



Despite it now being late October, there are still some flowers bringing cheer outside. In the sand beds, this *Hymenoxys* species (probably *acaulis*) recently started to flower:



As many of you know, we cover our sand beds each winter with a plastic roof to keep off winter rain. These lids went on last week and not a moment too soon as today's torrential showers would have left the beds very wet. I must remember however to check the beds from time to time to ensure they are not completely parched rather than merely dry, as in some past winters I suspect some of the more shallowly rooting items were short of water leading to desiccation.

On the new crevice garden too there are still a few flowers. We also planted in here recently some bulbs: There were a few crocuses which we placed in our service paths, including *Crocus niveus*, *C. tournefortii*, *C. malyi* and others. Some of the autumn ones are already in bloom (but haven't always turned out to be what it said on the label – a frustrating experience I know most of you will know and understand!). Others included *Corydalis solida* types as well as *Corydalis malkensis* and we have tried some small alliums such as *A. bisceptrum* and *A. akaka*. I thought it may also be worth trying some of the smaller *Fritillaria* so have planted *F. carica* and *F. pudica*. We also put in some small Irises such as *Iris attica* and *Iris suaveolens* (both yellow and



purple forms). I will let you know how they get on. One non-bulbous plant in flower still in the crevice garden is *Erigeron aureus* 'The Giant'. This has flowered non-stop since we planted it in the spring:



Before the crevice garden was built, these raised beds used to stand in that location:



When we dismantled these beds, we kept the stone from the walls and throughout this year our landscaper on the team, Peter Herman, has been recycling it to build low retaining walls to a couple of beds on the rock garden.



This bed is at the very top of the rock garden:



Logs, now decaying, were originally used as an edge. After Peter's work it looks like this:





A similar bed round the back of the rock yard has been done in a similar way. Here are before and after pictures:





Peter has done a great job and the whole area looks much neater and tidier. It's also great to feel we have been able to re-use materials. Here is the man himself while doing the work:



Moving under cover now, at this time of the year we have quite a lot of the South African winter-growing bulbs in flower and many of these can be seen in the Display House. A couple of Oxalis currently in there are firstly *Oxalis purpurea*, in a yellow-flowered form:





This next one is usually seen around as *Oxalis bullulata*, but this is probably a synonym of *Oxalis benepsecta*:



Another South African which I am flowering for the first time at home right now is *Syringodea longituba*. The common name for this genus is Cape Crocus and they seem to be most related to the true Crocuses of Europe and Asia. The flowers, which are 2 to 2.5 cm diameter, open on warm days and appear to have no scent. The leaves are filiform and twisted:





A couple of Polyxena in the house are firstly *P. pauciflora*:



The next is *Polyxena pygmaea*:





DNA work suggests that *Polyxena* should probably be included in the genus *Lachenalia*.

Just one more South African to show for now, *Daubinya alba*. This is a relatively new plant, having being described in 2002, although it was around in cultivation for a few years before then as an un-named species. Despite its name, the flowers are most often flushed with pink/violet:



Finally this week, I still get constant enquiries about Sunny the Wisley cat. I'm glad to say that despite a few ailments of old age, she is still with us and still enjoying life. Here she is just this week, thankful to us for putting the lids on the sand beds as this means she can now sleep there even when it is raining!

