



BULB LOG 36.....7th September 2011



Cyclamen hederifolium

Autumn has come to the bulb bed and to allow space for the early flowering bulbs I have cut back the growth of the herbaceous plants that have given us summer interest. Delphiniums etc which were already going yellow and starting to die back naturally will not suffer from being cut back now.

Looking down you can see that the *Cyclamen hederifolium* leaves are now appearing. These are among the longest lasting of the bulbous leaves as they will stay green until next July or August.

There are many forms giving a wide range of shape, colour and pattern.



The same plant as above viewed from the side to show off the fine floral display.



A silver-leaved form in full flower.



I had to clear away the leaves of *Paeonia emodii* which had flopped to the ground to allow this *Cyclamen* to grow unhindered and be seen.



Other forms with silver leaves which contrast with the leaves of *Hepatica* seedlings.



Clematis aff. roylei

We raised this Clematis sp. from an Alastair McKelvie seed collection – it would seem to key out to *Clematis roylei*. We have had it for some twenty years and every year it gives a wonderful display of flowers through late August, September and until the frosts come. We always cut it right back to 30cms from the ground during the winter.



Clematis aff. roylei



Lysimachia paridiformis* ssp *stenophylla

The seed of this plant was collected about 20 or more years ago in China by Mikinori Ogisu, he sent them to Roy Lancaster who sent them on to us to sow. We raised a reasonable number, most of which we sent back down to Roy and we kept three plants for ourselves. It is a good grower with nice foliage and a lovely cluster of bright yellow flowers in late summer. It has never set seed for us but can be propagated by cuttings.



Lysimachia paridiformis* ssp *stenophylla



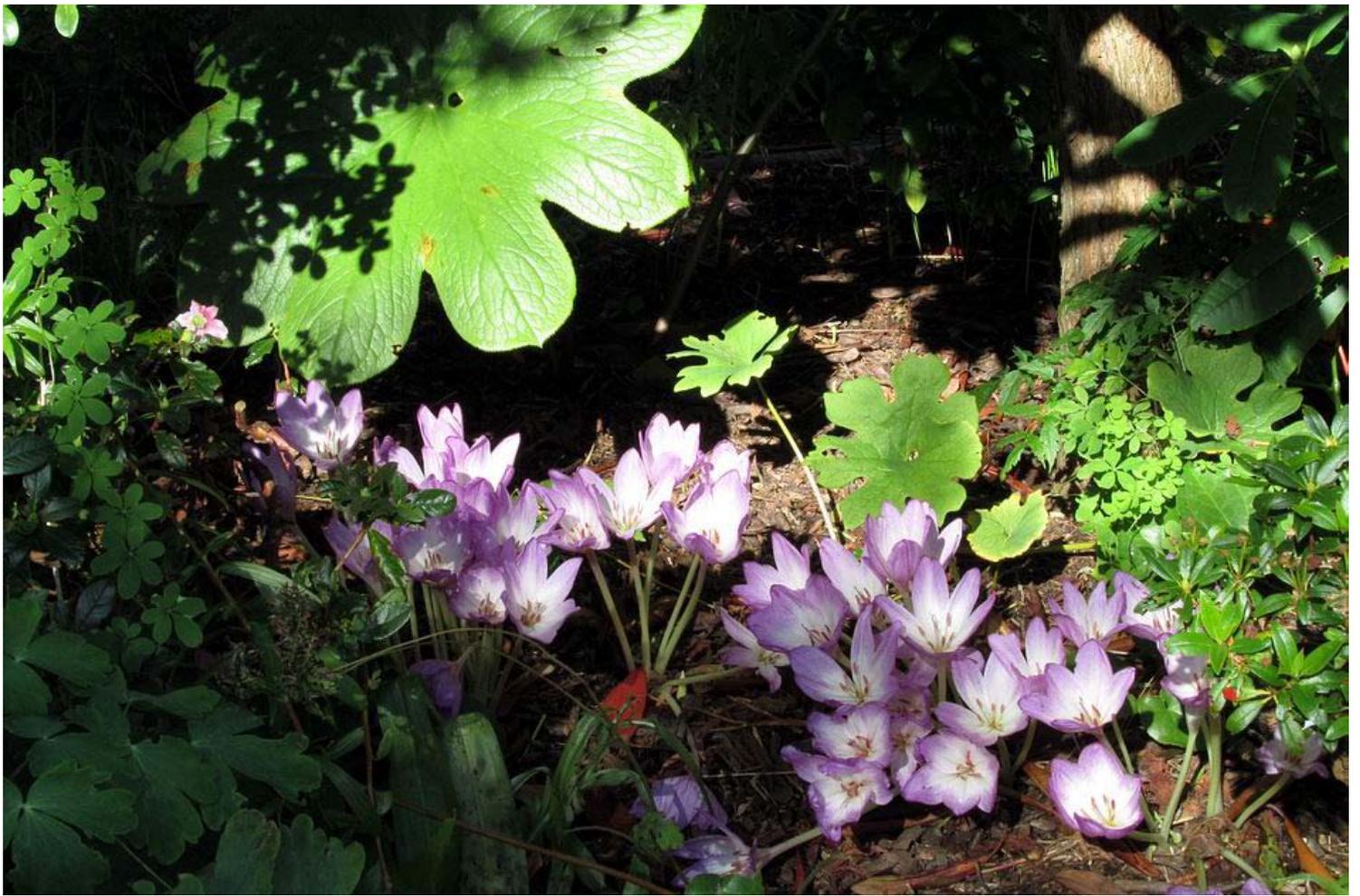
Shortia soldanelloides

Because of the cool moist summer this *Shortia soldanelloides* is producing a few out of season flowers. These are tough little plants and once you get them established they can cope with most conditions except hot dry summers.



Colchicum view

I love walking around the garden in the low light of autumn when dark and shade play a big part in painting the picture. I came across this view through a dark forest of stems to a group of *Colchicum* flooded in sunlight.



Colchicum

From the other angle the Colchicum flowers stand out against the dark shadows which are also broken up by the large lobbed leaf of Podophyllum pleianthum.



Crocus speciosus flowers appear through Primula, Meconopsis and Centaurea leaves.



Sand bed

Crocus speciosus ssp *xantholaimos*, on the left and a hybrid with *Crocus kotschyanus* on the right, are flowering in the sand bulb bed. It is wonderful to see these doing so well outside when we have lost so many *Crocus* in pots as a result of last winter. The flowers both cheer me up with their beauty and make me sad at all the ones that we will not see – the lesson, should I decide to take it, is to stick to growing the species more resilient to our climate.



Crocus speciosus ssp *xantholaimos*
x *Crocus kotschyanus*



Crocus nudiflorus

The first *Crocus nudiflorus* flower in our garden this year and below one of three white forms we have raised from seed from *Crocus nudiflorus* 'Orla'.



Crocus nudiflorus albus



Crocus vallicola

As I mentioned above perhaps I would be wise to stick to growing the bulbs that thrive in our cool summers and moderately cold winters such as the beautiful *Crocus vallicola*.

It grows easily for us both in the open garden and, as seen here, in pots in an open plunge frame. The majority of the ones you see here are from our own garden seed. Originally, around thirty years ago, we had two introductions of seed collected in Turkey and all the plants we have now are descended from those.

Setting seed is dependent on successful flowering, pollination and growth of the pollen down to complete the fertilisation process and that is dependent on the weather conditions while the flowers are out. I usually lift one or two pots into the glass house and pollinate them to ensure that I get seed on some of them.

This is one of my favourite species with the lovely acuminate tips to the floral segments and their delicate violet veining.

Crocus vallicola

There is subtle variation throughout our population in flower size, petal shape, extent of the violet veining, colour of the style, pollen and tube.



Narcissus bulbocodium leaves

Among the other bulbs we grow in the open frame are some pots of *Narcissus bulbocodium* which you can see is now sending up its new leaves. Due to the continual moisture the old leaves are still present which shows that given a constant supply of water and cool conditions this bulb can be in perpetual growth with no dormancy. Exactly the same pattern will be happening underground with the new roots emerging before the old ones die back.



Narcissus bulbocodium leaves

There are also signs of leaf growth appearing in the bulb house especially in the ones that I have recently repotted into slightly moist compost. This pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium* shows clearly that it is time for the first autumn storm and indeed I have watered the bulb house this week.



Sternbergia sicula leaves

One of the pots of *Sternbergia sicula* that survived the winter is now sending up leaves but as the bulbs were reduced in size I doubt if I will see any flowers for a year or two.



Fritillaria house

My attention will now have to turn to repotting the Fritillaria so I can water them nearer the end of the month. I have already done the Chinese frits as they start to root much earlier – in fact some that I grow in the outside frame also have roots all year round when moisture is present.



Colchicum

My final picture this week is a group of three different Colchicum cultivars.