



BULB LOG.47..... 20th November 2012



Autumn leaves



Over the weekend, while we were away in Ireland, two Acer trees, which had turned a nice yellow, were stripped of their leaves by severe winds, now they form a colourful carpet on the ground.



This bulb bed is now without a flower and going into its winter state.



Some late flowers are still appearing like these **Crocus banaticus**, survivors of the storm.



Crocus banaticus



In the sand plunge the **Crocus pulchellus albus**, which I think has some hybrid blood, also continue to appear.



Crocus caspius

I have seen little variation in *Crocus caspius* despite raising it from seed for many years - they are mostly white, sometimes with a hint of a violet grey wash.

However I am now getting a few with a slightly more obvious colour wash as seen in the picture below.



Crocus caspius



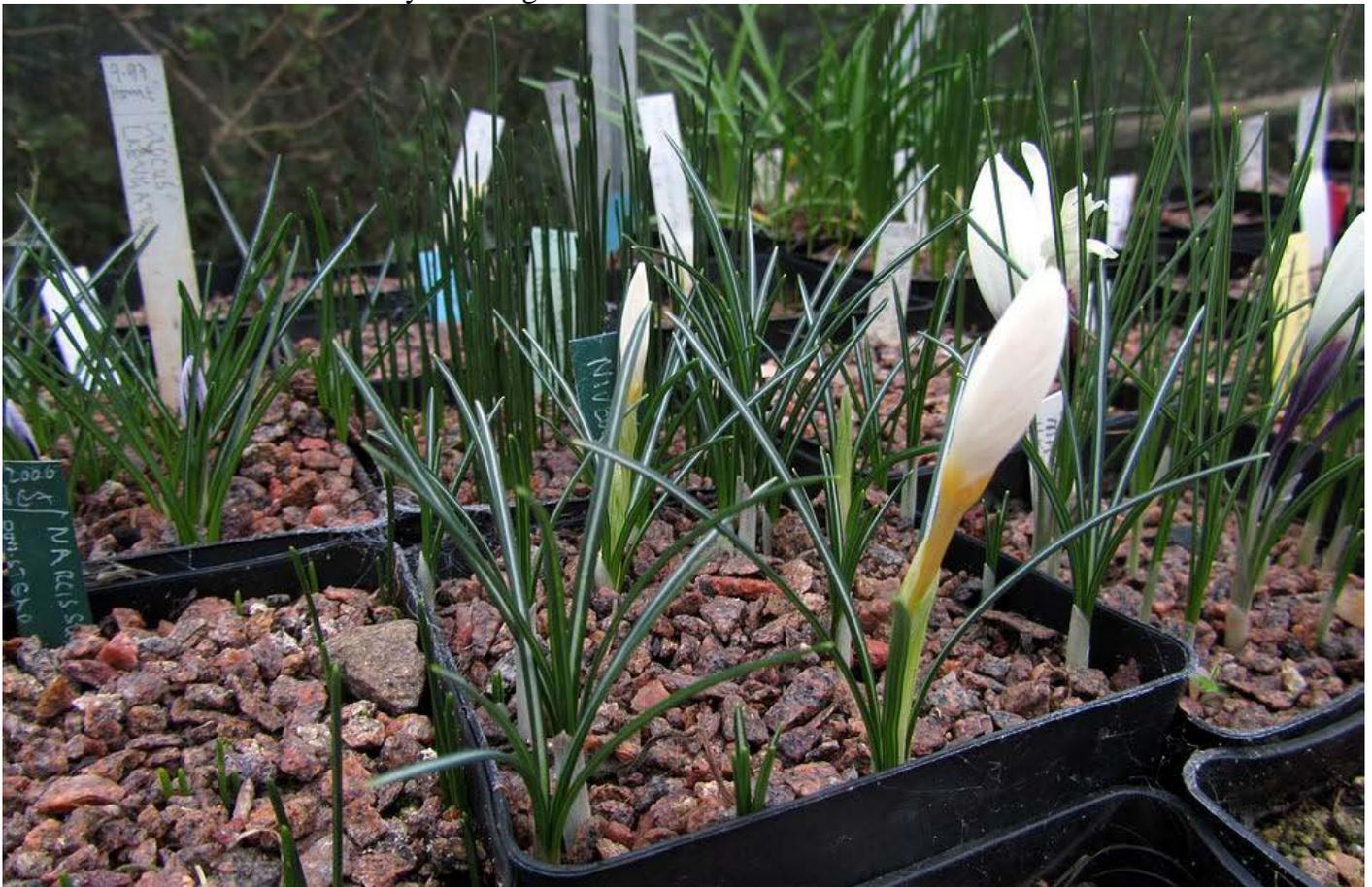
Crocus goulymii



Crocus goulymii

Whether a bulb flowers before or after the leaves appear is often discussed and in some cases I have seen this phenomenon used to distinguish species but in my experience this is not a reliable diagnostic. The leaves of some Crocus species, like *C. goulymii*, will start to appear at the same time as the flowers provided there is sufficient moisture at the roots. What triggers the growth of the flower in bulbs is a fascinating topic, there is a very interesting thread on the [forum](#) you should read, and there is much speculation

about what the triggers might be but it is clear to me that water is not necessary for autumn bulbs to come into flower. However the leaves will only start to grow when water is available.



Crocus niveus

Provided there is water present, *Crocus niveus* leaves are reasonably well developed when it flowers.

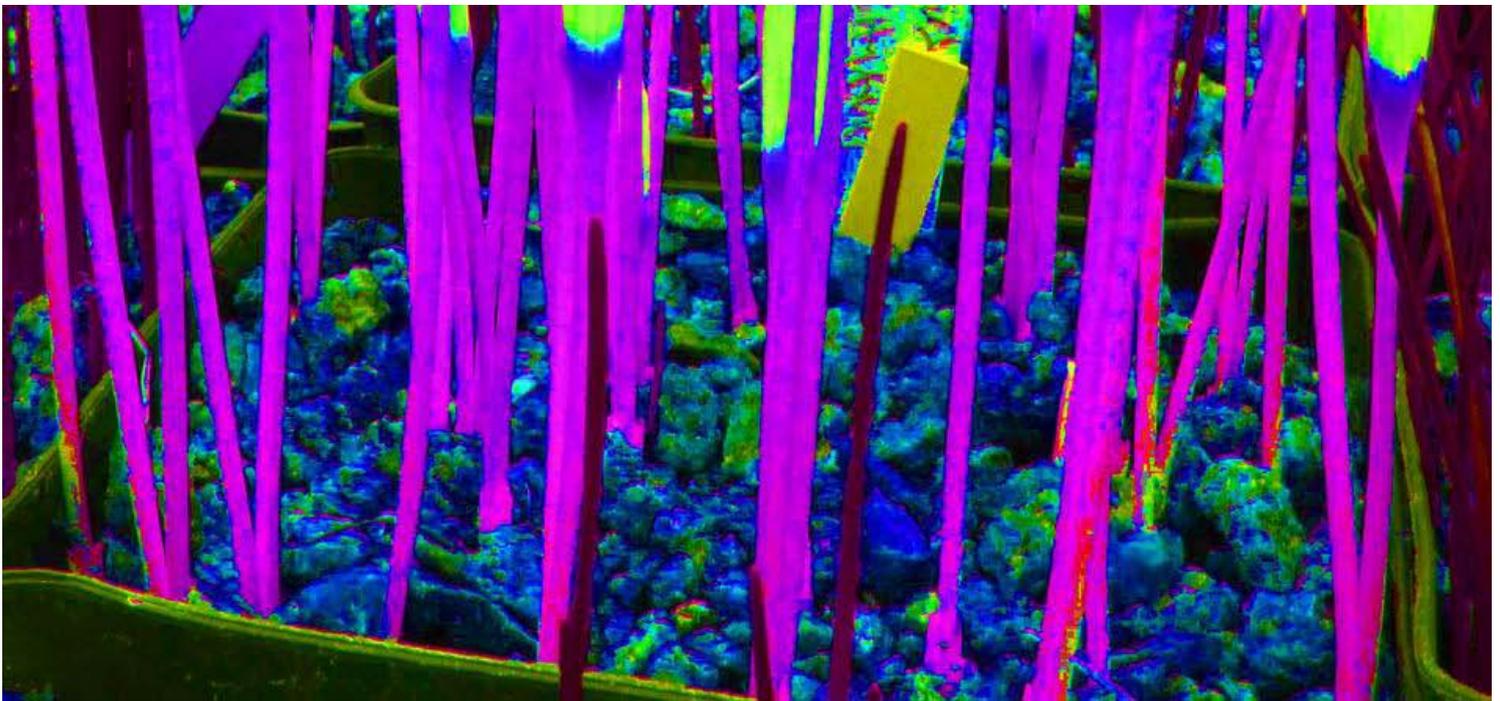


Crocus kotschyanus

Crocus kotschyanus always flowers some time before the leaves emerge. While the presence or absence of leaf growth is reliable in some species in others it is entirely dependent on physiological conditions – if water is available at the root to fuel the leaf growth.



Crocus kotschyanus



Sorry, I could not resist turning this miniature forest of stems into a psychedelic image.



Crocus mathewii

Crocus mathewii falls into the category of flowering as the leaves emerge provided there is adequate moisture available. Mature corms can produce two flowers in quick succession followed by another two, sometime later. You can see in this picture the remains of the first two flowers lying to the left with a new flower fully formed and a second flower bud just emerging to its right.



Crocus biflorus buds

We may never completely understand the parameters that trigger the autumn flowering bulbs but we can be sure that the spring flowering ones have a requirement for cold before they come into flower. Many bulbs like this *Crocus biflorus* above push their buds through the surface at this time of year then wait until the cold of winter passes before they respond to the increasing temperatures and daylight hours of spring.



Crocus in bulb house

Galanthus peshmenii

Galanthus peshmenii is another autumn flowering member of a primarily late winter /early spring flowering genus. Obviously these early flowering forms do not have the gene that requires a period of cold before they come into flower.

It is interesting to note that of all the more commonly grown bulbs it is only *Fritillaria* that does not have any autumn flowering representatives.

Below are some more pictures of *Galanthus peshmenii* - the one on the left is slightly immature and has only two inner floral segments. The right hand one tells me I have a problem with slugs in my plunge so I have scattered a few of the blue pellets around in an attempt to eradicate this pest from the bulb house.



Galanthus peshmenii





This pot of *Galanthus peshmenii* illustrates the sporadic nature of flowering I often associate with strange weather patterns. The changeable temperatures make it difficult to get an even flowering throughout the pot – also note the chewed flower to the right.



I am enjoying the unexpected flowering of *Sternbergia lutea* so much I have to share yet another picture with you. I hope that this is not an isolated occasion and that this pot will flower for me every year.



Final picture for this week is another very seasonal one as we start to move from autumn into winter.....