida* that I sowed as soon as it was ripe last summer just germinating now in an open frame.

I will have to watch out that it does not fall prey to slugs or snails and I will also give it a cover if we have any more snow forecast.



***Eranthis pinnatifida*- flowers emerging**

Most seeds if sown at the optimum time for that species will germinate at exactly the same time as the parent plants start into growth and *Eranthis pinnatifida* is no exception. This is the pot from which I collected the germinating seeds and here, right on cue, are the immature flowers just emerging through the gravel.



***Eranthis* 'Schwefelglanz'**

We only got this pale sulphur coloured form of *Eranthis* last year from a German friend and it looks to be increasing quite well in the pot. I will keep it in a pot until it increases enough to let me plant some in the garden and still keep some in a pot. I collected some seed from this plant last year but I was not sure how viable it looked – I'll be watching the seed pot with anticipation over the next few weeks.



Mystery seedling quiz

Now for a (nearly) New Year quiz I am going to leave you with two pictures; the first, above, is of a newly emerging seed leaf and the second, below, is of the seeds themselves, that I received and sowed last June. I was very excited to receive this species and am even more excited now that at least one has germinated - I hope for more.

My question to you is can you identify the genus that these seeds are from ?



Mystery seeds – identification next week