



BULB LOG 04.....23rd January 2013



Colchicum kesselringii

Last week I spoke about bulbs and corms where I said colchicums have bulbs of course the conventional wisdom states they are corms and I am grateful to those that contacted me with very persuasive information. My problem is that while I understand what I have been told I have to see for myself exactly what is happening in colchicum and will sacrifice some plants, not *Colchicum kesselringii*, this year to study the growth cycle in more detail to answer my questions.

Read more of my dilemma, or comment on this debate, in the [SRGC forum](#).



Despite the lingering snow and cold conditions more shoots such as the **Corydalis** on the left, are pushing through promising a floriferous period sometime soon I hope.



Shoots of **Crocus michelsonii** seedlings not yet mature enough to flower – hopefully with a good growing season and a feed of potassium (kalium) the first flowers could appear next year.



The first shoots of **Tecophilaea cyanocrocus** are often visible in November but these have just appeared .



Fritillaria shoots

Fritillaria shoots are also starting to appear and I can even see the pink of the flower buds on *Fritillaria stenantha* nestling low between the emerging leaf tips above.



Iris danfordiae

The reticulate iris form the section of this genus that I love best and the lovely yellow *Iris danfordiae* is one of my favourites. I have grown it for years but always only the cultivated form that the Dutch Nurseries grow so well. I have never managed to get it to persist and have had to replace it every other year but a few years ago I was delighted to get some seed of the wild form and even more pleased to see them back up again this year. I hope I can succeed in establishing this in our garden.



Iris histrio

I was given a bulb of this form of *Iris histrio* a number of years ago and have had no trouble in building up a nice wee stock as it increases by offset.

This year I had enough to split it into two 7cm pots.

The next stage if the rate of increase stays the same will be to plant a few outside in the open garden – probably in one of my sand beds.



Another pot of *Crocus sieheanus* seedlings come into flower for the first time and like the one I showed a few weeks ago I will have to confirm the identity from the corm tunic when I replot them.



I know there will be more shoots in this outside frame but it is frozen shut and best left like that until the thaw comes - then I can see what is awakening in the pots below this frozen blanket.



Narcissus 'Cedric Morris' has reverted to the flowering time I was used to some twelve years ago when the flowers never opened before February. For all the years I have written the Bulb Log the first of its flowers have opened by December if not in late November. There are no signs at all yet of the two clumps that are in the open garden.



At last the first pot of **Narcissus romieuxii** types are opening in the bulb house. All these flowers from a 7cm pot confirms to me that I really do not need to use bigger pots to get a good display of flowers. Although I do also use 9 and 11 cm pots the bulbs in the small pots often grow best and I have fewer losses to wet rot as the smaller volume of compost dries out quicker as the bulbs shut down towards the summer.





This is a pot of a hybrid made by the late Don Stead that I thought was clone – I was going to call it Joan Stead after his late wife. I have shown it previously and the stand out feature was the very deep lobing of the corona – however I am not sure how stable that feature is. I need to work further to asses this pot to see if I have more than one clone and or if the degree of lobing will vary from season to season. The flowers illustrated above and below have deeper lobing at one side than the other suggesting to me that it is the latter.





Narcissus romieuxii
JCA 805

These two pictures show the face and side view of a *Narcissus romieuxii* JCA805 flower. It is an original seedling kept going from that original introduction by the late Jim Archibald many years ago.

This collection resulted directly in a number of variations of this species and a number of selections were made from the original seedlings. Thousands of seedlings have been raised since this plant has been in cultivation and the majority of all our *N. romieuxii* forms and hybrids have this as an ancestor.



Narcissus romieuxii open pollinated seedling

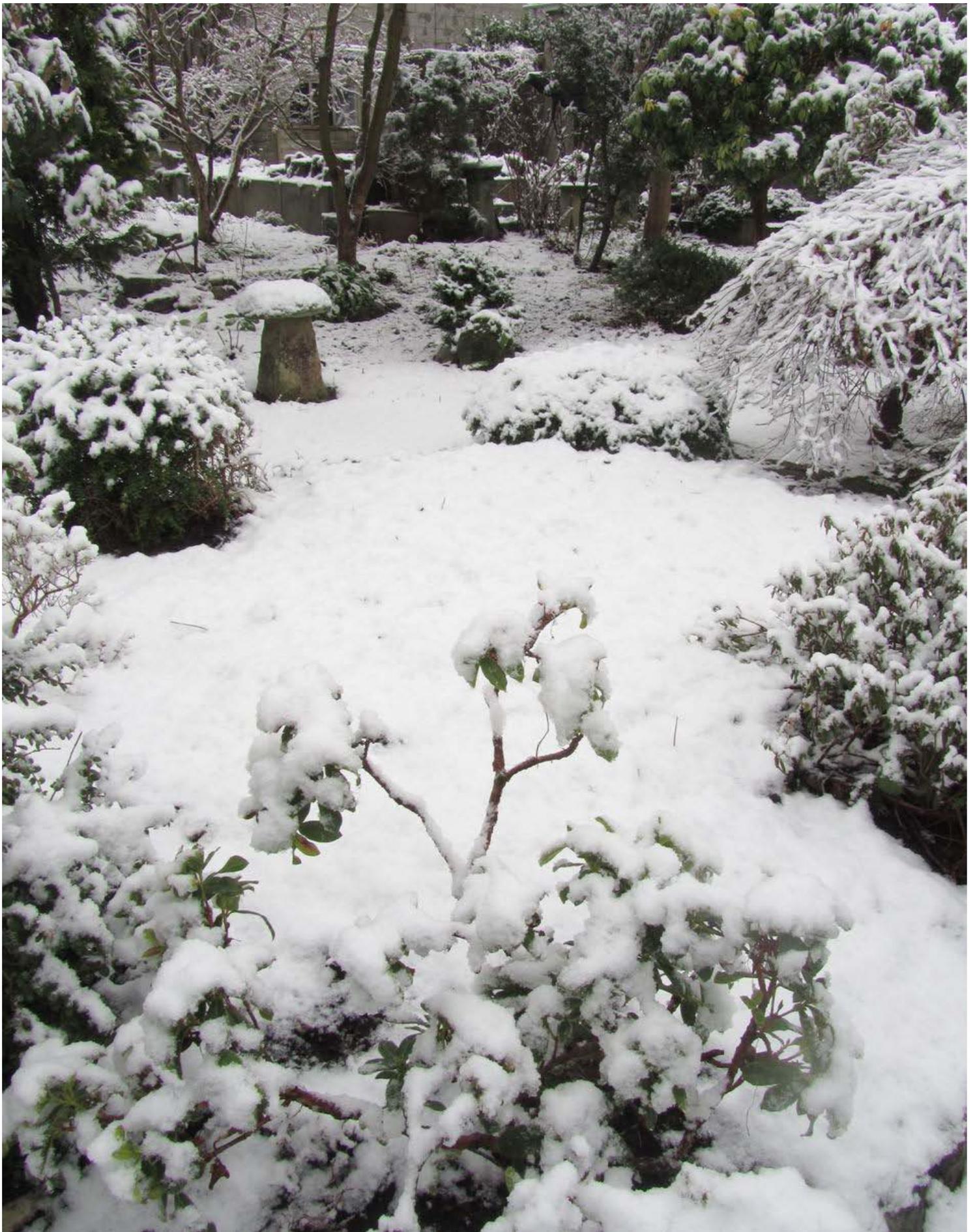
Even during the heaviest snow falls areas at the base of the larger shrubs remain clear of snow. This illustrates well the 'rain shadow' effect caused by trees and shrubs. The dark areas without snow showing the zone that will remain drier as rain is also shed away from this area under the canopy. This area can be used to good advantage for planting bulbs that want a dryer summer rest.





I took this picture under the rain shadow of a dwarf pine tree where I planted a number of bulbous plants including *Trillium rivale*. What I was horrified to see was some foraging blackbird had plucked off a number of the buds complete with flower in its search for food.

To prevent the rest of this group suffering the same fate I have protected them with a bit of wire mesh.



The long term forecast is that a big low pressure is coming across the Atlantic towards us so the weather will change to rain at the weekend - I am not sure if I should be glad.....