



BULB LOG 09.....26th February 2013



Eranthis hyemalis

A group of backlit *Eranthis hyemalis* is one of the great sights at this time of year. While there has not been enough warmth to encourage them all into full bloom yet a few in the advance party are opening to reveal the fascinating interior of the flowers.

I encourage them to self seed and am active in helping to distribute the seed to other parts of the garden when it is ripe by simply scattering it onto the beds.

Despite the hundreds of seedlings around the garden there is no distinguishable variation in the colour of the flowers.





Eranthis 'Guinea Gold'

The stems of Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' are also pushing through the ground now – the group above is in one of the raised slab beds.



Here a group of 'Guinea Gold' is growing in a fish box trough which makes it easy for me to replant them every year into fresh humus rich compost which helps speed up the rate the tubers divide to increase my stocks.

Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' is a cross between *Eranthis hyemalis* and *E. cilicica* which many now lump into a single species under the name of *Eranthis hyemalis*. As grower I prefer to keep them as separate if for no other reason than I find *E. cilicica* is not hardy in our garden and I find it impossible to grow in the open garden for more than a couple of years before it disappears. Many think hardiness refers only to the degree of coldness a plant can tolerate – but there is much more to it than that.



***Eranthis* 'Pauline'**

Fortunately there are some different colour forms of *Eranthis hyemalis* around such as the pale *Eranthis* 'Pauline' shown above. There is a label in the adjacent pot for *Eranthis* 'Schwefelglanz' which has very similar coloured flowers to 'Pauline' in fact I have found it difficult to separate them out from appearance alone.



There are no signs of growth from my pot of 'Schwefelglanz' and there are only a few seedlings left in what was a good pot of seedling of that plant last year – I fear that they have died. Now I come back to hardiness – it has not been a particularly cold winter, these plants have come through several long very cold winters before so what has killed them? My suspicion is they rotted off during the long cold wet summer we had last year. I also think that we lose *Eranthis cilicica*

not just to the cold in the winter but to the excessive summer wet that we experience. Luckily we have a number of self sown seedlings from 'Schwefelglanz' germinating in adjacent pots so I can try it again making sure that I give it a drier summer rest.



Eranthis 'Orange Glow'

I bought a seedling of Eranthis 'Orange Glow' at the SRGC Early Bulb Day- a plant I have been wanting for a while to increase the colour variation in our Eranthis plantings. Long term I hope I can establish as many colour forms as I can in the open garden in the hope that they will share their genes producing variably coloured carpets of Eranthis rather than the single hue we currently have.



Eranthis pinnatifida

I have no hardiness problems with Eranthis pinnatifida which spends all year in an open frame – I only bring it under glass to enjoy the flowers and encourage a good seed set so I can increase my stock of this beautiful plant. I have a good pot of seedlings now starting to reach flowering size and these will get planted out into suitable areas of the garden.



A clump of *Eranthis* 'Guinea Gold' emerges at the base of some *Galanthus* showing what good companions these early flowering bulbous plants are in the open garden beds.



Many forms of *Galanthus* are now standing tall waiting for a wee bit of warmth to open their flowers.



Some yellow forms of the Sandersonii group are doing very well in one of the “sharp sand bulb beds” – set off as these are by a backdrop of Eranthis in the bed beyond.



Another companion of the Galanthus is this Iris ‘Katharine Hodgkin’ just about to spring open.



Iris 'Sheila Ann Germaney'



Iris reticulata

Over the years we have tried a number of the named forms of *Iris reticulata* to see which would be best suited to our garden conditions. Many quickly dwindled and disappeared others broke down into many bulblets but a few, like this one, have done well flowering reliably and increasing as well. I cannot remember what its cultivar name is.



Narcissus asturiensis flowering here next to a pot of *Iris histrio*. Last week I showed a similar *Iris* growing outside which I captioned *Iris histrio* but should have called it *Iris histrioides* they are very similar to look at but *I. histrio* above flowers with its leaf present and *I. histrioides* flowers before the leaf emerges.



Narcissus perez-chiscanoi* x *N. cyclamineus



Bulb House –photographed through the glass

The Narcissus in the bulbs house are really picking up now and just as I predicted those that usually flower through the winter from October but are late are all coming into flower no together with the early spring flowering ones. While I do enjoy having Narcissus in flower all winter I feel that this 'late' flowering is much better for the plants. Also in the garden we are saying things are late but in actual fact for a number of years they have been getting earlier and earlier which is not necessarily in the best long term interest of the plants.



Narcissus 'Atlas Gold'



Select seedling ex Narcissus 'Camoro'



Narcissus 'Craigton Clumper'



Narcissus seedling



The later flowering has resulted in many of the Narcissus flowering on short stems much more in keeping with their scale than the ungainly etiolated stems we have had when they flower in the dark days of winter.



Plunge of 7cm pots



Another pot of *Crocus laevigatus* comes into peak flowering on a sunny day.



Moving back outside for this week's final image you will see *Crocus abantensis* in a raised slab bed just thinking of opening if the temperature would just rise a wee bit more.....