



BULB LOG 44.....2nd November 2011



Crocus stigma with pollen grains attached

The world of plants is a fascinating place especially when you add a little macro photography which enables us to enter a wonderful world like this: seeing see this crocus stigma has small hair like growths awaiting the arrival of a pollen grain.



Crocus caspius

This is the second flowering from this pot of *Crocus caspius* – look carefully and you can just make out the dried remains of the previous flowers.



Spent Crocus flowers

In fine weather it is difficult to understand why you should remove the crocus flowers when they go past and dry out but as soon as the atmosphere turns cold and damp the dried remains absorb water and attract mould and rot.



Baby snail

Careful inspection of all the emerging growth is also essential to keep your bulbs in good health - discovering problems early make them much easier to deal with. I saw this tiny baby snail on the floral tube of a Crocus and dealt with it before it grew into a giant like its parent by feeding on my bulbs.



Aphids

Aphids are an ever present threat even at this time of year and I check every pot as the leaves emerge.



Last march of the Aphids

One aphid soon gives rise to a whole clan so as soon as you see them wipe them out. I do this literally with my finger and thumb because I dislike using chemicals unless I have no choice. It is the potential spread of virus that is the worst nightmare in a collection of bulbs and chewing by the snail and sap sucking of the aphids can both lead to that. It is also worth remembering that virus can spread from one plant to another by any vector that transfers fluid and that includes us. So, if you have aphids on more than one plant, clean your fingers between wiping.



Crocus biflorus

I have this Crocus labelled as a form of *Crocus laevigatus* from wild-collected seed but I suspect I have mixed my labels as it looks like a form of *Crocus biflorus* to me; most likely *C. biflorus pseudonubigena*.

See the picture of the open flower below showing the characteristic black colour of the anthers before they dehisce.



C. biflorus pseudonubigena ?
Very different from *Crocus laevigatus* shown below.



Crocus laevigatus



Crocus sp. ?

Another mystery is this Crocus I received unnamed – I suspect it is *Crocus pallasii* - any comments would be welcome – another view of the flower below.



Cardiocrinum giganteum



Last week I showed a picture of the seed head on *Cardiocrinum giganteum* and there was a question asked in the forum of when I would cut the seed heads off.

With most lily type plants the seed is viable and ripe before the capsule starts to turn yellow and open. When the seed is mature the plant then shuts down and it is just a drying off process that allows the capsule to split and shed the seed. You can remove the seed pods as above or cut the stem and allow them to dry off naturally if you wish.

As you will see from the sequence of pictures below I have opened one capsule and sown some seed. I will over the coming weeks open and sow some more to see if I notice any effect on the efficiency of the germination.



Cardiocrinum seed pod opened to reveal the seed some of which was sown -see below.





Cardiocrinum giganteum

Most lily bulbs replace themselves every year but *Cardiocrinum* is unusual in that it does not replace itself annually. As a juvenile bulb it grows in size each year as each leaf base forms a scale adding to the size of the bulb - only when the bulb has reached sufficient size will it produce a stem and flowers and then that bulb dies. If the growing conditions are suitable a number of small bulblets will form arising from the rooting points around the base of the stem.



Cardiocrinum bulblets

In this case I got five bulblets which I planted directly back into the garden spacing them out and enriching the planting holes with leaf mould. It will take from three to five years of good growth before they reach flowering size.



Paris seed

To clean the Paris seeds of their fleshy surrounding I place them between layers of newspaper and rub hard enough to crush the pulp but not hard enough to damage the seeds.



Paris seed – cleaned

The clean seed was sown 2cms deep in a pot and placed outside in an open seed frame to await germination.



Rhodohypoxis troughs

Now the Rhodohypoxis have gone underground I have moved the troughs and placed them under the staging of the glass house to allow them to dry off for the winter.



Colchicum cupanii

Now for a few flowers from the bulb houses to finish off this week's bulb log.



Galanthus nivalis reginae-olgae



Galanthus peshmenii



Galanthus peshmenii



***Narcissus cantabricus foliosus* in bud**

The first of the Narcissus are starting to open – greeny yellow while in the bud but pure crystalline white when the flowers open.



Narcissus cantabricus foliosus hybrid

