

International Rock Gardener

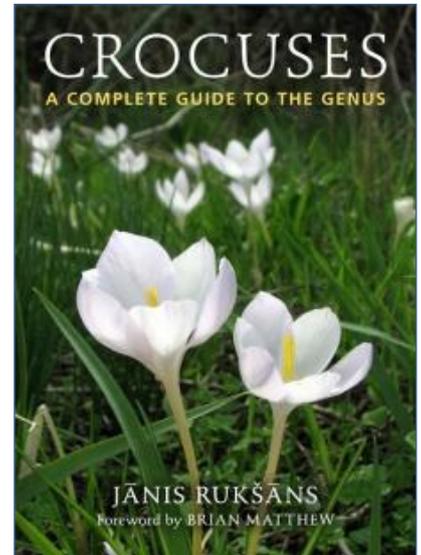
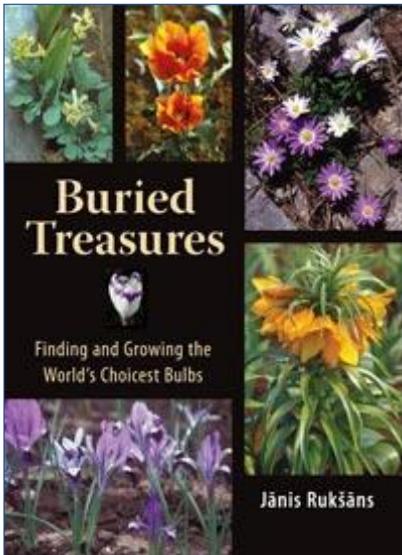




Plant hunters have always been intrepid souls, venturing into areas where all sorts of unknown tribulations lurked. Happily, the fate of [David Douglas](#) – who died in a pit trap in Hawaii in 1834 - has not befallen any recent plant explorers.

The Latvian nurseryman and author Jānis Rukšāns is recognised as a bulb expert: he is author of a monograph on the Genus *Crocus* and his book “Buried Treasures” has given an exciting account of the adventures he has experienced over many years of plant exploration in different countries. One is tempted to think of him as a sort of green-fingered “Indiana Jones”. Janis has delighted readers with his books and his tales of his bulb hunting expeditions both in his Talks and in the pages of the SRGC Forum. He contributes to the forum both on his travels and on the plants he cultivates in his nursery. Last month he shared with forum readers the story of his trip earlier in

March to North West Turkey. The major part of that story is published here but a great many more photographs can be seen in the SRGC Forum along with other references, particularly to the crocuses mentioned, such as extra pictures of *Crocus demirizianus* (to show the distinguishing features used to describe the species) and links to comments on that species elsewhere in the forum by Janis and Ibrahim Sözen. The SRGC Forum is open to all: registration is only required if you wish to take an active part by posting to threads. Sections of the forum dedicated to bulbous plants are particularly popular, which is no surprise when we can enjoy descriptions of newly named plants such as [Crocus fauseri](#), one of several plants named for forumist and Australian bulb maven, [Otto Fauser](#) as well as the latest *Galanthus* cultivars, such as the one named for [Franz Hadacek by Gert Hoek](#), amongst the wealth of other contributions.



Centre above: Jānis Rukšāns and his wife, Guna, a grower of [perennials](#) who is also an author.

Jānis Rukšāns has written nine books, five of these on bulbs – here are details of two:

Left above: *Crocuses - a complete guide to the genus* (publ. 2011 ISBN-13 9781604691061)

Far right above: *Buried Treasures: Finding and Growing the World's Choicest Bulbs* (publ. 2007 ISBN-13 9780881928181)



Far left: [Otto Fauser](#) with his award of the John Pascoe Fawkner Gold Medal for outstanding contribution to Horticulture at the 80th Anniversary celebrations of the [Ferry Creek Horticultural Society](#) (FCHS) in Victoria, Australia in 2102.

([Fawkner](#) was the founder and inaugural secretary of the Victoria Horticultural society, now the RHSV. The FCHS and its supporters have had a close association with the SRGC for many decades.)

Left: *Crocus speciosus* subsp. *ibrahimii* – [named for Ibrahim Sözen by Henrik Zetterlund](#), photo Jānis Rukšāns

International Rock Gardener

---World of Bulbs---

Yellow Fever in Turkey, March 2013 Text and photos by Jānis Rukšāns

While in Latvia there were still fierce frosts (last night, March 20th, we had around minus 20°C) and there is nothing to do in my greenhouses where all crocuses are again covered by [glass wool](#) sheets (regardless of them being in bloom), I decided to search for crocuses in warmer countries – so I went with a few friends to NW Turkey, to an area from where several new crocuses have recently been described. Contrary to that of Latvia, spring in Turkey this year was early, but we successfully brought some frost there from frost hardened central and Eastern Europe. With our arrival in Turkey the rain started and snow fell at higher altitudes (300-400m).

I named this article “yellow fever” – usually this combination is used for the blooming time of yellow daffodils, but during our trip we really only saw crocus flowers of yellow species. The blue & white ones had finished, still not started or we simply didn't find them in their flowering stage.

Was the trip successful? I think so, yes, although we did not find two unusual and beautiful newcomers to the large *biflorus* family, but we found one, most probably new species and some other nice discoveries which compensated for those things not seen.



Left: Bozdağ

Below: *Anemone coronaria*



Our team of four was truly international. Our guide was [Ibrahim Sözen](#), an SRGC forumist. He arranged car rental and was our driver and we explored many spots following his advice, his courage and insistence. Two were from Czech Republic – Jiri Bydjowsky likes the nature of the Mediterranean region, he is the chief gardener of Pardubice city and all the city parks are his garden. He does grow a few plants – in pots on the balcony of his apartment. Vaclav Jošt is a very long-time friend and during the communist era he was the chief lily-breeder in former Czechoslovakia but, in the free economy, breeding is not profitable and he was forced to change his profile – now he imports and sells Dutch bulbs all over the Czech Republic. His main interest is still lilies but he joined the [Cyclamen Society](#) and is proud that in his collection are all but one wild cyclamen species. The single exception is [Cyclamen somalense](#). In Turkey he wanted to see the habitats and variability of cyclamen in the wild.



Left: *Cyclamen graecum* subsp. *anatolicum* and far left, a show bench at a Cyclamen Society Show.

Photos from the SRGC Forum by [Diane Clement](#).

International Rock Gardener

We firmly decided that we would collect nothing but following this rule was not easy and in truth I, secretly from the others, collected two samples – an unusual colour form and what is most likely one new species – only 4 corms – 1 for a herbarium specimen, one for DNA research and two for potential seed crop in future. So I brought home only 5 corms and more than 500 pictures, including flower details and habitat pictures. I already had samples in my collection from the other crocuses seen on this trip. Of course, we dug up some corms at each location for identification purposes and corm pictures but afterwards we replanted them.



Snowy Bozdağ tops



Anemone coronaria

In this instance we decided to visit NW Turkey. I had visited this part in 2008 together with Vaclav, our forumist Hendrik van Bogaert and galanthophile Colin Mason, when we looked mostly for snowdrops, travelled through quite low altitudes visiting by way a lot of historical monuments. This time we will go to the mountain tops and our trip starts in Izmir. It is a [huge city](#) but we found our hotel in the city centre with surprising ease.

My main interest is *Crocus lydius* – recently described by [Kerndorff, Pasche](#) et al. (at the same time as *C. fauseri* and *C. beydaglarensis*) – with up to 5-6 ridges in each groove of the leaf, growing exclusively on granite (3 localities), and which seemed to be easy to find as the ridge from where it is described isn't very large. It has very few but wide leaves, so there couldn't be problems with spotting it. The day is very nice and sunny and on the way we decide to go up to the snowy tops of Bozdağ ridge. Very soon we stop because on the roadside there is a fantastic population of *Anemone coronaria* – with a full spectrum of colours. It is not so often that you can see at the same spot flowers of all shades from white to deep blue and brightest red. We saw Anemone in many localities, but nowhere did the population so completely represent this variability.



Some of the variation in *Anemone coronaria*.

International Rock Gardener



Crocus herbertii

We go on up the road, noting spots where we should stop on way back... and then there is a double shout - Vaclav and I, at the same time, have spotted yellow at the right side of the road. Of course – it could only be *C. chrysanthus* but as we got closer my eyes widen - no, no, it isn't *chrysanthus*. By its flower it looks very similar to *C. gargaricus*, but taking a pair of corms out of the soil allows me to identify it, without any doubt, as *Crocus herbertii*.



White stolons (left) a few cm long sprout from the sides of the corm. Further checking of the corm tunics confirms identification, although the altitude is surprisingly low for this species – only 950m. For both species it would be a widening of their area but for *C. herbertii* it is long way away from its traditional locality.

I cast my gaze upwards and there, just where forest line changes to roadside slope, is a group of white crocus. *Crocus biflorus*? It is not easy to climb up but we are rewarded. We have found an albino of *C. herbertii*. I had never before heard that such a thing exists, although I have seen millions of *C. herbertii* on

Uludağ – they all were very constant in their shade of yellow. But here was a group of pure albinos with only the slightest yellowish shade. Of course because of stoloniferous habit of this species they all derive from a single mutation and I don't feel I am damaging nature when instead of replanting I pick up one corm.

Albino form of
Crocus herbertii



International Rock Gardener



Left: *Crocus chrysanthus*
Ibrahim also found *C. chrysanthus* at this point. It was late for this species and the flowers were damaged by bad weather, but they invariably had a brown back to their petals. We spot only a few plants but all seem to be identical. We drive up and up and stop from time to time to picture more and more *C. herbertii* by openings in the forest. More and more *C. chrysanthus* appear on our way up and all invariably have a brownish back to the petals. As I lie down for close-up pictures I glance upwards – there I spot something unusual – it is another albino, but in this case of *C. chrysanthus*, growing side by side with *C. herbertii*.



Left: *Crocus chrysanthus* , albino on Bozdağ
Below: *Galanthus elwesii*



Here there are some snowdrops with the last of their flowers and amongst them one is with double the number of petals. Now I will be in trouble from the galanthophiles – I didn't collect it but left it untouched. Sorry, Colin, we decided not to collect during this trip, so I can show only a picture. But in any case – in my opinion it isn't permanent, only two stems grew up together and next season it will return to normal shape. But – who knows?



Left: *Scilla bifolia*
Far left: *Corydalis wendelboi*

There are *Corydalis wendelboi* in full bloom, too, and of course, *Scilla bifolia* blooms everywhere. We reach an altitude of 1300m. Unfortunately the road further along is closed by a strong iron gate and several road-signs prohibit access. The reason is very simple – road slides caused by the thawing snow. Of course – we could walk up but it

International Rock Gardener

isn't the site of *Crocus lydius* (the main target of my trip) and time is quickly passing. So we make some soup (we have with us thermos flasks with hot water) and coffee and turn in the direction of Göldağ. We have a discussion with Ibrahim – on my map the highest point is marked at the west end of ridge, on Ibrahim's map it is just the opposite. Finally Ibrahim's view wins and after a long winding route by small but well-kept roads between villages we reach Göldağ. We make several stops by the road to Göldağ where we spot some flowers, but everywhere it is only *Crocus flavus* subsp. *dissectus*, to which I would like return its historical name - [Crocus mouradii](#). It looks closer to *C. antalyensis* and its distribution area doesn't overlap with subsp. *flavus*. Unfortunately neither of the two last main DNA research papers compared both taxa. Gitte Petersen et al. researched subsp. *flavus* but Dorte Harpke et al. worked on subsp. *dissectus*.



One of the Göldağ peaks.



Finally we reach Göldağ. There really are volcanic outcrops which could be the habitat of *Crocus lydius*. We try one route, walking up by a narrow tractor track with a lot of rubbish heaps on the sides. But there are no crocuses. And the altitude isn't sufficiently high. As you can see from this picture, above right, where I show my colleagues going down from our first research up the slope of Göldağ, we don't look very happy.

We saw plants of this *Ornithogalum* sp. which we are now told is *Ornithogalum refractum*.



The next road up, although it is a dirt road, is passable by our car and we drive almost up to the highest altitude. There are yellow crocuses

International Rock Gardener

blooming but in this case they are *Crocus flavus* subsp. *dissectus*. It should bloom later and confirmed that spring here was very early and that there remains little hope to find our targeted flowers. We saw it in gullies where more snow had collected in winter. The weather is dark and it is quite late, so the flowers are closed and not easy to make good pictures. Up to then we found only subsp. *dissectus* and in leaf, the autumn-blooming *Crocus pulchellus*.



Above: *Ornithogalum beyazoglui*

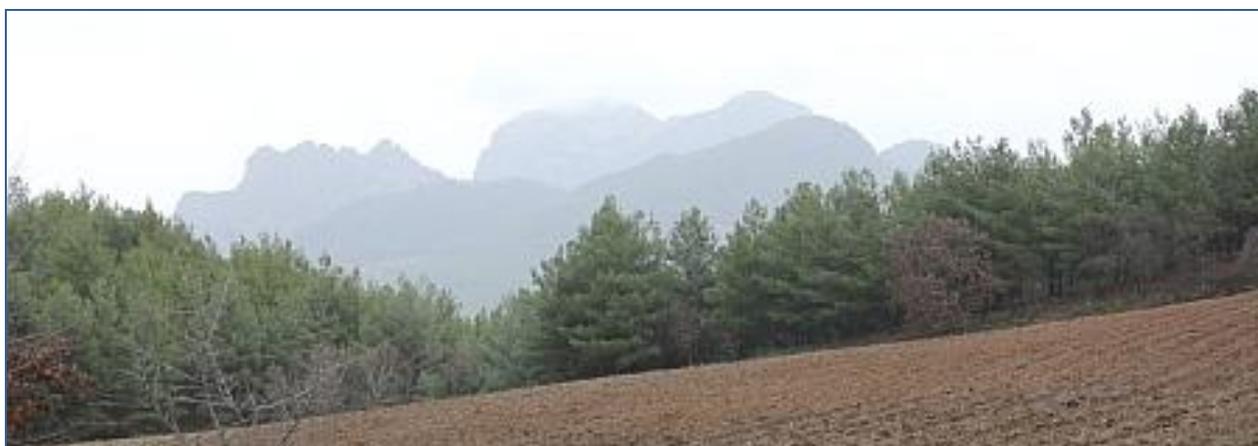
Right: *Crocus flavus* subsp. *dissectus*



We do find one of the most spectacular *Ornithogalums* – we thought it to be *O. lanceolatum* but [Oron Peri](#) has said he thinks that it is *O. beyazoglui* rather than *lanceolatum*. It has very spectacular leaves, but they only have such a shape in their natural habitat in the mountains.

During my earlier trips I had collected 2-3 bulbs of this very early blooming species. Everywhere my attention was attracted by its curved leaves, but in the garden (at least with me) they always grow straight. Of course, it is less ornamental than in the wild, but in any case it is worth growing. [Demand](#) for it is so great that I'm always short of it. In "Gartenwelt" I read that in Germany it sometimes is even an autumn-bloomer. In Latvia it blooms as one of the first, sometimes too early in the garden and is damaged by frost.

It is very late and we must go to nearest city to search for hotel. By road we pass the western peaks of Göldağ but they all look to be formed from calcite stone, so not suitable for *C. lydius*, which grows exclusively on volcanic rocks. It means that Ibrahim was instinctively right in heading first to the Eastern peaks.



We spend the night in Akhisar. The weather forecast is very bad - heavy rains offered for later the next day but they start during the night. Following days will be even worse - Siberian cold will also reach Turkey and even snow is forecast. TV shows floods and other natural disasters. In the morning we start early and from time to time we meet stronger or weaker showers. Now we took the road on the other side of the peaks. The hill which we yesterday saw from highest point we reached, is

International Rock Gardener

covered in clouds. We found a road to it and decide to drive along it as high is possible and then walk up. But soon our attempt is foiled. Night rain filled gullies with water, small streams turned into waterfalls and we are stopped by washed out roads. This side of this hill remains unexplored. Further along an asphalt road we met granite outcrops and there are plenty of crocuses in leaf, but they are all only the autumn flowering *C. pulchellus*. It seems that from this point this species follows us everywhere.



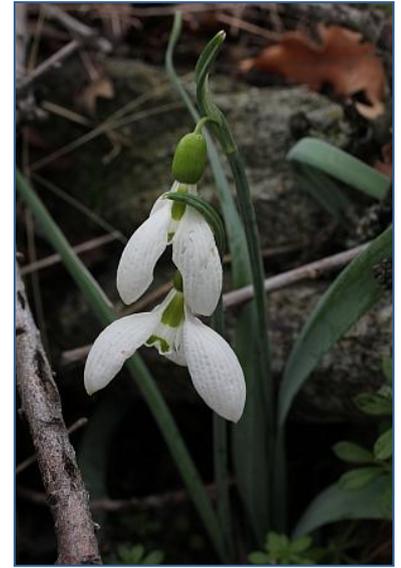
It was raining heavily and searching for crocus I became completely soaked. My colleagues pushed me back into the car and we drove on. Again the place looked very, very promising, but the rain is so heavy that we only make some pictures of a Turkish village through the car windows. So again this locality remains unexplored. We continue on this road, hoping that we will not be forced to turn back, because the map shows that in a short distance the dirt road will start, which is not the best for such a car as ours (although it has four wheel drive) in such weather.

In contrast to the weather forecast, in the afternoon the rain did not get worse - just the opposite - it stops and the sun even shines through the clouds. At a very nice and promising looking spot we make our daily soup. The opposite side looks ideal for crocuses – all the expected 'neighbour plants' of *C. lydius* are here, and excellent volcanic base rock, but again there is only *Cc. pulchellus*, *chrysanthus* and some *pallasii* which I picture here showing its typical corm tunics.



Left: *Crocus pallasii* corm

Here we decide to walk up as high as possible and we really are going up to a spot where further climbing would turn into a hopeless enterprise - there seems little more than steep rock. On top we find *C. flavus* subsp. *dissectus* in bloom, but the flowers are closed and covered by waterdrops from the recent rain. Also flowering there, under shrubs, is *Galanthus elwesii*.



Above right: *C. flavus* subsp. *dissectus* and *G. elwesii* at highest point reached by me and Ibrahim - 940m. Our Czech companions started to worry about where we had disappeared to, because we had been gone some time. We found no *Crocus lydius* in that vicinity. Soon the asphalt ended, but the dirt road was quite good and after a few kilometres we are back in same spot where we stopped searching

International Rock Gardener

last evening. Now we decide to go up to the highest point. The locality really looks ideal, but everywhere we found only the earlier seen species, not *C. lydius*. The sun opened the flowers of *C. flavus* subsp. *dissectus*, so more photos were taken, and a picture of *Crocus pulchellus* corms. I always open my hand lens to check the leaves, but it always turns out to be just those crocuses we have seen many times before.



An "ideal" location



Crocus pulchellus corm

We have spent more than one and half days searching for *C. lydius*. We can't use more time on it. Evening is approaching and we must hurry to the next spot - where we will look for *Crocus simavensis*. I tell myself that the finding of a new locality and the albino of *C. herbertii* compensates for this failure. We took a smaller road over the ridge to Simav and soon after the pass again we saw yellow flowers (oh, how I tired of this subsp. *dissectus* everywhere, again and again!). I took a photograph only to document that *dissectus* grows at this spot, when Ibrahim tells me – "Janis, your knees are on *C. biflorus*." And really I am resting on the almost dead flowers of a blue coloured crocus. It looks very interesting and this one is the other for which I can't resist to collect a few corms - one for herbarium, another for DNA and two for my collection. This looks very close to *lydius*, but the corm tunics are very different. Checking at home all the descriptions of *biflorus* group species I can't find any which could match with this one. An excellent end to the day!



Left: An almost withered bloom of the *Crocus* sp. nova and the cross-section of its leaf.

After a night in Simav our direction is to the mountains in the North. At present the weather is quite good but dark clouds are 'mooching' around. And I can repeat again the same - everywhere we see only the earlier seen trio - but at our first stop all have finished blooming.



Far left: Habitat north of Simva.

Left: For the first time during this trip we see *Cyclamen mirabile* leaves.

International Rock Gardener

We drive on up as the first snowflakes appear in the air. There at the forest edge we spot the first ***Crocus chrysanthus*** (right) and it seems that side by side are growing *Crocus danfordiae*. Its flowers are over and not worth picturing.



I identify *Crocus pallasii* too, by some leaves. But the snow becomes heavier and heavier. *Crocus chrysanthus* is blooming everywhere. There are fantastic views of bright yellow flowers spotting the snow. They look completely different from those seen earlier (on Bozdağ). If I were 10 years younger - I would certainly start research on this Crocus. In my opinion there are several species included, only it is not easy to separate them visually. It would be an excellent task for a scientific degree. At present it is only accepted that there are a lot of different cytotypes included.



Here the flowers are purest yellow and only a very few have a small brownish tongue at the outer base. Snow cover becomes thicker and thicker and we must turn back. *Crocus simavensis* grows together with *Crocus chrysanthus* and I suppose that at the first locality we were too late, but higher up it was too early. Of course that is only speculation. So, this one was the second failure of our trip.



Above: *Crocus chrysanthus* and (right) a corm

Now we go to look for *Crocus mysius*. We take a narrow asphalted road to the top of a ridge through small villages but quite soon are forced to return. The road some kilometres before the pass is covered by such deep snow that driving further becomes dangerous. We have to physically push the car to turn it around. When we are almost back to main road Ibrahim stops at a small gully and there it is - *Crocus mysius*.

Of course, it is without flowers but, by its leaves and corm tunics, it seems to be true. One more mark on my computer's crocus distribution map! Of course it would be far better to see it in flower, but spring was unusually early there - just the opposite to the previous season when all was in deep snow.



Far left: *Crocus mysius* corm

Left: The road to Uludağ

International Rock Gardener

Back on our way, we try to drive up on Uludağ. The road is quite normal but it is late and the weather again worsened. Soon we are in clouds which are like fog and again there is more and more snow on the road sides. It is too dark for spotting any crocus leaves, but in flower there is only *Crocus flavus* subsp. *dissectus*. We are forced to turn back.



Left: On the road down we stop to picture a nice ***Muscari* sp.**

We still had two days left of our trip and two species to search for. So next morning we quickly turned to the North. It is quite a long way to Čan where, on the road to Čanakkale, the Turkish botanist Osman Erol and Co. (Levent Can and Levent Şık) found and described a new crocus - *Crocus demirizianus*. A very similar and most likely identical crocus was found earlier by Ibrahim but on the opposite side from Čan. Checking my notes I found that in 2008 I collected there one corm of crocus, initially identified as *pulchellus* (from 5 collected *pulchellus*, one turned out to be the spring blooming "*biflorus*"). So now I want to recheck locality - how widespread it is there and Ibrahim wants to compare this one with his plant - are they the same or not? Here the snow greeted us at much lower altitudes - from 300-400m all became white, only the road remained clear of snow. We were not in the best mood, but on approaching the search locality the snow disappeared.

In 2008 there were not many crocuses; I spotted only a few *pulchellus* and some *candidus*, which bloomed in deeper gullies. Now a new road has been built and spotting the correct place is not easy, but for two of us this locality was very remarkable. In 2008 we lost Colin Mason there and we were forced to call the

Jandarma to search for him with a tracker dog. Fortunately, six hours later, Colin appeared on the roadside just before the search dog arrived. Now, seeing on the roadside an advertisement for "Kolin Hotel" - we joked that this hotel was named in our Colin's honour.



Crocus candidus and corm

Surprisingly, here the ground is now covered by *Crocus candidus* leaves. It is everywhere. What a great contrast with the situation 5 years ago. I can say the same about *C. pulchellus*, but nowhere did I spot any *biflorus*

International Rock Gardener

leaves. *C. candidus* is a quite special crocus. It can bloom with only one leaf, and usually has no more than two leaves.

I also spotted there some *Fritillaria* sp., *Corydalis integra*, *Tulipa* sp. (*sylvestris*?) leaves and plenty of other natural objects to photograph.



Fritillaria sp.



Corydalis integra



Archon apollinus (False Apollo)

Finally we decide to leave. We again select a small road through villages, but everywhere we spot only two species - *pulchellus* and *candidus*. When the road becomes impassable, we turn back to main road.



The best botanists - they will find the smallest crocus leaf.

C. pulchellus locality



C. candidus locality

Just as we are leaving the forest zone, Ibrahim insists we turn back and repeat our search on another spot by the main road. I'm carefully watching roadsides and one place and rock seems familiar to me. We stop there and together with Ibrahim I climb up. And there it was - spotted again by Ibrahim. His eyes are brighter - I didn't note it because the leaves of this crocus are very erect and strongly resemble grass. At this spot it really is growing like grass... Putting GPS records on map we found that distance between my 2008 spot and spot now found by Ibrahim is only 100 metres.



Ibrahim checking the GPS coordinates.

And again we go further to the North - for *Crocus bifloriformis*, earlier regarded as the *C.*

International Rock Gardener

biflorus typically found in Turkey. I have it, so now I want only to see its habitat - where it is growing, because my stock came from other collectors. The type locality recorded by Erich Pasche is at 900m, although it does grow in a much wider area and at much lower altitudes, too.



There are several places which look equally good for crocus, when Ibrahim selects one where we stop. Entering a shrubby area I immediately spotted crocus which by the foliage undoubtedly belongs to *biflorus* group. Here the corms lie extremely deep and in very wet (because of recent rains) sticky clay. It is not easy to get a corm and to make its picture some washing is needed. Corm tunics confirm that it is the target of our search, *Crocus bifloriformis* although the altitude is only 160m. (See the Forum for more photos of this bulb.)

Right: *Crocus bifloriformis* corm
Below: *Crocus demirzianus* corm



Next morning we turn along the coast, back to Izmir, shortly entering a small side road, because on the roadsides we again spotted yellow flowers. There is a large spot where recently the forest was cut and new pine trees planted. Around it is a barbed wire fence, protecting the plantings from goats and sheep and at same time it protects crocuses, too. In this case it is *Crocus flavus* of the type form and for me it is the first time I have seen it blooming in nature. The corms lie extremely deep in sticky clay, but I dig one out to picture the characteristic very long neck of the corm tunics.

Crocus flavus subsp. *flavus*
corm



International Rock Gardener

In the forest outside of the fence there are only very few specimens, even though the forest growth is not dense. There are some *Crocus pallasii* growing there, too.



Crocus flavus subsp. *flavus*



Ruins of Pergamon.

We decided to devote the rest of the day to culture - visiting [Bergamo](#) with the famous ruins of Pergamon at the top of the hill. This is the spot where *Crocus nubigena* grows (at least I have one from

Archibald, labelled as "Pergamo ruins" and from the same spot is a picture of *nubigena* used by Osman Erol for comparison with *demirzianus*). The ruins are very impressive, although earlier local people used the Roman marble columns for production of chalk.

International Rock Gardener

The road guides us to [Manisa](#), where we spend our last night and in the morning we start driving to Izmir Airport. We have a lot of time, so at a quite low pass we again make some side turns.

To our great surprise it results in one more yellow crocus. In this case it is *Crocus balansae* - the last crocus of our trip. It was a single flower, which for some reason had not bloomed much earlier with the others nearby, as other plants seen were with seedpods.



Crocus balansae location

Crocus balansae



Anemone coronaria

The last picture is the same as the first in this trip - *Anemone coronaria*, but this population is very uniform – all the flowers are bright red with white eye.

And this is end of my report. I hope you enjoyed it and are not tired from so much reading and I am sorry for not giving you exact localities. It is only to protect localities from commercial diggers. Thank you for your attention!

Jānis

Ed.: The full story of this journey, with many more photos, can be seen here [in the SRGC Forum](#). There are many more trips reported in the Forum, such as [this one about a Crocus trip](#) with Ibrahim to SW Turkey in 2012. We are fortunate in the Forum to have threads concerning many types of plant, often concerning newly found or described species and with information about many countries and detailing experiences of growing a very wide range of plants. It is also the largest group of SRGC members, providing a virtual meeting place for what is a very widespread community of plant-lovers.

International Rock Gardener

---Plant Portrait---



Ranunculus seguieri Text and photos by Jaroslav Baláž, Czech Republic

This lovely buttercup has been called “the poor man’s *Ranunculus glacialis*” here in the lowlands of Bohemia, meaning that it is of the similar beauty to the almost impossible to grow alpine, *R. glacialis*, but possible to grow in the open garden.

*Ranunculus
glacialis*



Ed.:
John Richards,
in his AGS
Diary, tells of
his visit to
of [Jaroslav's
small alpine
nursery in
Dolní
Radžínka.](#)

International Rock Gardener

Ranunculus seguieri is scattered in widely separated areas of the European Alps, usually on limestone, at an elevation of 1800–2400m. This species flowers from May to July.

It is still not commonly available, probably because this species is poor at setting seeds in our gardens. It is a relatively easy rock garden plant so the lack of seed set must be due to unfortunate local difficulties.



Ranunculus seguieri and *Ranunculus glacialis* pictured in his Norwegian garden by Geir Moen



I first met this plant in the famous Passo Rolle ([the 1984m high pass](#) in the Italian Dolomites) on the wet screes under the marvellous peak [Cimon della Pala](#) (3184m), where many aristocratic plants enjoy superb values of air and light. That was more than 20 years ago and at that time I only knew the true alpine there from pictures.

Ranunculus seguieri forms tufts of finely cut, smooth, grey-green leaves with flowers on very short stems. The rounded large white flowers are golden-eyed from their large boss of stamens. Young stems are softly hairy, later becoming glabrous, bearing 1-3 flowers about one inch in diameter.

The plant, out of flower, is only 5cm tall and up to 15cm in height as the flowers fade. I pronounce this species as easy, growing well and blooming nicely in the new soft limestone (marl content) scree in a Czech-Moravian highland garden.

No special care is needed here. Older, larger plants can be divided and seed must be sown fresh, immediately after ripening. Some plantsmen regard it as a scree or trough plant par excellence.

J.B. (Translation by ZZ)

Ed.: See photos by Anne Spiegel, a regular visitor to the Dolomites from her home in the USA, of *Ranunculus seguieri* making marvellous “gardens in the mountains” in [the NARGS forum](#).