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Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 1114th March 2018





The snow and deep freeze disappeared as quickly as it arrived as these two images taken on my phone through the window of a moving bus and a train illustrate. Due to the ever changing weather conditions I had to change my travel arrangements to Perth last Tuesday. My intention was to travel there and back on the same day by train but snow drifts and floods meant I had to go down by bus and home the next day by train and what a difference that day made.



Wild grey windblown rain, sleet and snow on Tuesday was replaced by calm sunshine as spring returned.



Back home in the garden the plants and flowers had all bounced back after a week in the deep freeze with little signs of damage.

My plan for a river of yellow Eranthis rising from the cobble bed and winding up the garden is slowly progressing.

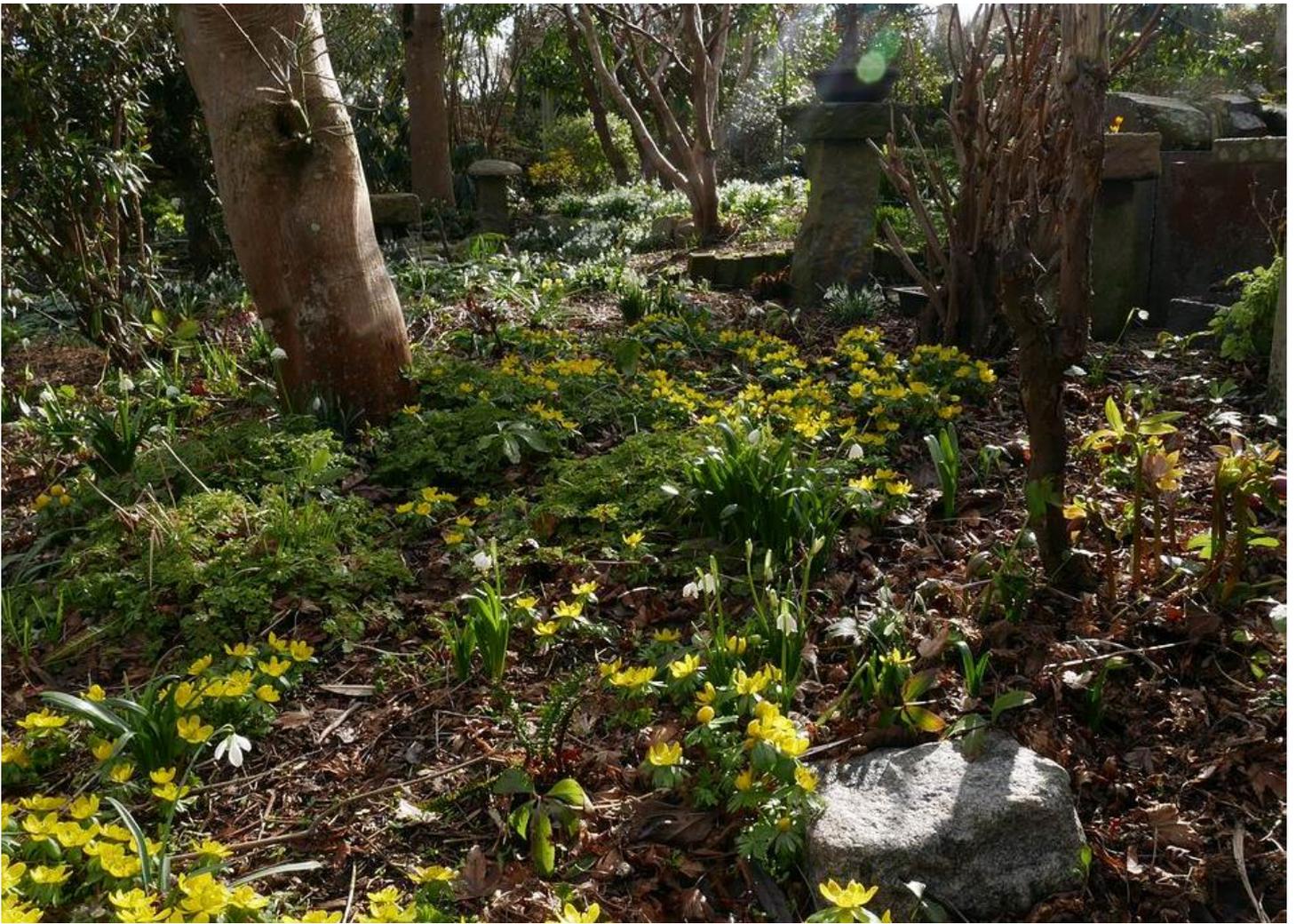


Galanthus flowers which were completely flattened by freezing winds then weighed down by snow are now standing up proudly displaying in the sunshine with the source of my yellow Eranthis river in the background.

I could buy a lot of Eranthis and plant them but that is not the way I like to garden I like the slow, more natural way. I have moved some plants from congested groups replanting them along the course of my river but mostly I am scattering seeds which will start to flower in their third year. The mass of seedlings germinating in the cobble covered sand bed shows that I did not collect all the seeds last year - I will thin these out by moving some of the seedlings next year when they start into their second year of growth



Winding out from the cobble bed the yellow river will head up the garden.



The yellow river is flowing slowly in the direction I want and is to contrast with a similar effect of the Galanthus and Leucojum which also lead the eye up the garden in a direction that will roughly describe a cross X with one leg being yellow and the other white heading off in another direction.



In nature we see plants of all ages from germination to maturity and that is what I endeavour to mimic in the garden. Some plants moved previously are seeding around creating that natural scene where there are plants of all ages, not just mature specimens.



Eranthis 'Orange Glow'

To add variation I have been scattering seeds from the other colour forms I have so they mix in with the more typical yellow.



Last autumn I also planted out one whole box of **Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'** along the route of my river – this plant does not set seed so the only way to increase it is by division so I am keeping one boxful that I can spilt every year.



When you are planting dormant bulbs in the autumn you are working blind with only a rough vision of how the overall spring flowering effect will be and invariably you leave blank spots. I potted up twelve tubers which I will use to fill in the spaces when I see all the flowers of last autumn's planting in bloom.



I had intended to empty, split and replant this fish box trough last autumn but did not get around to it. It was started as a propagating trough of the double *Sanguinaria canadense* and a single *Galanthus nivalis* bulb got in - now they cohabit perfectly. I do not like

seeing the white of the polystyrene exposed along the weather worn top edge and I have another trough waiting to be used so I must spilt it this year.



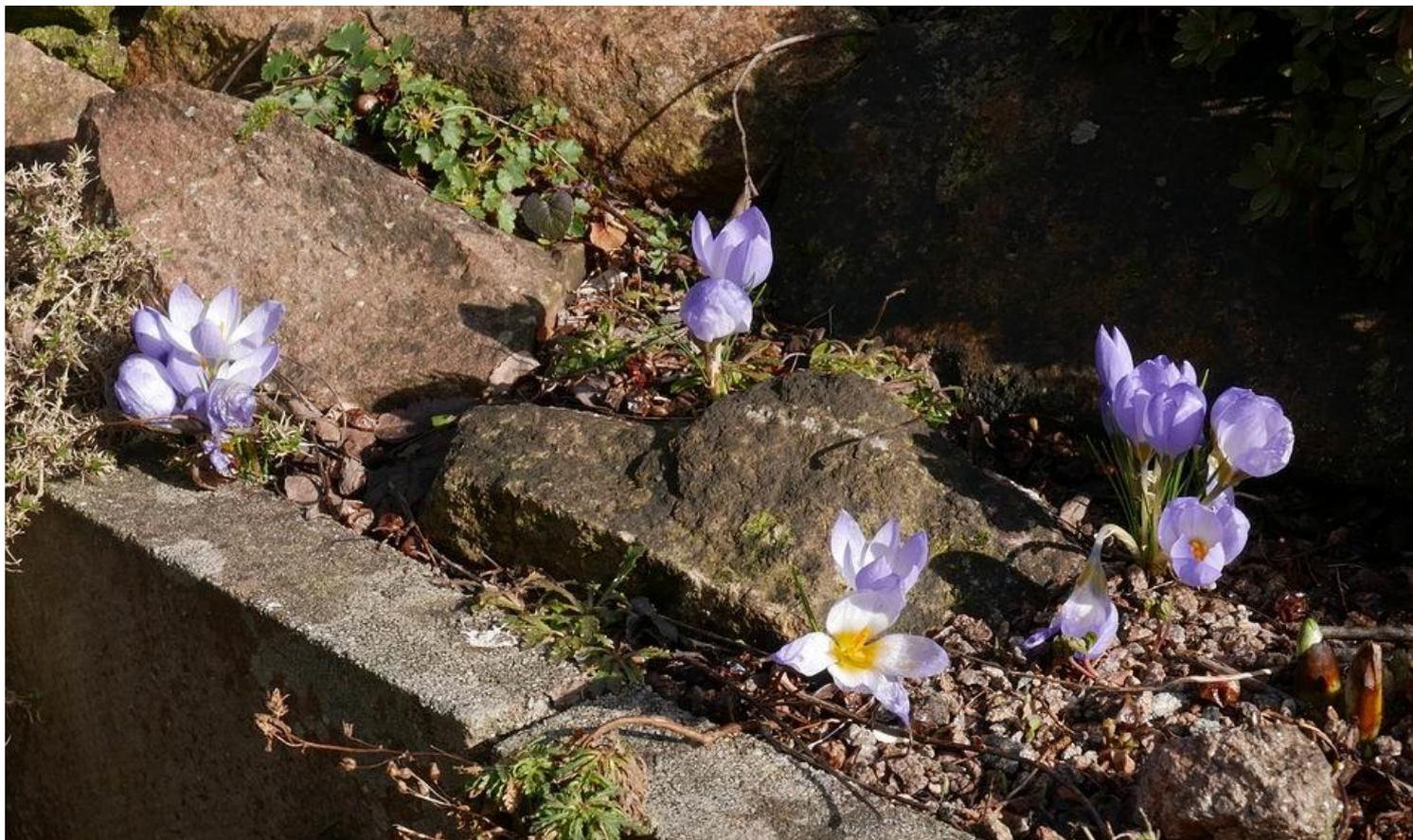
All the plants in this bulb bed are rising up now the blanket of snow has melted and all that water is entering the ground at exactly the best time to help fuel the rush of spring growth.



Many different cultivars of galanthus mix together with Leucojum and many others.



Note the number of seedlings around the parent plants of Galanthus, Eranthis, Corydalis, etc..



The flowers of *Crocus abantensis* bear some scars from the severe weather of last week but still put on a fine display in the sunshine.



Crocus abantensis



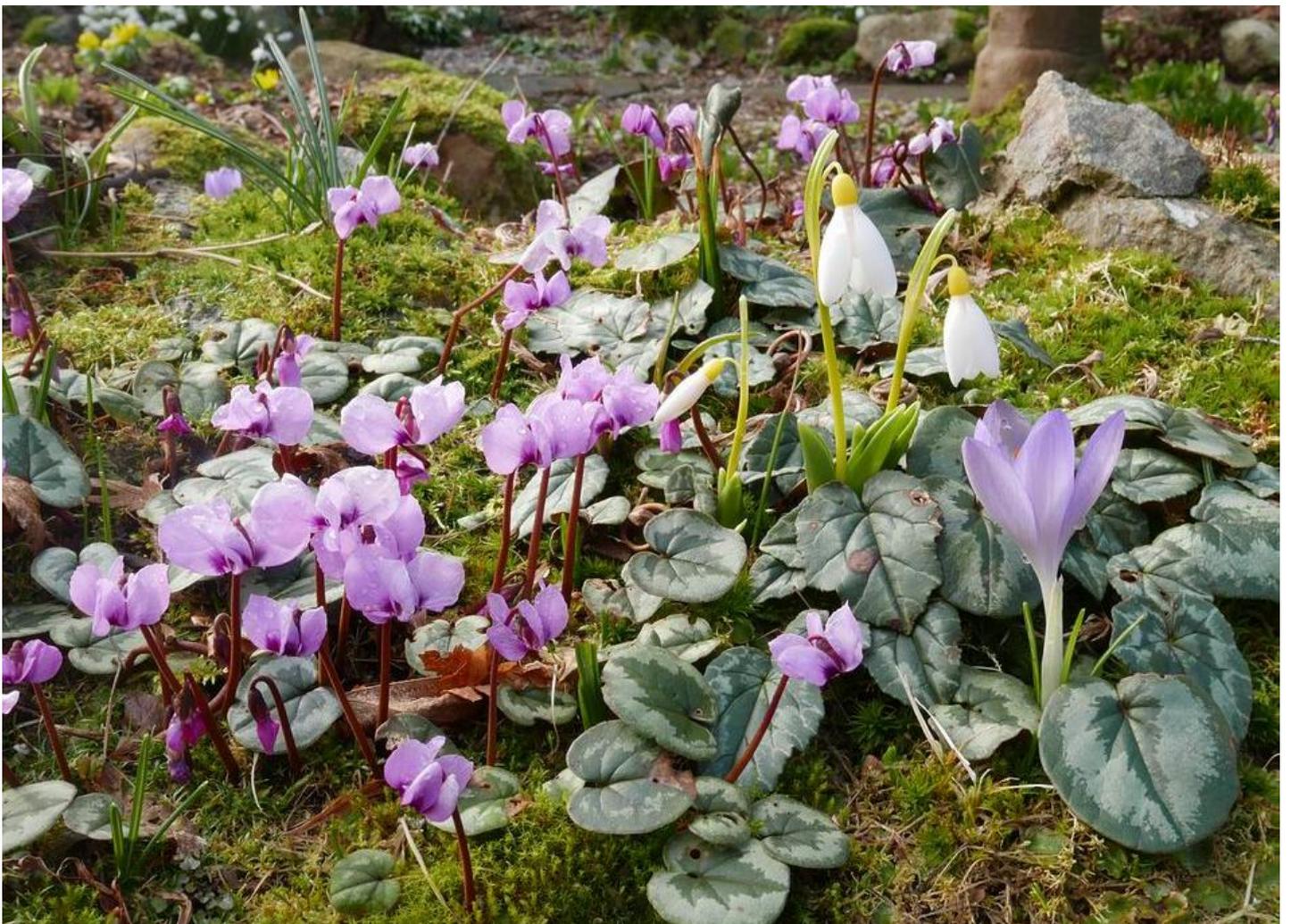
Crocus tommasinanus



Crocus tommasinanus



Crocus thirkeanus



Cyclamen coum, Crocus tommasinianus and Galanthus 'Elizabeth Harrison'.



There is nothing like changing the way you do things to give you great pleasure and a new found interest – since converting a number of the sand plunges to sand beds I have been delighted with them. The bulbs in the first one I converted (the ‘U’ shaped bed) are increasing and becoming a bit too crowded for my liking while this one is nicely spaced allowing us to enjoy each individual flower.



Formally included under *Crocus biflorus* I am not sure what the currently accepted name for this species is but that does not stop me enjoying its great beauty and observing how well it has settled in to growing in pure sharp sand.



A group of **Crocus kosaninii** is also enjoying the growing conditions in sand and under glass –this species needs the protection of cold glass it does not survive for us when planted outside.



For the near future I plan to leave the plunges in one glass house for pots: there I can keep a reference collection all with their labels but I get more pleasure now from the mixed plantings I am making in the sand beds – they are much more like our garden beds.



Crocus sieberi



Crocus sublimis Tricolor



Crocus x jessopae and **Crocus kosaninii** growing in the 'U' shaped sand bed



Crocus x jessopae



Crocus paschei



Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper' is a free flowering *Narcissus romieuxii* seedling that quickly clumps up. Despite being frozen and blasted flat with the strong winds the Narcissus have all sat back up and are enjoying the conditions under glass warmed by the sunshine.



Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger' is a hybrid between *Narcissus bulbocodium* and *romieuxii*.



Narcissus bulbocodium



Mixed narcissus.





Galanthus 'Margaret Ann'

On this page are a couple of special snowdrops that we have been growing in pots as we build up from a single bulb now I am happy we have enough so I will plant one or two outside to see how they cope with the growing conditions in our garden.



Galanthus 'E A Bowles'



I will end this week with a scene of yellow and white which for now are the dominant colours in the garden