



BULB LOG 39.....28th September 2011



Crocus speciosus



We are back home after four super days at the SRGC Discussion Weekend to find the lovely dark form of *Crocus speciosus* is now in its full splendour. It adds beautifully to the mix of *Colchicum* and *Cyclamen* in this section of a bulb bed.

I wish garden writers and broadcasters would stop calling *Colchicum* 'autumn crocus' as it is grossly misleading to the public who should be informed that there are spring and autumn flowering species of both *Crocus* and *Colchicum* available.



Colchicum agrippinum

Colchicum agrippinum is high on my list of favourites and if you are only going to grow one Colchicum in your garden then choose this one. The beautifully tessellated flowers are borne in great profusion and the leaves that emerge later are among the smallest of the garden colchicum so it can easily be planted among other plants without the fear that they will be engulfed by the leaves in the spring. Another very positive feature is that it increases well and after five years a single bulb will form a good sized clump ready to be split and spread around.



Colchicum variegatum?

Colchicum agrippinum is a hybrid whose parents are believed to be *C. autumnale* and *C. variegatum*. Many years ago I bought a single bulb of Colchicum variegatum and it looked just like the more familiar *C. agrippinum* to me but after some fifteen or more years it remains a single bulb so it may be the true species after all.



Front Drive

There are a number of Crocus flowering in our front drive just now. All the bulbs in this gravel drive have grown from seed scattered on the surface and many have matured nicely and are producing a lovely display of flowers; like *Crocus banaticus*, poking up through the *Geranium* leaves. Others that have been successful are *C. kotschyanus*, *pulchellus* and *nudiflorus*.



Crocus banaticus



Bulb house

The Crocus in the bulb house have also been attracted out by the sunshine. These are the survivors that have proven themselves hardy through our last winters - such as **Crocus serotinus salzmanni** below.





Crocus kotschyanus

One of the best autumn flowering crocus that is perfectly hardy in the garden and in pots is the beautiful *Crocus kotschyanus*. There are a number of colour variations each of which has the typical orange zonal markings at the base of the flower.





Crocus kotschyanus side view



This plant is in the trade as **Crocus pulchellus albus** but is, I think, a hybrid with *C. speciosus*. Whatever it is a very beautiful and easy crocus whether in the garden or pots.



Crocus nudiflorus

Most of our *Crocus nudiflorus* are in the garden but these are seedlings from the white form, *Crocus nudiflorus* 'Orla' which, as you can see, are not white. I find that a very small percentage of the first generation of seedlings are white but I hope that second generation seed taken from these plants may result in a higher percentage of whites.



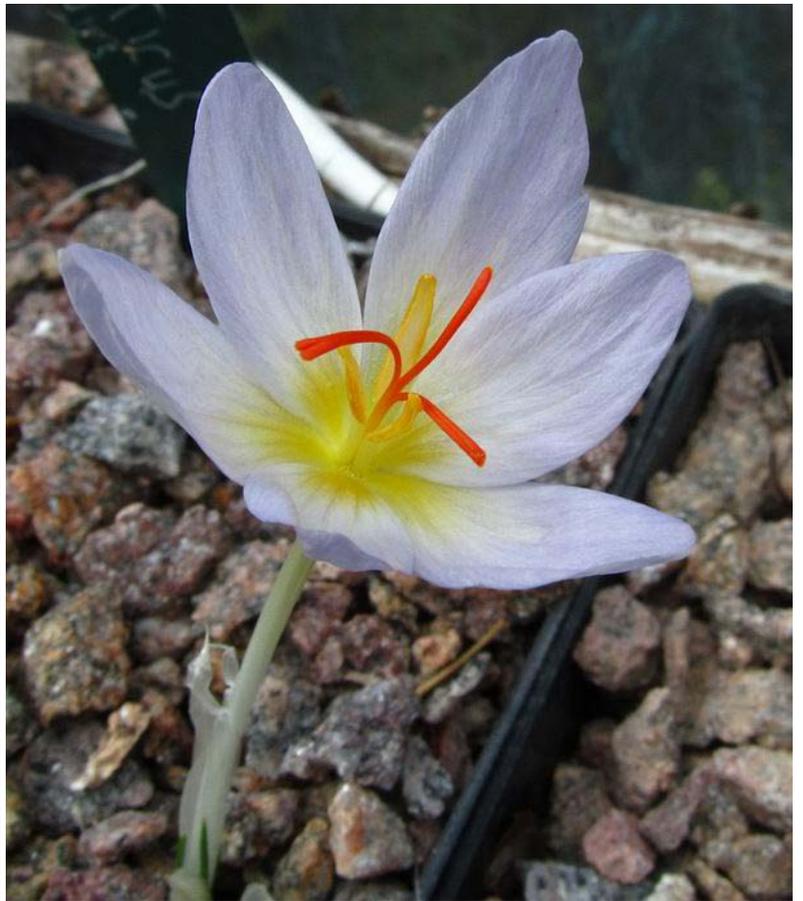
Crocus laevigatus

The very first flower of *Crocus laevigatus* has opened – this remarkable species can come into flower anytime from now until March making it the species with the longest flowering season that I know of.



Two views of **Crocus hadriaticus** raised from seed and so showing some variation in colouring.





Crocus hadriaticus lilacinus

In place of the white some forms have an all-over lilac colour – not surprisingly these are called *Crocus hadriaticus lilacinus*.



Crocus asumaniae

I am very pleased to find that some forms of *Crocus asumaniae* have survived last year's cold winter. We lost so many *Crocus* that each flower is a joy and a relief as it heralds the hope of more to come. Gardening is a mixture of joy and disappointment as we succeed and fail with many plants luckily the successes usually outnumber the failures and the lessons learned become part of the experienced growers knowledge.



Crocus mathewii

Considered by some to be just a good form of *Crocus asumaniae*, *Crocus mathewii*, above, is among the most beautiful flowers of a pretty attractive genus. I would like to think that this beauty can retain its specific status as it celebrates one of the world's great plantsmen, Brian Mathew, who has done so much to broaden our knowledge and understanding of many plants and especially bulbs. Above is the type form that I received many years ago from the great man himself, showing off that dramatic deep blackcurrant coloured throat.



Crocus mathewii 'Dream Dancer'

I received this colour form; *Crocus mathewii* 'Dream Dancer' from our friend Anthony Darby who had to give up his collection when he emigrated to New Zealand – his loss was our gain, thank you.