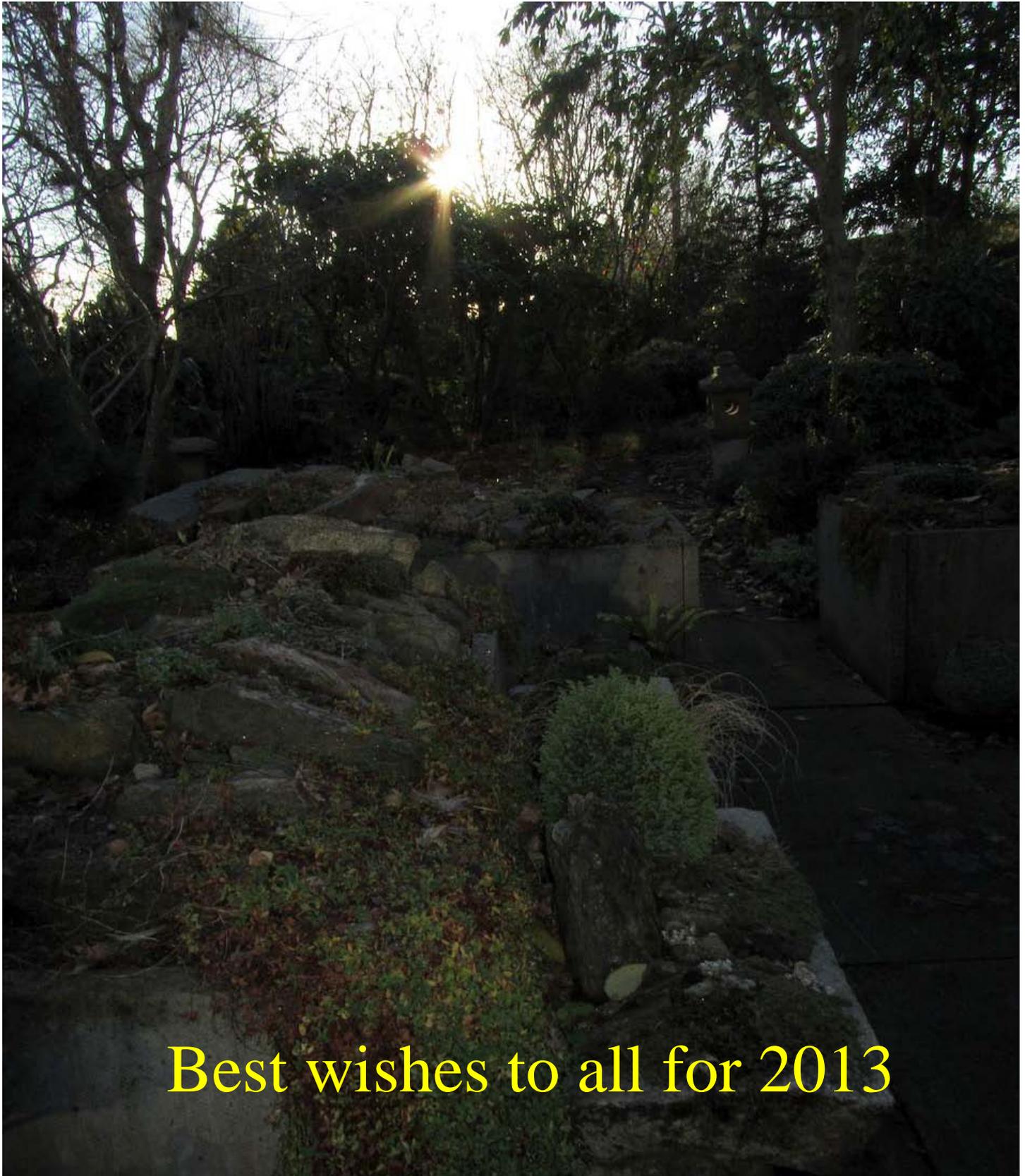




BULB LOG 01.....2nd January 2013



Best wishes to all for 2013

And so I start writing the Bulb Log for another year. This time last year I decided that ten years of my logs was enough for both me and you, dear reader, so I intended to stop at log 52-2012. So why am I back again for another year? Firstly due to the massive support and encouragement that I get from regular readers and secondly 2012 was such a strange growing season that will have knock on effects on how the plants will perform in 2013 that I simply could not leave the saga there.

Many of you may find the opening picture a bit dark – that is my intention. This picture was taken at mid day on 1st January 2013 – we were lucky it was a bright day and the sun was shining however this is as high as the sun gets in the sky and so winter light levels are relatively low. It is easy for me to forget and for you to realise just how far north Aberdeen is, **Latitude:** 57° 08', North. **Longitude:** 2° 07', West.



Compare the picture of Hamamelis above showing the very first flowers only just unfurling from the bud with the one below, taken on exactly the same date last year, and you can see they were much more advanced last year.



Plants do not flower according to our calendar - instead they respond to climatic conditions which provide the key triggers that initiate the different phases of growth.

What stimulates winter flowering plants like this to flower must be complex and cannot just depend on temperature.

Hellebore -2012

Last year at this time this Hellebore was also much more advanced than it is today as the picture below shows.

Woody plants and herbaceous plants are just like bulbs all responding in their own ways to our weather irrespective of our man made calendar of months and days.

My perception is that this winter is not substantially colder than last year so I cannot believe it is purely temperature that initiates this growth.



Hellebore -2013



One good thing is that over the last week we have had a few days when it was not too wet and the ground was not frozen so we could make a start to tidy up the fallen leaves and cut back the remains of last season's growth in preparation for the new growth to emerge.





While tidying we often find things that we would not see just walking around like the *Colchicum* 'Waterlily' flower above and the very first snowdrop flower to emerge in the garden.





I have been watching the posts showing flowering plants on the Galanthus threads of the SRGC forum with some envy. No, I am not succumbing to out and out white fever but I would just like to have bulbs that would flower unprotected in our garden at that time of year.



The few that we have flowered this season have been under glass like this pot of *Galanthus reginae-olgae*.



This is the bulb house on **1st January 2013** with very few flowers apart from some *Galanthus peshmenii* that have been out for months probably flowering for so long because they have not been pollinated – pollinated and fertilised flowers will usually shut down quite quickly. Compare this picture with the one below taken on the same day last year where you will see masses of *Narcissus* in flower. Careful observation of the picture above will let you see that we have a single *Narcissus* that has just opened its flower.



1st January 2012



Narcissus romieuxii

This *Narcissus romieuxii* seedling is the first to flower and it is quite a long way ahead of any of the other buds which remain tightly closed. What we are going to see in the coming months is a compression of the flowering season for this group of *Narcissus*. The ones that would have been flowering since October will start to flower as we move through January and I suspect that the later flowering ones will flower at their normal time and so I hope we will have a mass display then.



While the flowering stems have been reluctant to grow the leaves respond to different conditions and have been growing steadily in the low light. The evidence of this can be seen clearly above with the lower parts of the stems appearing very pale; blached as they grow in poor light.



There are still plenty of *Crocus laevigatus* flowers appearing even though they do not get enough light and warmth to open – the snow drops in the background do reflex and fill the house with their beautiful honeyed scent.



Crocus caspius

Different pots of *Crocus caspius* all raised from seed are also flowering, showing subtle variations in segment width and colour although the colours change as the flowers age.



Crocus caspius



I feared I had lost these seedlings of **Fritillaria davidii** because they had not appeared earlier but I was relieved and encouraged when checking an outside frame to discover their leaves just appearing now. I have moved them into the frit-house so I can keep a close eye on and prevent them becoming a meal for the slugs. While there are many disappointments in growing plants there are always more moments like this to lift my spirits and keep me going.....

I would like to remind you of one of the many events to look forward to this year – I hope to meet many of you there for the conference and the tour of exceptional and inspirational gardens.

2nd CZECH INTERNATIONAL ROCK GARDEN CONFERENCE

2nd to 5th May 2013

“Five years after the successful First International Conference in Beroun, we have arranged yet another in the Wellness & Congress Hotel Dvořák in Tábor, the medieval county town of Southern Bohemia. We aim to make this Second International Conference even better than the first. We are going to offer a cocktail of high level lectures, interactive workshops and themed evenings. The conference program is designed to give participants plenty of time for intensive networking of all sorts.”

Martin Sheader (England) - Flowers of the Patagonian Mountains. Rock plants from South to North along the Patagonian Andes

Ian Young (Scotland) - Small bulbous plants in cultivation. An SRGC sponsored lecture.

Dieter Zschummel (Germany) - Plant exploration in Iran

Peter Korn (Sweden) - Growing in sand. Rock and scree garden construction near Goteborg

Vladimir Epiktetov (Kazakhstan) - The top plants from flora of Kazakhstan/ Central Asia. Partly sponsored by SRGC.

Michal Hoppel (Poland) - Rock gardening in Poland. Rock garden construction in practice - rocks, crevices, troughs, walls and its plants'

Zdenek Zvolanek (CZ) - American Golden West. A song to remember Zdenek's late partner, Joyce Carruthers

Vojtech Holubec (CZ) - Chinese flowering Paradise. The best of flora of China and Tibet.

Jiri Papousek (CZ) - Czech crevice gardens. A Guide to interesting gardens.

Jaroslav Klíma (CZ) - Growing of alpiners in the field. From rock gardening to industry.

Zdeněk Zvolánek (CZ) - Charm of Balkan. To remember Czech sources of alpiners within iron curtains in the past.

Workshops:

Ota Vlasák at al. - RG in Troughs

Ian Young – Propagation of bulbs

Cyril Lafong - Alpiners in pots

“We have chosen to move from our previous comfortable venue to the city of Tábor so as to take advantage of a 200-seat conference hall at the Hotel Dvořák while also having the opportunity of showing you the most charming countryside of the Czech Republic. Tábor is 90 kilometres south of Praha (Prague); express trains (Praha Hlavní Nádraží) and buses (Underground Station Praha-Roztyly) serve the city practically every hour on weekdays and the hotel has a plenty of parking space for delegates who come by car. <http://www.taborcz.eu/EN/>

The Hotel Dvořák was quite recently the town brewery and a fortified castle. The large brewery has been rebuilt as a 4-Star Congress Hotel. The cellars and surroundings are very suitable for tasting Czech lagers (Pilsners) for the Scandinavians, and lighter ales for any weaker nations. The hotel has plenty of beer and even offers a therapeutic beer spa (bathing in genuine beer with yeast). Two people may bathe together in beer in wooden vessels - as well as having pumped pipe beer available for an even stronger cure.”

Meals based on traditional Bohemian (Czech and Moravian) cuisine will be served, digested and - we hope - remembered. <http://www.dvoraktabor.cz/en>

[Full Conference details and booking.](#)