



BULB LOG 09.....2nd March 2016





Galanthus 'Corrin'



Galanthus 'Ramsay' and 'Glenorma'

Both the picture above and on the cover picture show a very striking variation of the snowdrop – I especially like the shape of the flower as well as the extensive dark green markings on both the inner and outer segments of Galanthus 'Corrin'.

There is a wide variation to be found in Galanthus especially in cultivation where more than one species is involved. Flower size is one of the variants illustrated by the tiny 'Ramsay' flower I am holding beside the largest flowers we have on 'Glenorma'



Galanthus 'Wasp'

I find the full, rounded flower shape the most appealing but it is good to highlight this by having some with long narrow petals like Galanthus 'Wasp'.

I do think there are now more named Galanthus cultivars than there are genuine variations but I would not like to stop the enthusiasm for one of the earliest flowering bulbs in the year. Anything that gets people looking closely at bulbs, especially in the cold wet days of late winter / early spring, should be encouraged.

We can even be guilty parties in our own garden where we find ourselves looking for the slightest difference between the flowers.

For instance mature bulbs of the snowdrop on the right always has twin flowers, secondary bulbs have a single flower until they build themselves up to full size.





In some forms, like the unnamed group above, the inner segments are longer than the norm and in the most desirable they are equal in size to the outer ones such as in *Galanthus* 'E.A.Bowles' which also has pure white flowers.



The forms with yellow markings and ovaries are also sought after and make a nice contrast.



Eranthis and Galanthus

I am happy now I have the beds tidied and covered in a fresh mulch from the compost heap before the spring bulbs come into flower.



I like snowdrops best in mixed plantings where the variations in shape and size can be appreciated. We do not use labels in the garden beds so only the cultivars that have distinct and clear identities stand out.



Galanthus 'Lady Dalhousie'

One large stand-out plant is Galanthus 'Lady Dalhousie' one of the many fine snowdrops from Brechin Castle.



Galanthus and Leucojum



Leucojum vernum also has many variations but for some reason these have not yet become as popular as the Galanthus, perhaps it is because some of the beautiful variations we are seeing from the wild populations have not reached our gardens. Some years ago I suggested the LeucoJocks to champion the snowflakes and compete with

the Galanthophiles but this is still in its infancy and has a long way to go to catch up with the range of snowdrops.



To see more Galanthus and early flowering bulbs check out the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#)



Crocus tommasinianus and Cyclamen coum

The early flowers of spring are bringing colour to a corner of the sand bed, where you can also see some of the problems we face in our cool wet climate – the growth of mosses. Many an expert will tell you that the solution to minimise moss growth is to improve the drainage by adding grit or sharp sand – in my experience moss growth is at its greatest in the sand beds and gravel covered areas. This is not the only instance where the so-called expert advice is just being repeated and does not come from genuine practical experience.



We have had this form of **Crocus sieberi atticus** growing in our garden for around thirty years where it has proved to be one of the best, increasing every year and flowering freely provided we split the clumps up every three to five years.

Snails

Snails are another of the challenges we face in the garden which along with slugs are capable of munching their way through a lot of our precious greenery. While I can tolerate the odd hole in mature leaves I get very frustrated when they devour an entire crop of newly germinated seedlings. I found this cluster of hibernating snails on a ceramic saucer that was standing against a wall. This find has stimulated me to go and check the sides and bottom edges of the pots and troughs to look for more snails before they wake hungry from their winter rest.



Trillium rivale seedlings germinating.

The seed frame area is one of the few places in the garden where I will use slug pellets. A few pellets are all I need to protect this valuable crop of *Trillium rivale* seedlings. (I am not using the *Pseudotrillium* renaming!)



Trillium rivale seedlings

You can clearly see the swelling that will form the bulb (rhizome) of this newly germinated seedling.



Trillium rivale

Provided the seed is sown by the time the parent plant is coming into root growth, which for many bulbs is around the end of August beginning of September, then you can expect germination to occur when the mature plants come into growth in the spring. I refer to this as the ‘time window’ for sowing seed, That is exactly the case with the Trillium rivale seeds, shown in the previous picture which I collected from the best coloured forms, with pink and black current coloured spots, sowing it as soon as the capsule was ripe. This is the time mature Trillium plants are starting to form new roots. If you sow bulb seed after the ‘time window’ it is unlikely to germinate until the second year.



Trillium rivale seedlings

This cluster of *Trillium rivale* seeds are germinating exactly where the capsule fell from the plant, obviously we have nothing in our garden to help the seed get distributed around except for me and I missed scattering this one.



I disturbed these **Erythronium** seedlings as I was weeding the gravel path - one is just germinating and alongside that are one and two year old seedlings. These are self-sown seeds that were left on the plant to scatter and naturalise in the garden. This seed would have been shed around July allowing the seed to pass through the 'time window' and as a result they are germinating now while the mature *Erythronium* plants are also coming into growth.



Erythronium frame



Eranthis hyemalis

It is good that the temperature has risen enough to allow the Eranthis to open their flowers.



Eranthis cilicica

Eranthis cilicica is not hardy in our garden beds so I have planted a few in the bulb house sand plunge where hopefully being warmer and drier they will stay with us. *Eranthis* 'Guinea Gold', the hybrid between *Eranthis hyemalis* and *Eranthis cilicica*, is perfectly hardy and grows well in most parts of our garden.



Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'



Eranthis byunsanensis



Eranthis byunsanensis

I raised these rare beauties from seed I received in 2012: a few of the seedlings flowered for the first time last year but they were not fully mature - this year more are flowering strongly. With the pollen now ripe I am cross-pollinating them in the hope of getting some seed which I will sow as soon as it is ripe.....