



BULB LOG 02.....11th January 2017





The Narcissus continue to be the bulb of interest in the glass houses where many are now in flower – those growing in the sand plunge are still the most advanced with more flowers opening every day.

The cover picture is of an open pollinated seedling and with the promiscuity of this genus it is certainly a hybrid as are most of the others I share with you this week.

One of the species involved in this hybrid complex is **Narcissus romieuxii** (left) which has creamy yellow flowers generally with a wide corona - also the filaments and style have a yellowish tint.



These two seedlings illustrate some of the variations that occur in the seedlings and it is interesting to note some of the wild occurring hybrids which look exactly like so many of our seedlings.

One such group is *Narcissus x romanensis* a natural hybrid which I have been seeing pictures of looks like so many of our own seedlings – its flowers which have a yellowish tinge as they open then fade to almost pure white.



This is one of my selected hybrids involving *Narcissus romieuxii* and *Narcissus bulbocodium* . I named it **Narcissus 'Craigton Clanger'**, it has nice yellow flowers.



This is another *Narcissus* seedling which I have singled out for cloning but have not named.



Narcissus seedling

Its white flowers are smaller than many of the other seedlings from this batch however the main reason I selected this form was that its stems remained relatively short even in our low light winter conditions which is a big plus.

One of the parents of this form was the plant we have grown for forty years and received as *Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus* which as you will see in the picture below can get very etiolated in the winter light flopping all over the place.



Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus



This close up of the short form show how the flowers have a slight creamy colour as they first emerge, flower on the left, but soon turn to white.



Narcissus romieuxii



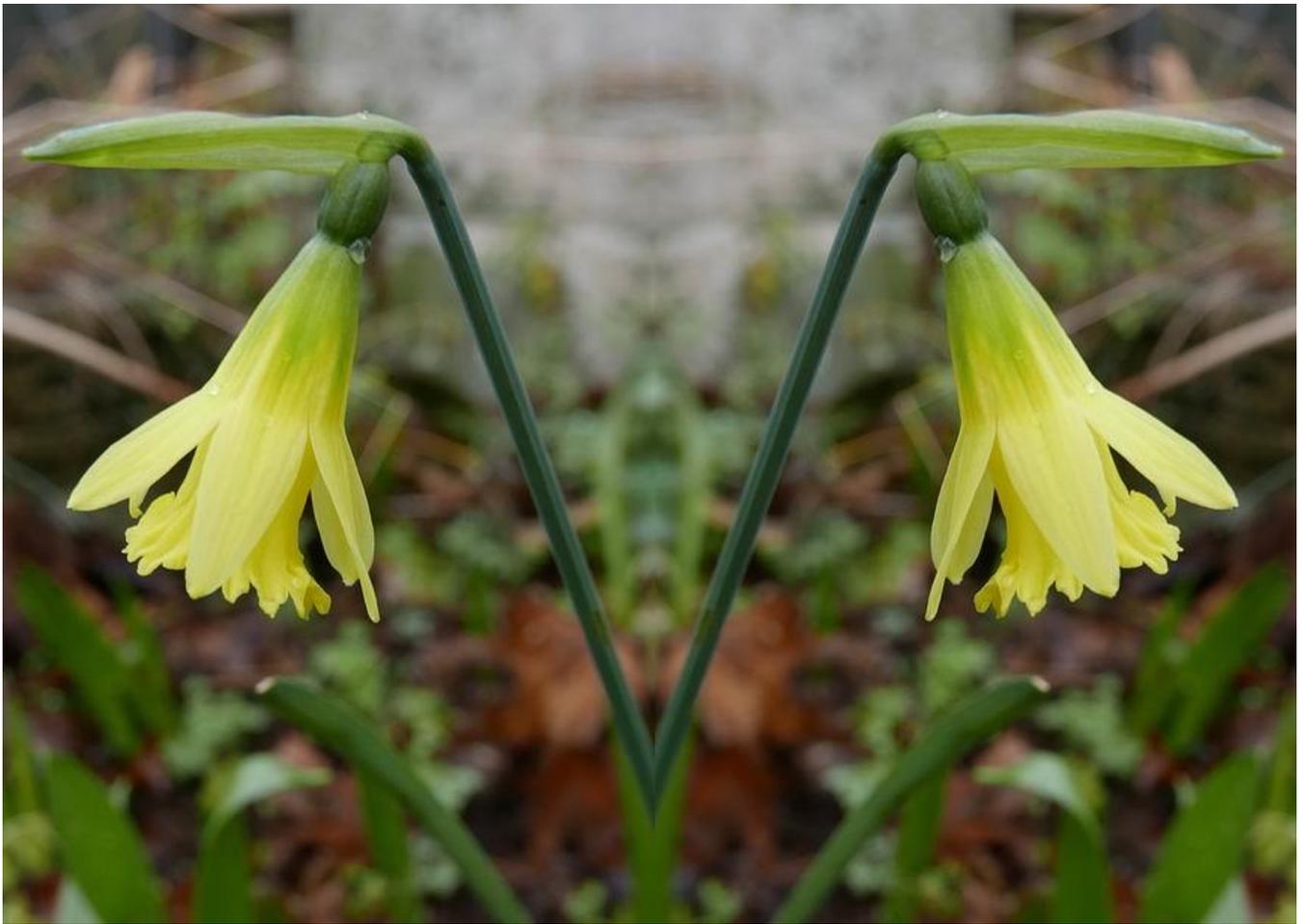
Narcissus mixed seedlings growing in the sand plunge.



**Narcissus
'Cedric Morris'**

We don't have as many Narcissus 'Cedric Morris' as we once did – I used to grow a lot in pots but then I planted most of them outside - now I have made a note to work at increasing our numbers again.

There are a few flowering in the garden and I will lift a bulb or two as soon as the leaves go back to twin scale.



Narcissus 'Cedric Morris' is fussy in our garden – I have planted it many times in various conditions but it mostly dwindles away disappearing after a few years. Where it has survived is in the well-drained narrow south facing bed at the base of the kitchen wall – I call this our hot bed – and this is where I pictured this one. I can quickly increase our numbers digitally, as in this picture, but that is not the same.



The sunrise, viewed through the window from my work table, shows that we are enjoying a period of unseasonably mild and bright weather allowing me to get ahead of schedule with many of the jobs in the garden.



I have now cleaned off the bulb bed and it is ready for a mulch. While the good weather allows me to get ahead of schedule it has also encouraged many plant shoots to start emerging early so I have to get the mulch on before the growth extends. It is very easy to spread mulch while growth is still underground but once the plants emerge it becomes increasingly difficult to spread the mulch without causing damage to the new fragile growths.

Part of the tidying process involves getting down to remove any weeds, many grow all through the winter. This task also lets me observe the plants that are in growth closely. While removing some leaves from within the leaves of this *Celmisia* I noticed the roots at the base of each rosette. (I have never managed to put a name to this species – it has soft floppy leaves and the white flowers always develop a pink tinge as they age.)



Celmisia

In effect each rosette had become an individual plant and simply by tugging gently I was able to remove three growths complete with roots to plant elsewhere – I filled the centre of the plant with some leaf mould to cover the roots that had reached the surface before I added the mulch.



Three new Celmisia plants.

Compost heap

These are the hedge and other prunings that I shredded and added to this heap in the summer.

It has now composted and is ready for adding back to the garden as a mulch where it will help retain moisture, cut down on the growth of some weeds as well as keeping a high organic content to our soil.



I have to carry all this material into the compost heap when I shred it then carry it all back out again when it is composted to add to the beds – this, as I showed in last week's Bulb Log, is the work that I am saving myself by making small heaps of the shredded winter prunings in suitable spots in the beds so all I have to do is spread it out when I see the growths emerging.



The bulb bed is now mulched and ready for the growth of the early bulbs.



While working on another bed I found these intrepid flowers of **Helleborus thibetanus** emerging.



Helleborus thibetanus



The area we refer to as the rock garden is an 'L' shaped bed that backs on to the *Erythronium* plunge beds. Originally it was in full sun but over the years trees and shrubs have grown putting it into partial shade with the short leg of the 'L' being the most shaded. Inevitably this has changed the environment and so we have adjusted the plants we grow there. This is the short, shaded leg, before being tidied, where as well as bulbs there are lots of *Hepatica pyrenaica*, *Ranunculus myconi*, *Ranunculus nathaliae* and *Haberlea rhodopensis*.



As I tidy the bed I discover how advanced the shoots of *Iris* '**Katherine Hodgkin**', above and *Iris reticulata*, below are.



Iris reticulata

This **Haberlea rhodopensis** was part of the original planting as were the New Zealand native plants below.



Aciphylla montana and **Helichrysum coralloides** in the partially tidied rock bed – here I am using 6mm granite gravel as a mulch, which is what was originally used for the bed. .



The gravel is a more appropriate mulch for the plants in this bed especially as I am taking down one of the trees that casts most shade so this bed will receive more sunshine again. I will have to finish off spreading the mulch before the many bulbs, mostly Crocus and Narcissus, appear.



At the far end of the rock bed alongside the path is this small bed I reconstructed a few years ago using broken concrete block, it is planted with *Hepatica* and *Corydalis*.

The growth of mosses and liverworts are some of the issues we have to face in our cool wet climate – they grow on all surfaces and have completely covered this rock work.

I used a combination of hard brush, wire brush and trowel to remove much of the moss – I am half way through the process in this picture where I have cleared the right hand side.



I have neither the time nor the patience to remove every last bit of moss but hopefully by removing the majority the rock will stay clear through the spring and summer before the it gains ground again next autumn.



This is a before shot of some of the concrete rocks covered in moss and liverwort.



This view looks from the path across the Erythronium plunge beds to the rock bed.



While I was working contrails painted the sky over our garden with the Scottish Flag.



The work of tidying the beds, mulching and tree removal will continue over the coming weeks as I look forward to the most exciting time of the year when the spring bulbs start to burst into flower.....