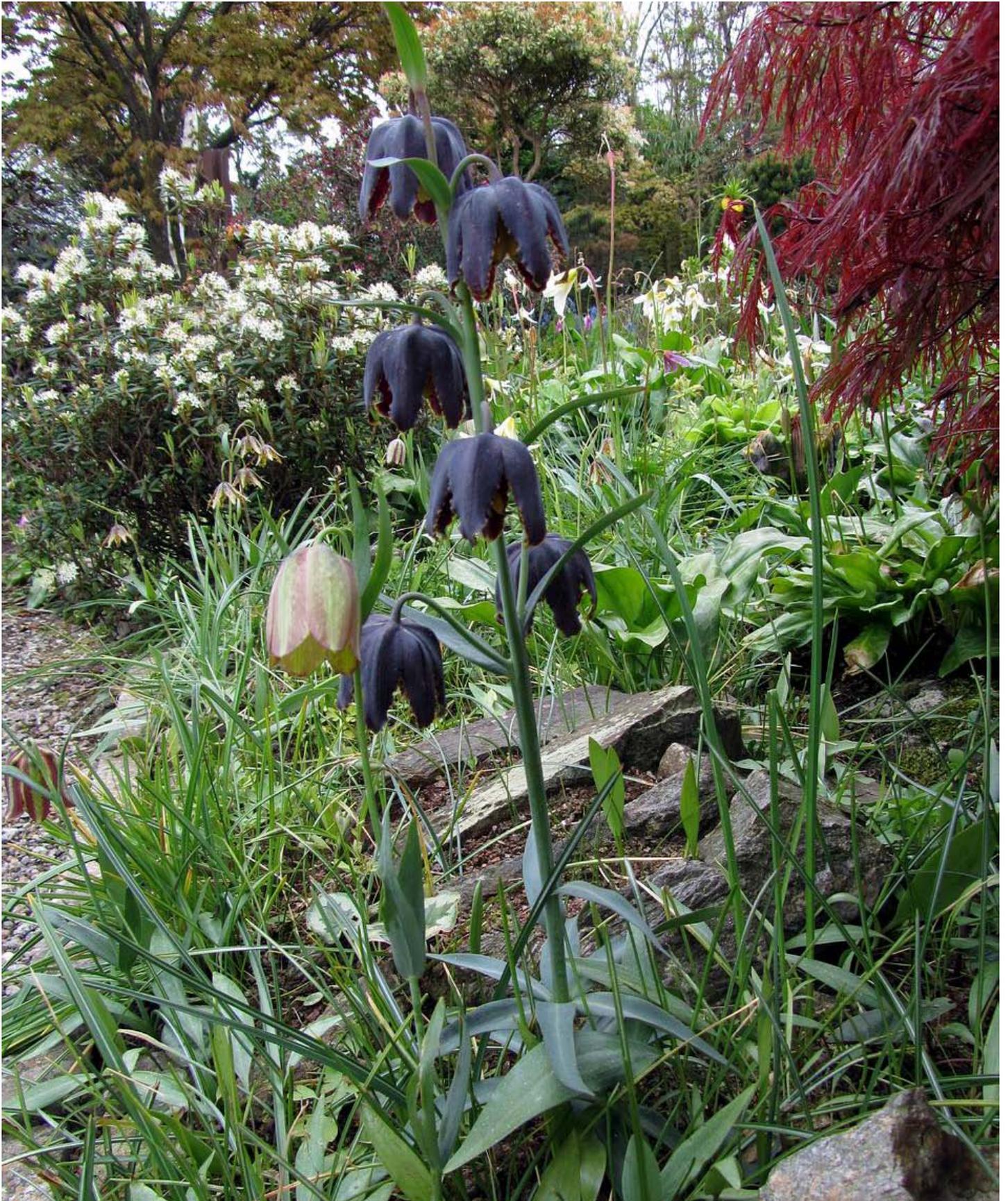




BULB LOG 19..... 9th May 2012



Fritillaria affinis tristulis

One of my aims is to grow as many types of *Fritillaria* as I can in the open garden. I have been putting some out for a number of years now and reading the Forum I detect there is a growing interest in planting them this way so I will show some of those that are doing well or better outside than they sometimes do under glasshouse conditions.



Fritillaria affinis yellow



All forms of *Fritillaria affinis* grow very well in our garden including the lovely dark form, *tristulis*, in the first picture and the yellow form, above, that I raised many years ago from wild collected seed labelled as *Fritillaria pudica*! Both increase well by rice grain bulbils.

On the left is *Fritillaria hermonis* - again a prodigious increaser by bulbils - hence there are always plenty of spares to experiment with.

Fritillaria hermonis



Fritillaria acmopetela



Also producing copious quantities of rice grains is **Fritillaria acmopetela** – in fact I have a theory that if you grow a collection of fritillaries in pots for long enough eventually they all turn into either *F. acmopetela* or *F. hermonis*. The reason behind this is that unless you are scrupulous odd rice grains from these species will encroach into other pots through reuse of compost, top dressing or accident and once there they increase more vigorously than the original subject. These pictures show only some of the variation that can be seen in this species and why I choose to grow even bulbs that increase clonally as freely as these do, from seed.



Fritillaria pontica

Very at home in the garden and also variable from seed is *Fritillaria pontica*.



Fritillaria pyrenaica

Fritillaria pyrenaica in all its variations grows well in the garden and in my experience it does not like to be confined to a pot for any length of time. When we were exhibiting I always rotated the show pots of this bulb so they spent only one year in the pot for the show before being returned to the garden to bulk up.



Fritillaria pyrenaica

You should always look inside your fritillaria flowers as so often the most spectacular display is hidden there.



Another form of **Fritillaria pyrenaica**



Arisaema griffithii

Many arisaema are starting to push through in the garden to provide interest where the early bulbs have gone past. Unfortunately the vagaries of our weather has brought some sharp night time frosts which have proved too much for some plants like the arisaema pictured below.



Frosted Arisaema

You might suspect that the species have different tolerances to frost and that is partly true - also different seed raised clones of the same species will have varying degrees of frost resistance but another factor is the many micro-climates there are in even a small garden. We have an number of distinct areas that are colder in our garden and this poor frosted arisaema is in one of those. I do hope that even though the above ground growth has been destroyed a small bulb will still form underground to carry it forward for another year.



Cardiacrostaphyle gigantea has not suffered any frost damage as its mighty stem starts to grow to hold its flowers up high later in the season.



A lovely tapestry of foliage from hybrids between **Dicentra eximia** and **Dicentra formosa** .



***Dicentra eximia* x *formosa* foliage**

The seedlings display a wide variation in foliage from my favourite ones with finely cut leaflets and an almost glaucous appearance, right, to the more broad green leaves closer to those of *D. formosa*.



The flowers also vary from pale to dark pink – no whites yet.



Ornithogalum sp.

I have never attempted to name the many *Ornithogalum* species that provide us with some welcome late flowers in the bulb house when the majority of the other bulbs are now heading towards their summer dormancy.



Ornithogalum sp.



Tropaeolum tricolor* and *Calochortus uniflorus

I love the way the *Tropaeolum* and the *Calochortus* scramble, pushing their flowers above the flopping leaves of the other bulbs.



Tropaeolum azureum



Tropaeolum azureum

I well remember the thrill we experienced when we first flowered this rare and thought to be difficult, beautiful blue South American plant in the 1980's. We raised it from seed from one of John Watson's legendary collecting trips- now it runs around, self sowing into the sand plunge of both the bulb house and the fritillaria house.

It is still a sought after and relatively scarce plant most probably due to the reluctance of much of the distributed seed to germinate. I have never managed to work out what stimulates the germination and when we sowed it into pots we had hugely varying results from an almost 100% rate in one year to near zero in many others. What I do know is that the seed that falls into the sand plunge now produces all the plants we want.



Tropaeolum azureum flowers

As with all plants you will get variations when you raise it from seed like this small selection of flowers show.



Trough

We are all often guilty of desiring the rare, difficult plants while ignoring the common, easy ones. We must resist falling into that trap as sometimes the common ones are just as beautiful like this example of simple sedums and sempervivum growing together in a trough with some self seeded Campanula.

