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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 01.....3rd January 2018



I wish you all a very happy, healthy New Year and hope you also have many plant and garden highlights in 2018 – I will be sharing mine with you in the weekly Bulb Log.

How wonderful it is to have so many Narcissus seedlings flowering in the bulb houses during the deep mid –winter. It not only cheers me up but also keeps me busy studying each and every flower, especially now I have so many growing without labels in the sand beds. While they are all lovely my eye is drawn to the one on the cover, and on the right, where the key and distinct feature that attracts me is the ‘cup’ shaped corona. Even in only its third year since planting there is a promising rate of increase as it forms a small clump. I am tempted to lift a bulb or two in the summer to also increase this one in a pot with a view to perhaps giving it a name.



One that I named previously is **Narcissus ‘Craigton Chorister’**.



I have found that having no labels makes me look even closer at each and every flower as I try and identify them. The majority that I planted into the sand bed were seedlings resulting from our own seed which means that they are nearly all hybrids involving *Narcissus romieuxii*, *Narcissus cantabricus*, *Narcissus albidus* and their allies.



The yellow seedlings suggest *Narcissus romieuxii* while the white ones reflect *Narcissus albidus* or *cantabricus*.



Now in its third flowering season the 'U' shaped sand bed is full of flowers with many more waves of Narcissus flowers which will continue to delight until May.



A few more images of my choice selection from the Narcissus seedlings currently in flower, if it does prove to be a good grower /increaser then I will name it 'Craigton Chalice'



The distinctive cup shaped corona makes it stand out from the mass of flowers that surround it.



The majority of the flowers at the moment tend towards white many also having white filaments and styles which along with the early flowering period suggest the inclusion of *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* genes.



Some of the diagnostic features that I am looking at is the colour of the filaments and style, also whether they are contained within the corona (as above) or are exerted this is the plant I have always known as **Narcissus cantabricus foliosus** another characteristic of this plant is the long tapered funnel shaped corona seen below.





The length of the pedicel that sits between the scape and the flower is also a key feature of **Narcissus cantabricus foliosus** – this is best seen when you pull back the papery membrane.

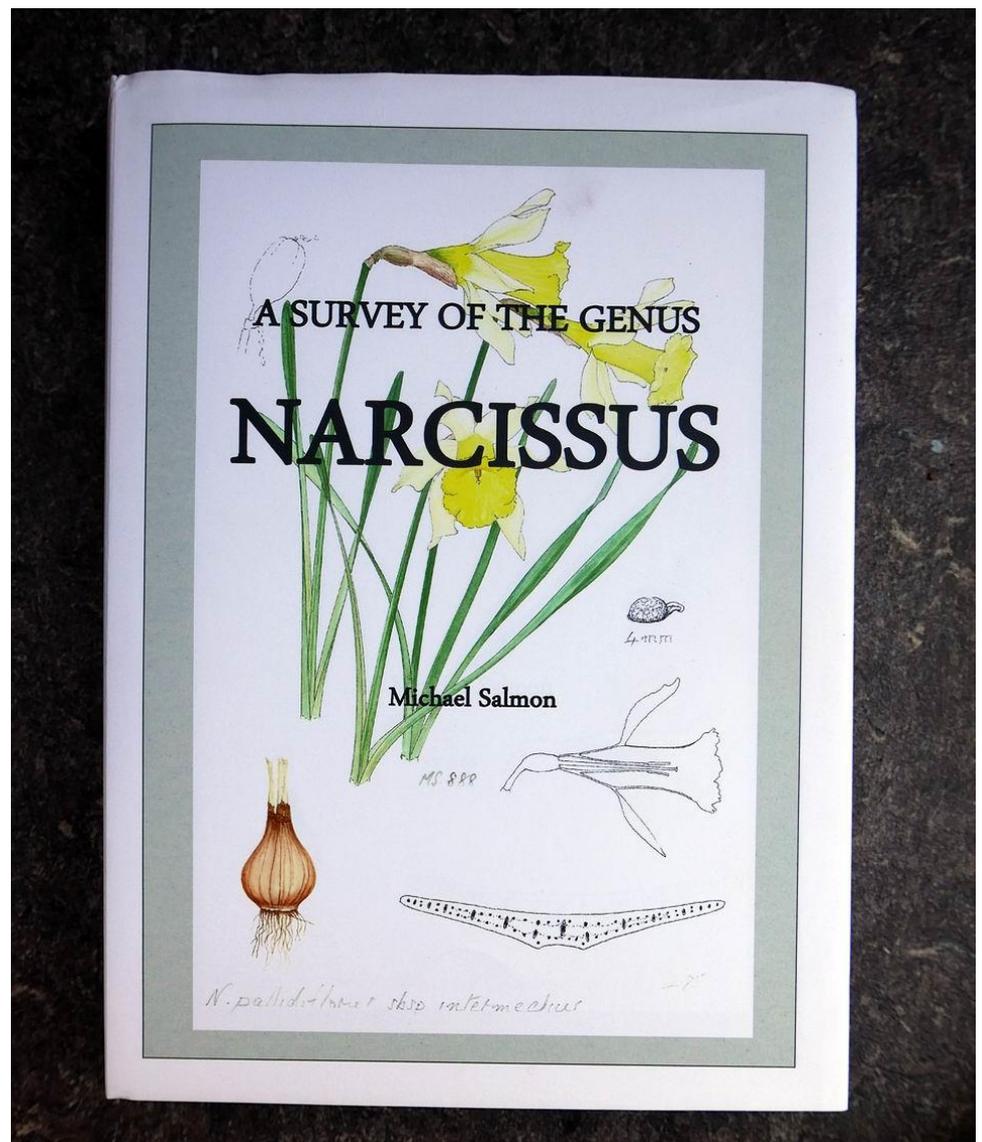
The promiscuity I am seeing within the Narcissus we grow in our bulb houses can also be found in their native habitats where many populations are formed of hybrid swarms. This is especially so in the group that grow in North Africa such as *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus*.

The seamless variation of the hoop-petticoat group of *Narcissus* defies the human urge to classify plants and it takes a brave person to publish their opinion but that is exactly what retired nurseryman Michael Salmon has done in his recent book [‘A Survey Of The Genus Narcissus’](#).

Salmon has over 50 years of experience of this genus gained by studying them in the wild and through growing them in cultivation and in this volume he shares his opinions.

Salmon introduces a new Subsection of *Albidae* which includes *Narcissus albidus* ssp. *foliosus* the plant I formally knew as *Narcissus cantabricus foliosus*. I have much sympathy with this conclusion as having grown this plant for thirty plus years I have never thought it fitted in with the other forms of *Narcissus cantabricus* I grew.

This book does not cover the cultivation of the plants but is Michael Salmon's view of the genus informed by his own experiences and research and while, as he admits, not all will agree with his conclusions it is a must have for anyone with an interest in *Narcissus*.



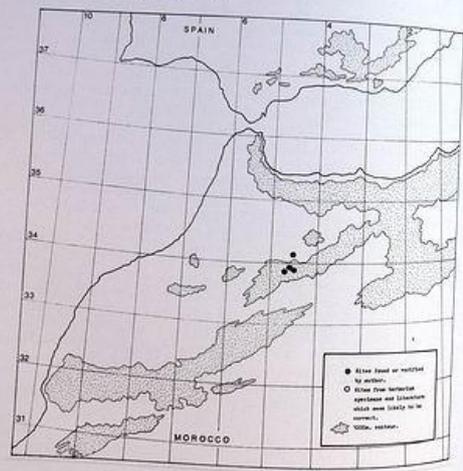
N. romieuxii ssp. *romieuxii* (Br.Bl. & Maire) Emb. & Maire, Pl. Maroc, Nov. 66 (1959)

Bulb short pyriform to 2cm diam. Tunics shell-like chestnut brown. Leaves 2-4 spreading, linear, flat on inner face, rounded and vaguely ribbed on outer, subulate-lanceolate, green, as long as peduncle. Peduncle stout, round, deep green, 5-8cm long. Spathe elliptical, green. Flower horizontal to upright, unicoloured, to 4.5cm long x 3-3.5cm diam. Tube narrow funnel shaped 2-2.2cm long x 1cm diam at throat, pale yellow, segments greenish below. Segments more or less at right angles to axis, shorter than corolla, spreading sides to 1.8cm long, the mouth more or less six-lobed, the rim undulate or crenulate, primrose yellow HCC.601/1. Stamens, filaments slender, straight sharply upcurved at apex, pale yellow. Anthers deep yellow, exerted beyond corona by 0.3-0.6cm, exceeding anthers by up to 1.8cm. Capsule shortly oblong, to 1.5cm long, greyish green. Seeds small, round, black.

Flowering: December to March. Pollinated by bee *Anthophora hispanica*.

Habitat: Morocco. Open grass areas among limestone rocks, open spaces between palm (*Chamaerops humilis*).

Distributed under no. S.F.370, S.F.108/1.



N. romieuxii ssp. *romieuxii*
M.S.

The book is extensively and beautifully illustrated with Michael Salmon's own watercolour illustrations which show the key features that identify the species including the bulb and section of the leaf to show the distribution of the vascular bundles one of the diagnostic tools.

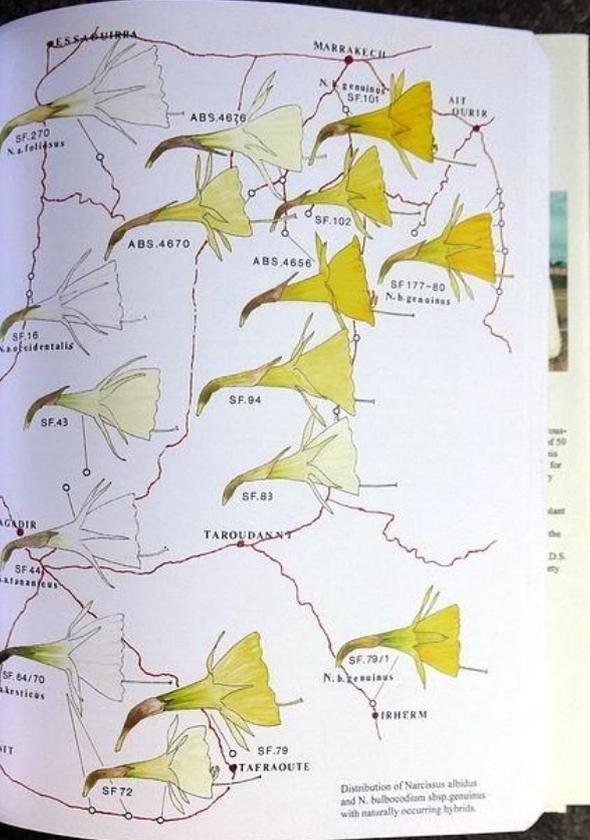
Naturally occurring hybrids of the Section Bulbocodium in Morocco, Middle, High and Anti Atlas.

Within this area are found three white species, *N. albidus* ssp. *occidentalis*, *N. albidus* ssp. *tananicus* and *N. albidus* ssp. *kesticus* and two yellow species *N. bulbocodium* ssp. *bulbocodium* and *N. bulbocodium* ssp. *genuinus*. This last species in combination with the white ones produced a variety of hybrids, which have a greater, or lesser contamination of one into another. (see page opposite).

N. bulbocodium ssp. *genuinus* has the widest distribution and, except for the far northern part of the High Atlas, is found throughout the area under discussion. It is invariably a plant of acid soils at altitudes of 2500 - 5000 feet. It has slender upright, pale to medium green leaves, green peduncle and uniformly deep yellow flowers eg. S.F.177, 180; S.A.327, S.B.101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127. The two white species found in the western High Atlas are *N. albidus* ssp. *occidentalis* and *N. albidus* ssp. *tananicus*. The first is widespread eg. S.F.15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. The second is a little variable. It is involved with *N. h. genuinus* in the area surrounding Amizmiz, Asni, north Tizi-n-Test and the Moulay Brahim Gorge where more or less intermediate yellow to pale yellow forms are dominant eg. S.F.101, 102; S.L.331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Hybrids from the Riff Mountains

Only one hybrid from this area has been found at the present time and this is *N. x tananicus* which is *N. romieuxii* ssp. *riffanus* x *N. cantabricus* ssp. *ualbidus*. It resembles its parents but with creamy yellow flowers.



Distribution of *Narcissus albidus* and *N. bulbocodium* ssp. *genuinus* with naturally occurring hybrids.

The author's watercolours also illustrate the variations within the species and the hybrid swarms. One personal criticism I would make is that I found in some cases the captions and naming on some of these composites confusing. To have the fifty plus years of experience, compiled in this document,

will prove invaluable to the long term studies of this unruly, confusing genus.



Narcissus albidus ssp. foliosus (M.Salmon) syn *Narcissus cantabricus* ssp. *foliosus*



Another with a similar name is **Narcissus albicans** which is a fertile naturally occurring hybrid between *Narcissus cantabricus* and *bulbocodium*.



Narcissus albicans



An open pollinated seedling of ***Narcissus albidus* ssp. *foliosus*** which may or may not have other parentage.



Narcissus albidus* ssp. *foliosus



Narcissus albidus* ssp. *foliosus

Despite the confusion of the naming and the mixed parentage of many of the seedlings I have raised I love them all not least for the fact that they flower through the dark winter months.



Above and below are some more of the various seed raised hybrids that swarm around our bulb houses.



Mixed Narcissus seedlings.



The dark yellow corona repeated in the filaments and style suggests this is a form of **Narcissus romieuxii**.



In one of the more recently planted sand beds in the former Fritillaria house more seedling Narcissus are coming into flower.



The majority of this group of *Narcissus romieuxii* seedlings share a slightly flanged corona where the end turns back.



Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'



One Narcissus is flowering in the open garden that is the dwarf flowered trumpet daffodil Narcissus 'Cedric Morris'.



More shoots of promise are appearing all around the garden indicating a floriferous spring to come.



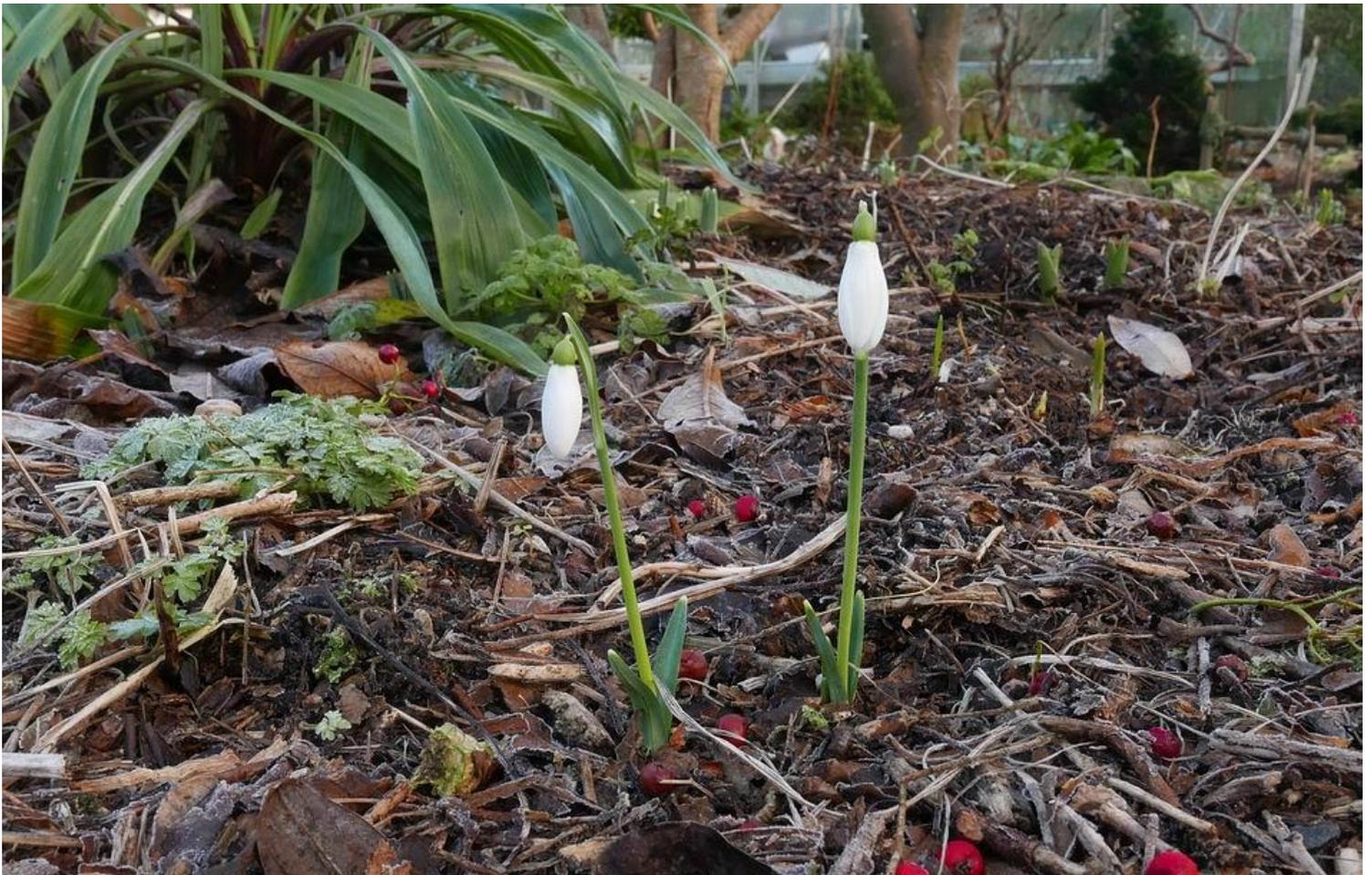


Undeterred by the intermittent snow and frosts Galanthus and Helleborus shoots are pushing through.





Snow today can be gone tomorrow (below).





One day our temperature reached 12C warm enough for this small clump of Galanthus flowers to open – the same group featured on the front cover of the first Bulb Log of last year.....