



BULB LOG 03.....15th January 2020



Eranthis pinnatifida



Eranthis pinnatifida seed germinating

Growing bulbs from seed brings so many advantages that I recommend it to everyone. The benefits include bulbs with good health, increased vigour, variation and acclimatisation of the bulbs to your garden. As it can take upwards of three years after sowing the seed to get the first flowers it does require some patience but that wait is only when you first start - if you continue to sow seed every year you will also have new flowerings every year. Another advantage I did not mention was that raising bulbs from seed also brings down the cost of individual bubs; indeed in some cases seed may be the only way to acquire bulbs.

Initially we acquired a small packet of *Eranthis pinnatifida* seed which we grew to flower and since then we have been building up our stock by collecting and sowing all our own garden seed.



Eranthis hyemalis seedlings



Eranthis pinnatifida seedlings

While it has been reclassified by some botanists as *Shibateranthis pinnatifida* I still use the name, *Eranthis pinnatifida*, with which most of us are familiar. I have noted some differences between the more familiar yellow Western *Eranthis* and this white Eastern group (*Shibateranthis*); one significant distinction is *Eranthis pinnatifida* has only a single seed leaf while *Eranthis hyemalis* has two seed leaves.



Eranthis pinnatifida

It can seem a slow process because only the small single seed leaves are produced in the first year after germination however in year two leaves more typical of the mature plants only smaller are produced - with good growth the first flowers can be achieved in the third year.



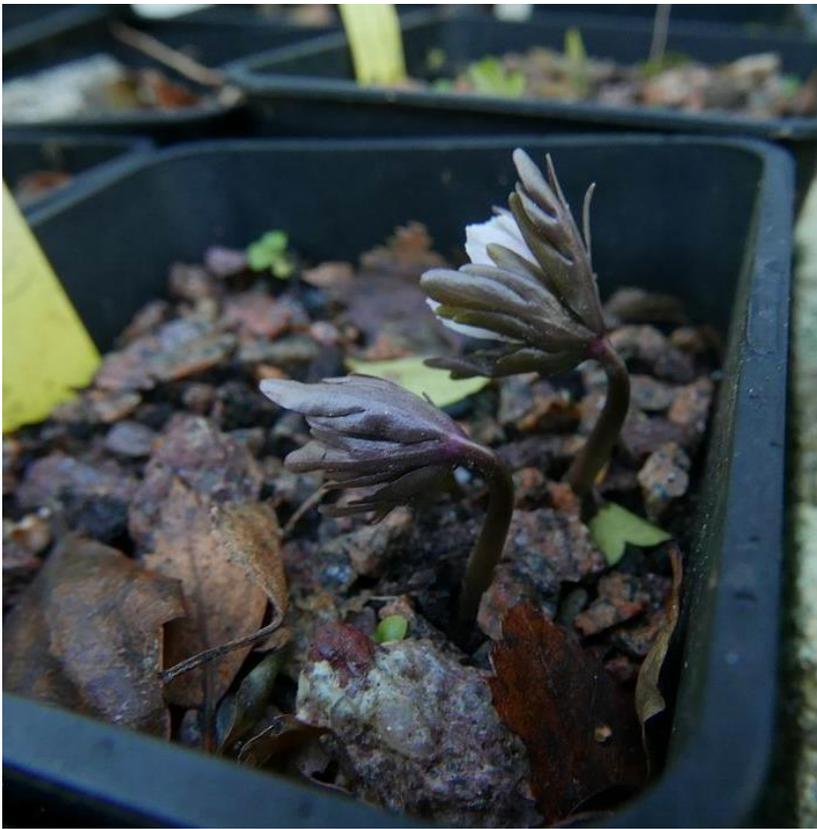
This is the form ***Eranthis pinnatifida*** most commonly seen in cultivation but we also received some seed from Japan of other variations of this delightful species.



Note the shape and colour of the leaves of these flowering seedlings which are typical of the first forms of *Eranthis pinnatifida* we raised, they have green leaves.



These two pots of seedlings show some of the variation within *Eranthis pinnatifida* - in the pot in the foreground the leaves are more finely divided with a dark purple colour compared to the pot of typical forms behind.



Above is one of the pink forms of **Eranthis pinnatifida** we raised from the seed received from a friend in Japan. Below are some of the second generation seedlings, raised from seed harvested three years ago, from the plant above – these have inherited the dark finely divided leaves and the pink tinged flowers.



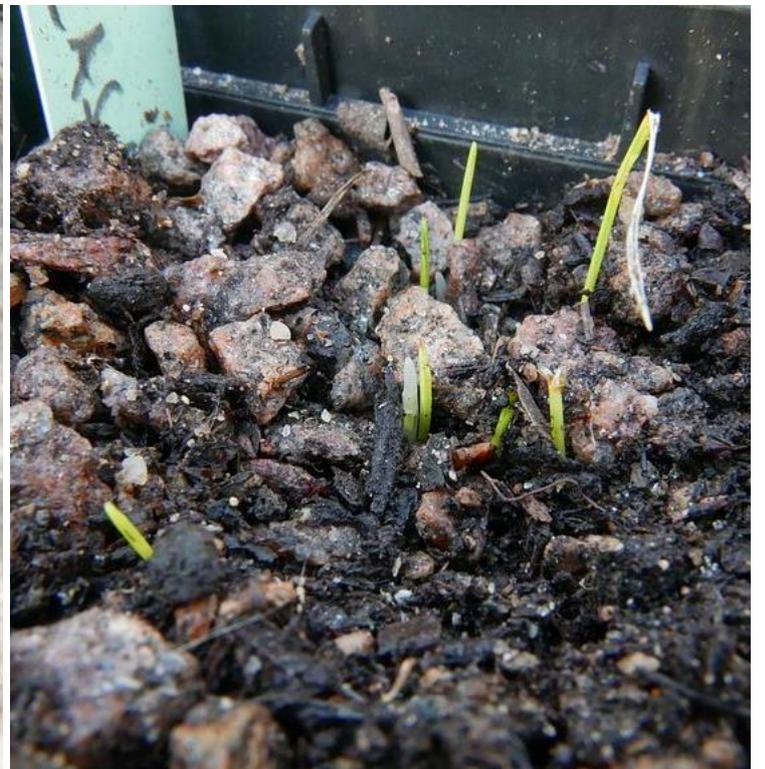
Eranthis pinnatifida seedlings ex pink forms.

You may find this species available for sale in some specialist plant lists but because of the rarity and the years it takes to raise flowering sized tubers it is likely to be expensive.

It is also often described as a ‘connoisseur’s plant’ and indeed it is a small gem but small is the operative word. Due to its diminutive size it would be very easy to walk past it in a garden but

if you do take the time to look into the flowers when they are fully open it is a thing of exquisite beauty.

Having now built up reasonable numbers of ***Eranthis pinnatifida*** a few years ago I planted some directly into the new bed, beside the pond, where the flowers are just poking through the pine needle mulch. These plants flowered in this bed last year and I scattered the seed that they set around the parent so I will be watching carefully for any of the tiny seed leaves to appear – my aim is to have a self-seeding colony of the various forms across this bed.



Crocus pallasii seed

This is a pot of *Crocus pallasii* seed sown deep on [27th September 2019](#) (left) which is germinating now (right). Experience tells me that leaving the seed pots outside to take the weather gives the best germination results - once they germinate I will move them under glass to protect them from hard frosts and being grazed off by hungry, winter roaming slugs. As this is the time many of you may be receiving seed from the seed exchanges I remind you of the Special Edition of the [Bulb Log 4619 - Bulbs from Seed](#) that I posted recently.



Camassia leichtlinii

Out in the garden while removing some mossy saxifrage from the gravel I discovered a group of germinating seeds within the moss like foliage along with some second year seedlings. I know these are *Camassia leichtlinii* because it is seeding around this area of the gravel.



It is interesting to compare the second year bulbs with the germinating seed on the right. The new bulb will form just at the point where the emerging stem tapers down to the first root.



Erythronium seed germinating.



The advantages of growing bulbs from seed are very evident in the bulb houses where most of the Narcissus growing in the sand beds are seed raised, showing much variation.



Mixed Narcissus



Mixed Narcissus



This, one of our reference pots, contains clonal bulbs of the original form we received as **Narcissus romieuxii** var **mesatlanticus**. I have come to the conclusion that this is more than likely a naturally occurring hybrid as it is similar to many of the hybrid seedlings that we are getting from our own seed.



Narcissus romieuxii hybrid with cone shaped corona.



Narcissus romieuxii hybrid with flat flared corona.



Narcissus albidus



Narcissus albidus hybrids



Narcissus romieuxii



Narcissus romieuxii



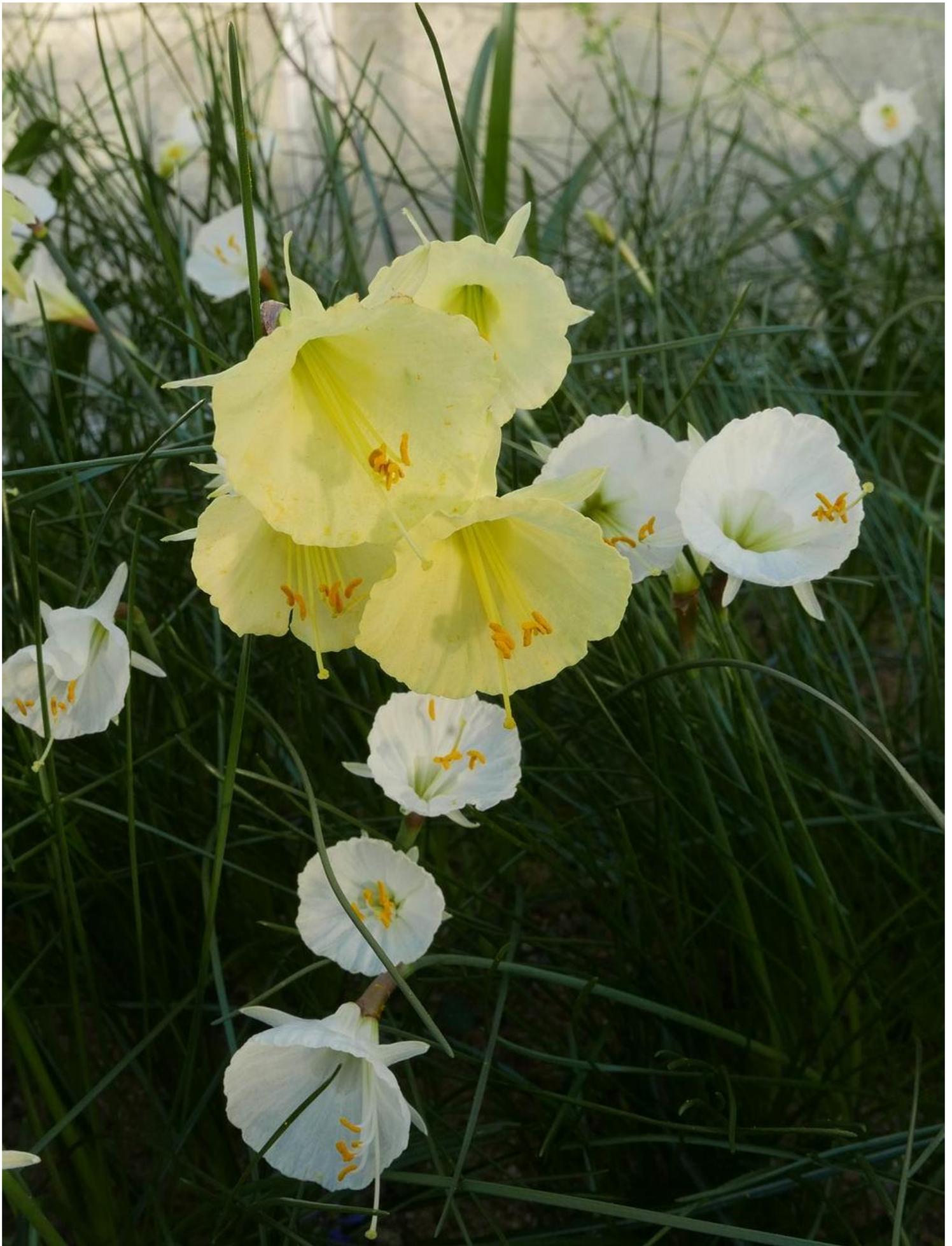
In the garden the first of the snowdrop flowers have pushed up and are showing white.



Galanthus hybrids



Galanthus woronowii



Narcissus

I will return to the Narcissus for this week's closing image –if you would like to see more on the variation in these Narcissus flowers click the link for the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#)