



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 07.....13th February 2019





We tend to speak about the spring flowering plants but here these are winter flowering - actual spring will not start for a few more months yet. Do not let the beauty of these flowers disguise how hardy these plants are and in our very changeable conditions they need to be. We are currently under a high pressure system which has brought bright sunny days pushing the temperature up above 5C with double figures (reaching 10-11C) forecast for later this week. The sun, where it hits the ground, soon drives away the night time frosts and encourages the first of our

Eranthis hyemalis to open their flowers. Our weather can quickly turn from sunny and mild to wet, windy and freezing periods; a cycle which can repeat several times as we move through the early months of the year making it difficult for the gardeners to know what to do, never mind the poor plants.



We have learned to take full advantage and enjoy the flowers like **Galanthus 'Mighty Atom'** while the sunshine and mild winter conditions last.



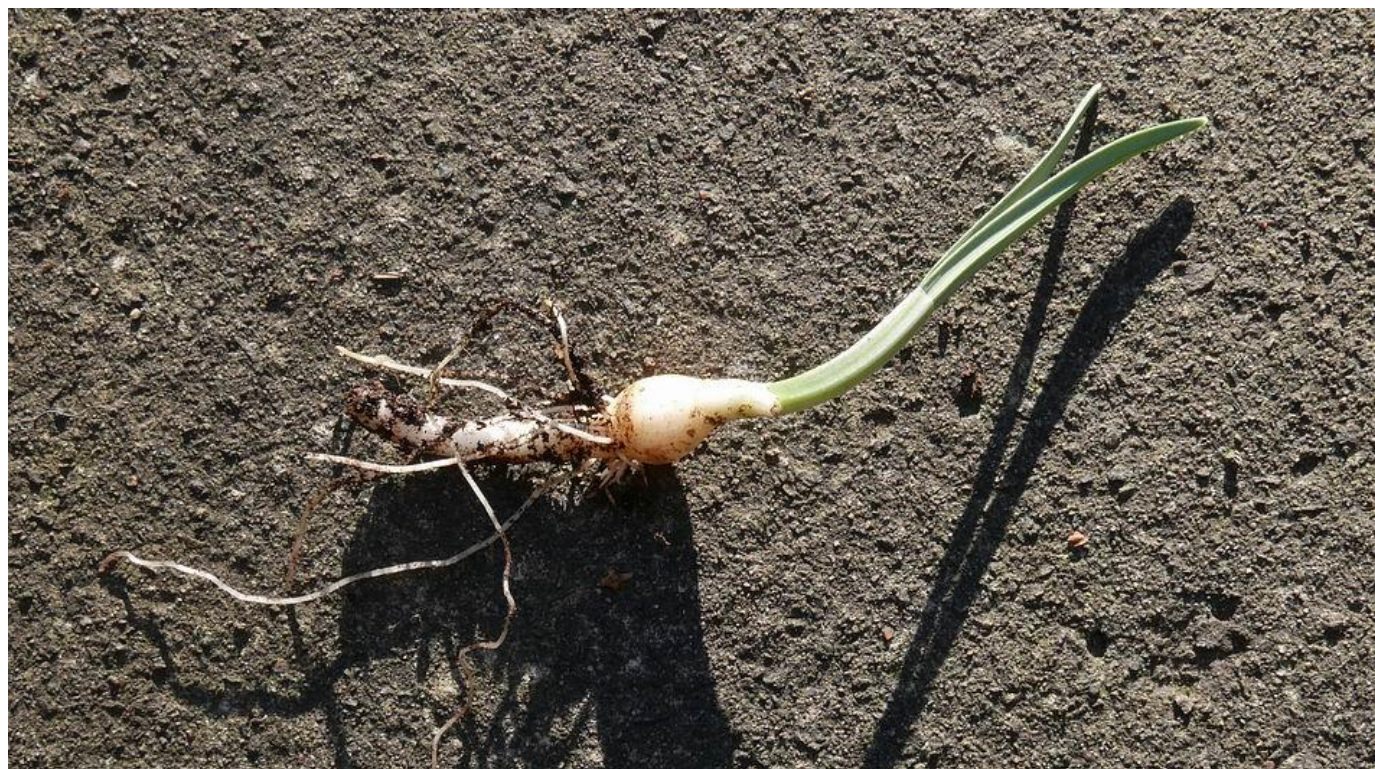
Galanthus 'Snoopy' flowers open in the sunshine revealing their little faces and large droopy ears.



In [Bulb Log 0119](#) I showed the process as I reduced the size of this clump of Galanthus by easing it up, removing half of it and then replanting the bulbs elsewhere. It is interesting to observe that while this, the clump I left, is still some way off flowering many of the bulbs I split off and planted individually or in small groups are much more advanced.



My first thought was have I planted these split-off bulbs into a sunnier position? However that is not the case so I can speculate that it is perhaps the lack of competition around the root and bulb that allows them to grow not only better but also that bit sooner.



Late last year, [Bulb Log 3818](#), I also thinned out a mass of *Galanthus nivalis* growing in a trough with *Sanguinaria Canadensis*, replanting some in the trough and the others around the garden. During that process this small bulb had inadvertently been left lying exposed on the surface of the trough – undeterred it not only formed roots and leaves but also a fat extension (contractile root) grew down into the trough from the base of the bulb which would over a few seasons take the bulb down to a more suitable depth for it to grow at. Needless to say since finding it I have assisted it in achieving its preferred depth.



While the sun is still low in the sky it can only reach and bathe small areas of the garden in the warmth from its light at any one time, so we get these dramatic effects of light and shade that can make taking pictures rather difficult. Our eyes see exactly the same scene as the camera lens does but the difference is that our eyes are connected to our brain which is able to process the stark contrast between light and shade infinitely better than any camera software.



Hellebore flowers opening in the background behind clumps of various Snowdrops some of which would also benefit from being split up before they get over congested.



This is how I like to see bulbs growing: nicely spaced out so I can appreciate each individual flower – it is good that they increase by forming clumps but that means to retain my preferred look I have to spread them out every few years.



The bulb bed is greening up quickly in the mild conditions with *Colchicum* and *Allium* leaves surrounded by a quantity of flowering *Galanthus*.



The bulb bed from another angle.



Galanthus flowers.



Galanthus 'Morgana'



Galanthus fosteri



Galanthus 'Morgana'



Looking much better than they did in last week's Bulb Log, under snow and ice, this wee patch of **Cyclamen coum** fuelled by the water from the melting snow now enjoys its turn in the sunshine.



Cyclamen coum and Crocus tommasinianus



More Crocus are starting to appear and I wait in the hope that the weather remains favourable so they open their flowers to be identified and enjoyed fully.



Crocus abantensis



Crocus atticus

Now its flowers are open, revealing a hairy throat, I can confirm the buds I showed a week ago are of *Crocus atticus* rather than the similar *Crocus nivalis* which has a glabrous throat.

Growing in a trough with dwarf willows the first of our **Crocus thirkeanus** reveals its glorious yellow flower.





Crocus atticus adds more colour to this bulb house sand bed.





Previously the Fritillaria house was filled with pots now all the bulbs are growing directly in the sand and to extend the seasonal interest I have been adding other genera such as the Crocus and Narcissus.





I love watching the way the changing light illuminates and effects the way I see the flowers of the bulbs flowering in the sand beds. In fact we get enormous pleasure from these wee Daffodils that flower all through the winter.



Narcissus bulbocodium



Narcissus bulbocodium

These plants are not difficult to grow and a few 11cm pots, such as these, will give you a mass of flowers and great pleasure during the winter months.



Narcissus romieuxii rifanus



Narcissus bulbocodium, Narcissus romieuxii and Narcissus hybrids.



Mixed Narcissus seedlings shining out in the sun light.



Narcissus hybrid.



Narcissus bulbocodium



Narcissus cantabricus



It is impossible to say which of these narcissus is my favourite but I do love the pure white crystalline appearance of *Narcissus cantabricus* which is just coming into flower now.

I have been working for months now on my talk looking at sixteen years of the *Bulb Log* and now I am making my final edits before I present it on Saturday at the Early Bulb Day in Dunblane. With so many pictures in my files to choose from it has been difficult to know what to include because in a talk to last one hour I have to leave out so much however I hope I have chosen a suitable selection to illustrate what I have been covering in these pages since 2003.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Dunblane and hearing the other speaker Ian Christie.....