



BULB LOG 52.....25th December 2013

Tree blown over in the gales!

The country was (and is) being battered by gale force winds which left a trail of destruction with many trees blown down. The only effect in our garden was this bonsai tree was blown over against a trough.

I used to have a lot more bonsai trees – in fact they were one of the first main things that I cultivated having been fascinated by the dwarfed trees that I regularly saw growing in the mountains of Scotland. Nowadays I just have a few that can stand long periods of neglect so this falling over was a good reminder to me that it needs a good trim.



I have grown this Tsuga in a pot for forty years. I do trim the top growth every year but it has not had a good root prune for many years now. I will make a note to rectify this around March or April when I will trim the roots back by at least a third.



One of the other great survivors is this *Chamaecyparis obtuse nana gracilis* which I have grown for thirty five years.

I know many people do not approve of bonsai – calling it torture to trees - but this could not be further from the truth. To keep these trees miniaturised and in a healthy condition over many years takes great skill and dedication and is more a case of mollycoddling them.



Conifers are very valuable plants in the garden providing evergreen structural elements –This *Chamaecyparis obtuse nana gracilis* is exactly the same age as the bonsai one above we got it at the same time and planted it in the front garden. I prune this every year to prevent the foliage closing up which would make it look more like a big shrub than a tree.



Not bonsai but true dwarf conifers live in this trough- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Minima' and 'Nana' - they stay very compact even after many years. We got them from Potterton and Martin, as it then was, over thirty years ago.



I have rooted cuttings from them many a time and some of these grow in some of the older troughs. Above is a twenty year old cutting in a limestone landscaped trough.



In an adjacent trough is another dwarf conifer, a form of *Juniperus squamata* that would get too large but I keep it heavily trimmed back by plucking off all the new growth around twice a year. I plucked this one after the first spring flush of growth.



Now it has had another trim back – unlike the true miniature conifers I will eventually lose the battle to keep this one in scale with the trough.



The Sedum and Sempervivum trough always looks good and needs little maintenance except the growth is now starting to hide all the rock work so I will thin out the plants using the removed material as cuttings.



Bulb house

As you see there are a lot of Narcissus now in flower in the bulb house. Compare the nice new staging of the bulb house with the old rusting homemade staging in the Frit. house on the right of the picture – it is due to be replaced this coming year.



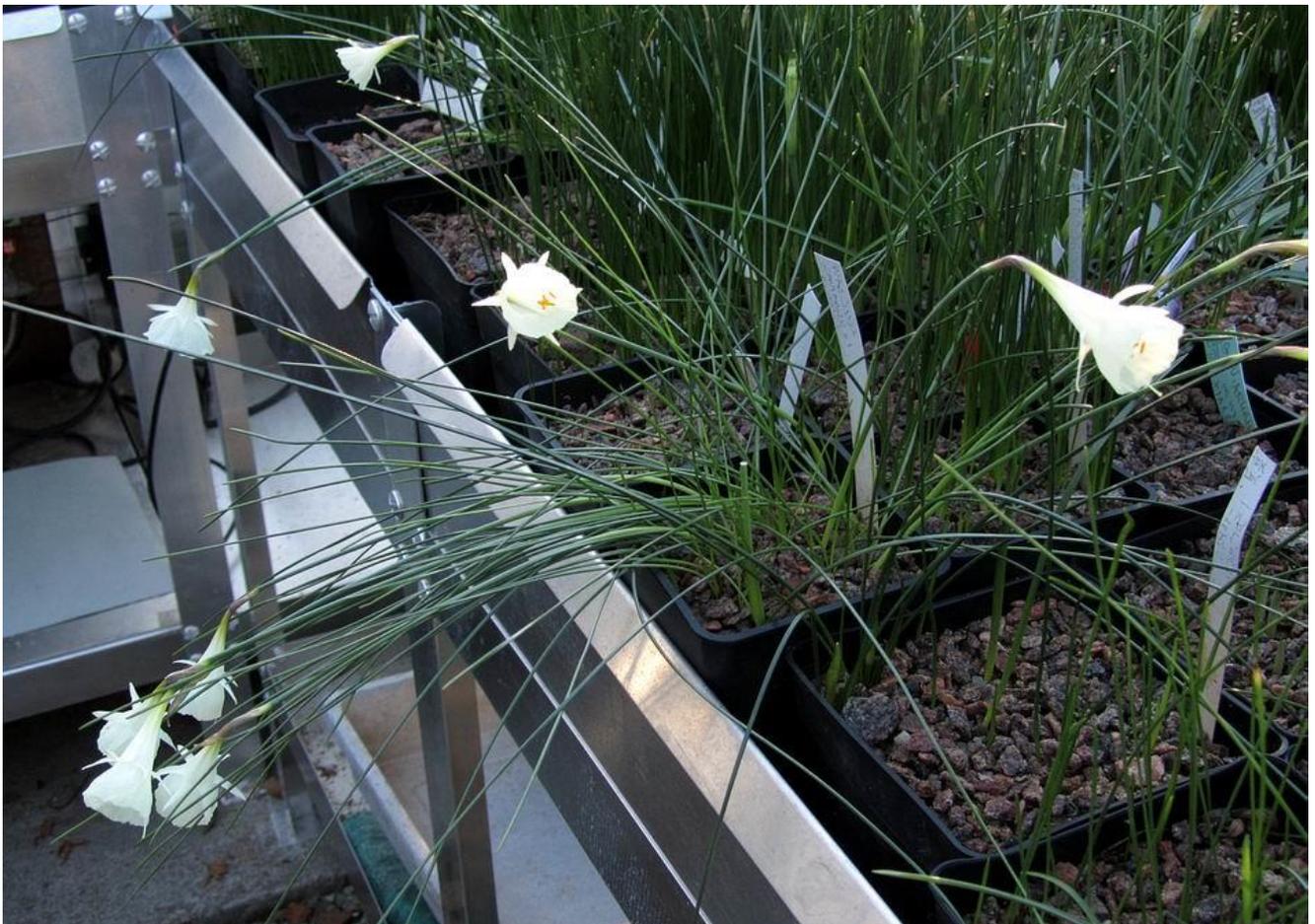
Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus and *N. 'Camoro'*.



Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus



Narcissus 'Camoro'



The way these Narcissus have flopped over is a clear indication that they need some water.



This section of Narcissus are very promiscuous and as a result we have lots of hybrids – many look very similar but some have good distinguishing features like the rolled back edges to the corona on the one above. This is one that I am still assessing a process that takes a number of years to see if it is a good cultivar or just another of the mass seedlings.



I got this as a single bulb - the original material was supposedly collected in Morocco – I have not yet identified it.



Narcissus romieuxii



Above the first flower on Narcissus 'Cedric Morris' is just opening.



On the left and early flower on *Crocus sieheanus* that is really way too early as there has not been sufficient light or warmth for it to open.



A few views around the garden to close off the year. First, one of the sand beds where a good number of *Cyclamen* have happily established and are in turn self seeding.



These beds will soon be burst in to life as *Galanthus*, *Crocus*, *Corydalis* all start to bloom - which will be first?



Giant domes of *Cassiope*, *Phyllodoce* and dwarf conifers give evergreen structure while the fresh growth of foliage appears on *Corydalis flexuosa* at the base of the sculpture.



Another *Narcissus* seedling is the final picture for this week and this year.
Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement as we move towards the 13 year of the Bulb Log.....