



BULB LOG 2.....13th January 2010



Wood pigeons

My little population of Wood pigeons has suddenly increased as their relatives have joined them to eat the berries on the Cotoneaster – one couple use a witches broom on our birch tree (see picture on right) as a readymade nest.

Below is the snow lying on the small sand-filled bulb bed I made a few years ago. I am fascinated by the way you can now see evidence of each layer of snow fall appearing as it becomes weathered. This is the reason that scientists are able to take ice cores from the Antarctic and discover the climate and weather patterns over the last few thousand years or more.



Bulb bed



Bulb Frame

As this picture shows I have no covers on this outside frame - the snow cover is the best form of cover I can get in these cold times. I have been placing some of the snow that I remove from the glasshouse roofs onto this frame because the snow acts as an insulating layer against the worst of the cold. Again I will have to wait for several months before I know if any of the bulbs in this bed have been damaged by the frosts. I lost a lot of my pots of *Narcissus cyclamineus* that were in a similar frame during the last big freeze we had some ten years ago.



***Fritillaria purdyi* shoot**

A quick look around the Frit house reveals that the first shoots are starting to appear.



Fritillaria tortifolia

Although I have not shown it previously, this shoot of *Fritillaria tortifolia* has been above ground for at least three weeks – well ahead of the other pots I have.



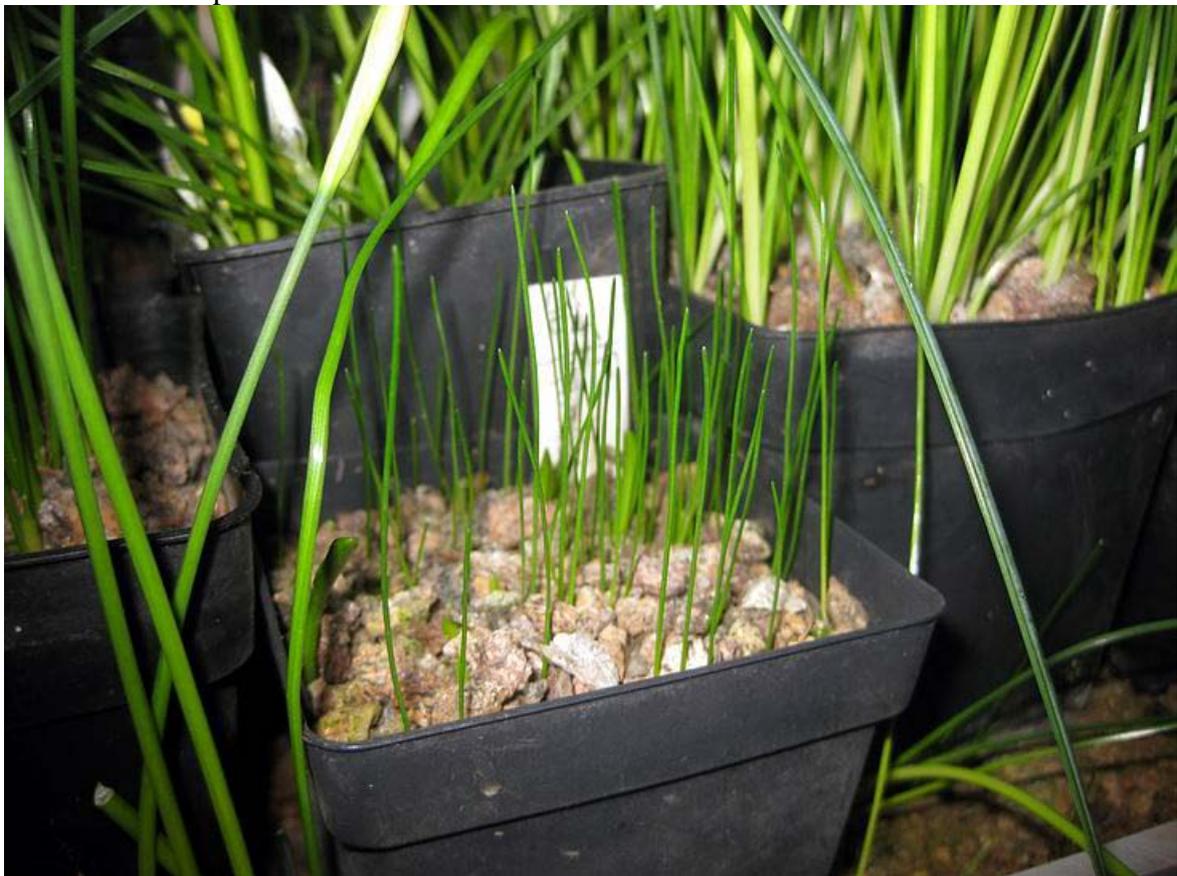
Fritillaria tortifolia seedling leaves

These seedlings of *Fritillaria tortifolia*, from home seed, were sown in September 2007; a few germinated in 2008 a few more last year and now they are coming back up. I will end up with one, two and three year old seedlings in this pot. Sporadic germination is a survival mechanism of plants so that all the seedlings do not perish in a single event of bad conditions but I do not normally get it when sowing my own seeds. Perhaps it is more a characteristic of the Chinese species; I will observe my other sowings closely.



Narcissus seedlings

These Narcissus seedlings are interlopers that self sowed into this pot of *Fritillaria graeca* some years back and as there are only three small frit bulbs I have just left them to enjoy each other's company. As I remember it is a nice narcissus with large hoop petticoat flowers on relatively short stems and as it is increasing well I think they will part Company in this summers repot.



Narcissus seedlings

Here is another example of that chance co-habitation with a batch of Narcissus seeds just germinating in this pot of *Fritillaria davisii*. It does show that when the Narcissus seeds are sown at the optimum time they will germinate at the time the parents are coming into growth and that they are hardy enough to have withstood the freezing conditions of the last three weeks.



Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper'

Last week I showed a pot of Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger' here is another of my selections, Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper' which was selected because it increases and clumps up very quickly indeed. Young Narcissus bulbs raised from seed always show more vigour than old forms that have been increased vegetatively over many years and perhaps picked up diseases on the way. These ones I selected stood out from their fellow seedlings by being exceptionally vigorous; producing some forty flowers from a 7cm pot.



Narcissus 'Atlas Gold'

I was given a bulb or two of Narcissus 'Atlas Gold' by a friend a few years ago and it is also increasing and flowering well in a 7cm pot. This just shows you that you do not need big pots and a lot of space to enjoy the pleasure that these wee treasurers can bring in the dark winter days.



Cyclamen cyprium

On the other hand I must remember to repot and split out this pot of *Cyclamen cyprium* seedlings. Even though they will grow well crammed in together they do like a bit more room and you can see that they are already starting to push on the sides and distort the pot.



Crocus michelsonii shoots

Unperturbed by the cold these *Crocus michelsonii* shoots have continued to extend slowly and are now at the stage where one mild sunny day will be enough to entice their beautiful flowers into bloom. I never cease being amazed at just how quickly especially *Crocus* flowers can burst into bloom for apparently nowhere – these at least have a head start.



Crocus biflorus isauricus shoots

Likewise these *Crocus biflorus isauricus* shoots are also playing the waiting game for a bit of warmth.



Crocus biflorus isauricus shoots

This close view lets you see that even the colour is clearly visible on one bud- just screened by the papery bracts.



Crocus sieberi sieberi shoots

As well as the lovely flowering Narcissus it is the expectation of all these fat shoots bursting in to bloom soon that helps me through the frustration of not getting into the garden in the snow. These are mature corms of Crocus sieberi sieberi with shoots that are big enough to flower every year.



Crocus sieberi sieberi shoots

I do not find that Crocus sieberi sieberi increase much by off-setting so collecting and sowing seed is the best way to increase your stock and always have healthy vigorous plants coming along. I am expecting most of the seedlings in this pot to flower this year.



Crocus imperati suaveolens

Here again is a pot of *Crocus imperati suaveolens* whose buds have not been damaged at all by the deep frosts that they have been subjected to over recent weeks.



Narcissus 'Camoro' flowers after the frosts

While not directly damaged by the frosts these *Narcissus 'Camoro'* flowers have suffered from a lack of moisture as all the water was locked up as ice and they are now going over much earlier than they would in frost free conditions. I will have to wait some time before I find out if the bulbs have been damaged by the cold.



Miss Lily has a roll in the snow

I will finish off this week's Bulb log with two pictures of one Lily who is perfectly hardy and is not damaged by the snow; in fact she loves it.



Miss Lily "Who Me"?