



BULB LOG 51.....23rd December 2009



Like many of you around the Northern hemisphere we are under a deep blanket of snow just now.



It all started last Friday night when we had a moderate amount of snow fall in just over an hour. Lily and I went out to check on the bulb houses – as you can see I rarely shut the doors except in severe cold.



Lily enjoys the snow and loves to roll over and over like a maiden rolling in the May dew. She also has to poke her nose into it.



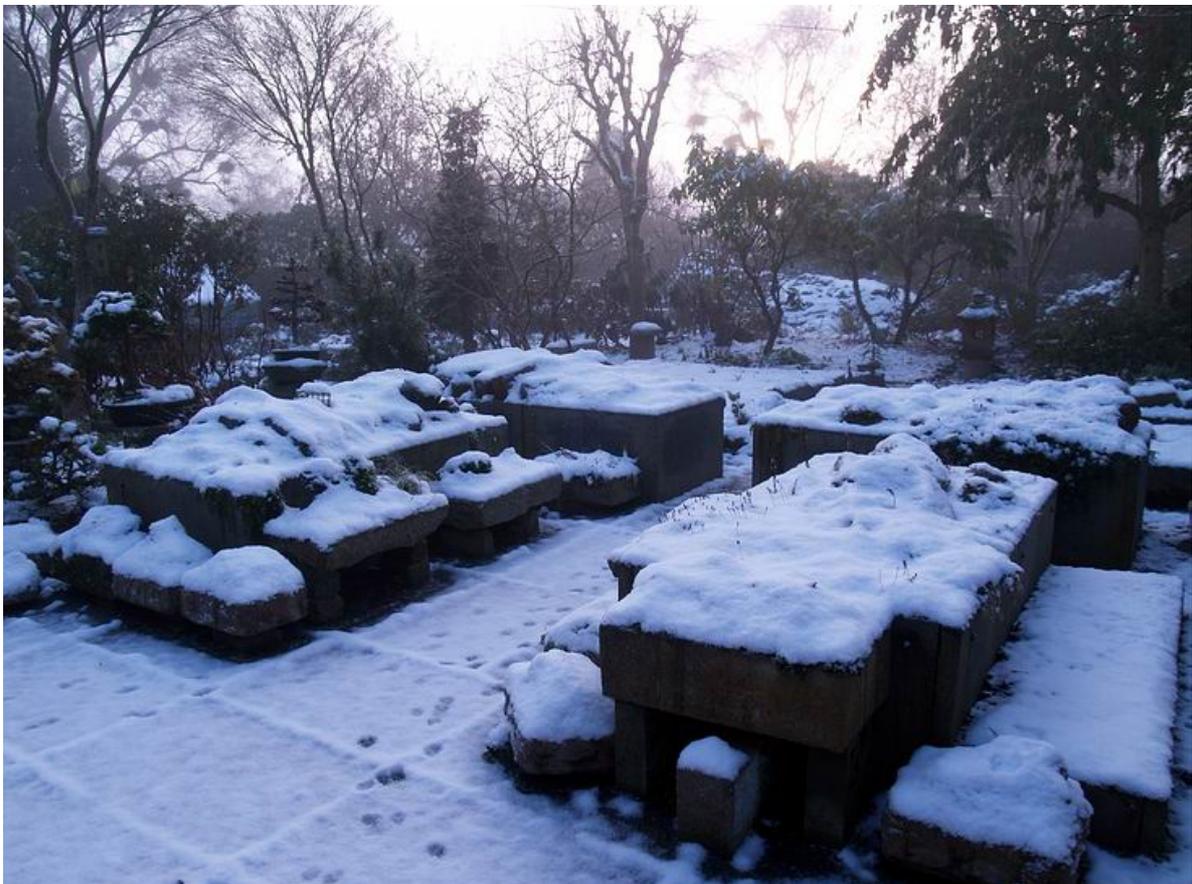
### **Bulb houses in snow**

When we are forecast to have prolonged periods of sub zero temperatures say below  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  that persists during the hours of daylight that is when I close the doors. It is also during such periods that the soil warming cables that I have in the sand plunge will come on to prevent the compost freezing solid which can kill some bulbs. The surface of the compost and the sand plunge are frozen just now but as the day time temperature hovers above zero it will not have penetrated through to the bulbs.



### **Narcissus**

The bulbs start to collapse as if they were needing water and that is exactly what is happening. Much of the available water has turned to ice and so the plants cannot take it up. Also as a defence against the chances of their cell walls rupturing as the water defrosts the plants reduce the water they contain in freezing conditions. Understandably I will not be showing many more pictures of bulbs this week.



### **Freezing mist**

A freezing mist approaches from the south but it did not completely engulf our garden as we seemed to be on the northern edge of it.



### **Snowed off**

Some ongoing work was snowed off then further snow falls arrived.



### **Winter wonder land**

It is a common saying ‘that all gardens look the same under snow’ - I could not disagree more. If you have a well laid out and planted garden full of interesting structural plants your garden will always look better even under snow. You will have more interesting humps bumps and mounds – not just a flat expanse of snow – plus some plants mostly trees and shrubs, will always stick out above the snow.





***Celmisia armstrongii***

*Celmisia armstrongii* is a very good structural plant with its long narrow, spiky, silvery leaves which even look good as they poke through the snow.



**Snowdrops**

The wee snowies are suffering as they live up to their common name and drop in the snow – they are now completely buried under the further falls of snow.



**Acer griseum**

A good selection of trees will always add structure and all year round interest to your garden and no garden is too small to have a tree. We on the other hand probably have too many because I am almost as addicted to raising trees from seed as I am with bulbs – it is just the space that restricts me.



**Conifers**

Conifers like most plants seem to go in and out of fashion but they should not be ignored as they will provide an excellent structure and cover for the birds. This is looking east down over Aberdeen towards the sea and you can see the heavy grey sky is full of snow.



**Verity 2**

I cannot remember if I have introduced Verity 2, our new wee car which replaced Verity 1 in early October. Maggi had arranged a big surprise for me with a personalised number plate: JIY BD. My full name is James Ian Young and those of you that follow the forum will know that I am known as “the Bulb Despot”, so BD for short and hence the registration number.



**Further snow falls**

The snow continues to fall and further falls are forecast for the rest of the week making it difficult to do much in the bulb houses. The cold dark conditions have slowed up all growth so not much is happening out there.



**Snow on the roof**

One task that I do have to keep up with is removing the snow from the glasshouse roofs.



**Depth of snow**

These structures are only designed to support their own weight with some added tolerance. The added weight of this amount of snow could easily cause the structure to collapse so I clear it daily. It also helps to allow more light into the bulbs that are in growth.



**Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris***

These Fieldfares are welcome visitors, along with the Redwings they have descended to devour all the berries in the garden another good reason to have plenty trees.

To help save the trees and also to save ourselves a lot of time (!) we do not send out Christmas cards any more so can we send you all Seasons Greetings and our very best wishes for a happy holiday.

**Seasons Greetings**

