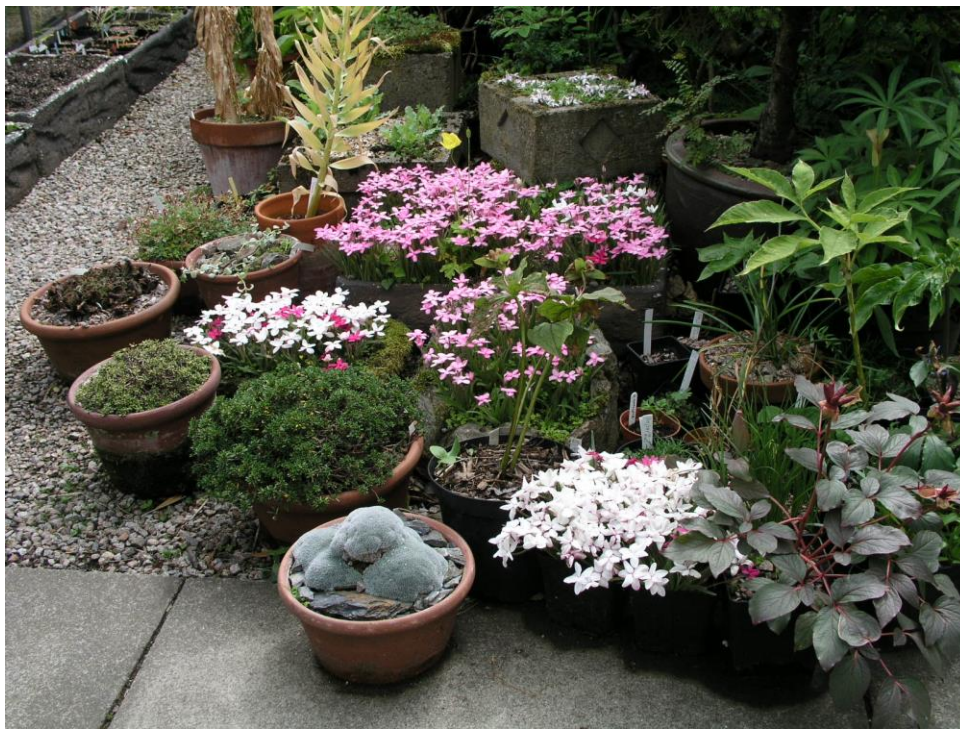




BULB LOG 50.....12th December 2018





It has been another week of low light levels making it very difficult to take any decent photographs so I have taken control and produced a still life for this week's cover picture.

With only two more logs to go before the end of this year I have been reflecting back through the sixteen years of Bulb Log pictures, not without purpose. I am delighted that I have been invited to give a talk 'Sixteen Years of the Bulb Log' at the SRGC Early Bulb Day on Saturday 16th February in Dunblane.

The talk will last just one hour but it will take me several weeks to put it all together. Once I know the subject I am to speak on, which in this case I was given, I will sketch out a story line then look for the pictures that will best

illustrate the message I want to put over - which in this case involves going back through the tens of thousands of images I have in my files. I copy any that I am likely to use into a new folder from where I can further edit them, then, once I have finished that process I will import the images into PowerPoint where I can edit them further as I set them up into the running order to suit my story line. I do not talk to each slide but prefer that the slides illustrate what I am saying so I will often set up a group of slides that transition automatically as I am speaking. I will go through the presentation many times on my laptop editing the slides until I am sure that it flows smoothly and logically. Once I am happy I will start to add the captions, mostly plant names, making the text as large as possible and always putting it at the top of a slide so that they will not be obscured from the audience by the head of the person in front. I also think of anything I may want to point out or highlight during the talk which I will do by adding in the symbols and effects available within PowerPoint.



Going back through my pictures I am taken back to the time we were still growing a few alpines in pots such as this **Raoulia eximia**. Seeing this plant now I am amused to see all the Narcissus seeds that must have fallen from adjacent plants germinating in this pot a signal that the bulbs were going to take over.



There have been many changes in the glass houses over these years and now that I have been cutting back on the number of pots of bulbs I am finding room for some plants in pots to overwinter including this small demonstration trough planted with Sempervivums. Coincidentally, like in the previous image, there are also pots of Daphne in the background of this image.



From 2003 this was one of two pots we had of **Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'** – it used to grow so well but now we only have one small patch of a few stems growing in the garden so I must try and increase it again.



The changes over the last sixteen years can be seen by comparing the picture above of the fritillaria-house full of bulbs in clay pots plunged into sand in my homemade staging with the same glasshouse today (below) with replacement staging and the bulbs planted directly in the sand.



I also get the chance to compare the same sand bed through more recent seasons. In the next three images, first on the right as it is now and the two pictures below are from earlier in the spring of this year with a display of Narcissus, Crocus and Corydalis in the first being joined by Fritillaria flowers in the third.



31/03/18



22.04.18



Some more comparison pictures of one of the other glass houses; first as it looks today then below as it looked in the early 1990's when we were still growing plants to take to Shows.



Glass house 1990's



Two more iamges of then and now of the same glasshouse, above sometime in the early 1990's and below as it looks today with the bulbs growing in square plastic pots.





The low light levels of our winter always cause the stems and leaves to etiolate and flop over, this is not helped by them being grown closely packed together.



Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus



This sand bed which has been planted for longest has proven very successful with the bulbs increasing in numbers to the extent that they are now very crowded and having to compete for space and light.



As you can see there are plenty of flower buds to come but the stems will inevitably become too long and fall over.

This summer I will go in and remove a number of the bulbs to give the remaining ones a bit more space.



Despite the stems being a bit floppy I still get great pleasure from the beautiful variations of flowers that brighten the dark days of winter.



Narcissus 'Craigton Chorister'



While picking a few flowers I accidentally pulled this bulb out of the sand which gave me the opportunity to record it showing that it has produced two flower stems and nine leaves.



You can see from the angle of the stem growth that the bulb was not planted in an upright position and I find it interesting to observe that while the stems and leaves immediately turn through almost 90 degrees to grow upwards the roots as yet have not worked out the orientation and are coming straight out from the base of the bulb.



Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus



A nice yellow **Narcissus romieuxii** seedling with an open flat faced corona.



Another yellow **Narcissus seedling** has more of a funnel shaped corona.



In a garden sand bed **Cyclamen coum** is in leaf with growing stems and flower buds waiting for favourable conditions to flower and you will notice, from the cluster of small leaves, the seed from last year's flowers are germinating where they fell from the capsule.

The sun in December even at mid-day is very low in the sky and can be seen shining through the highly pruned forty year old Pieris.





Photography is all about capturing light and I have enhanced this garden still life with a bit of fill in flash. The SRGC Early Bulb Day, where Ian Christie will also be giving a talk, is only eight weeks away so I will need to keep working to complete my talk in time and hope that you will join me in Dunblane on that day -16th February.....