



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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Autumn continues painting the garden with colours and this week I am again focusing my camera on the bulbous subjects, mostly *Colchicum* and *Crocus*. Our weather cannot decide if it is summer or winter as we get alternatively battered by rain and wind one day then bathed in unseasonably warm conditions the next. Many of the *Colchicum* and *Crocus* produce a succession of flowers so as one set of flowers gets flattened by the conditions others

emerge to take their place. This week I place *Crocus salzmannii* in the centre foreground of this picture looking across the cobble bed where other *Crocus* continue with their floral display.



Crocus are also flowering in the narrow bed below the kitchen window among some southern hemisphere bulbs namely the newly emerging leaves of *Ipheion* and the bright red flowers of *Lapeirousia laxa* (*Freesia laxa*).



A large flowered white *Crocus speciosus* hybrid.



Colchicum agrippinum and *Crocus speciosus*.



Colchicum agrippinum and a nice dark coloured form of **Crocus speciosus**.



Crocus speciosus

The next sequence of images celebrate some seedlings and hybrids of Crocus speciosus which is an easy garden plant that grows well in most conditions.



Crocus pulchellus and *Crocus speciosus*



Crocus speciosus and *Crocus pulchellus*



Crocus speciosus hybrid





Crocus banaticus



Crocus pulchellus



Crocus speciosus* growing among *Allium wallichii





The sprawling **Cyananthus lobatus hybrid** continues flowering on the raised slab bed, months after its first flower of this year opened in early July.



With its spreading habit it grows to cover this whole end of the bed and it took me a number of years to think of plants that could share this space until I decided to try early flowering bulbs that are dormant from July when the *Cyananthus* growth starts spreading.

Look carefully and you will see some *Narcissus bulbocodium* leaves emerging through the tangled mat of *Cyananthus* growth.

A reminder of how the same bed looked in March with the Narcissus in flower and the emerging growth of the Cyananthus in the front looking like a cushion plant.



More Narcissus bulbocodium leaves can be seen emerging among the fallen leaves and Cyclamen in the gravel.



While I have been converting many of the plunges to sand beds I intend to keep a reference collection of bubs growing in pots with labels in this Bulb house.



Crocus goulymii



**Crocus
kotschyanus
ex CMW 2685**



Crocus kotschyanus subsp. cappadocicus and Crocus hadriaticus ex Sparta



Crocus cappadocicus and a **Crocus pulchellus (hybrid?)** growing in the sand.

Janis Ruksans splits *Crocus cappadocicus* from the very variable *kotschyanus* complex describing the reasons in his excellent book *The World of Crocuses* if you like Crocus you need this book.



Sternbergia sicula

I have found myself frustrated by *Sternbergia* on two counts - first the fact that that despite being able to grow and increase the bulbs I have struggled to get them to flower as freely as I see them doing in warmer gardens the second is with the confusion with their naming in cultivation.

The three main ones we grow are *Sternbergia lutea*, *S. sicula* and *S. greuteriana* and there is a wide variation in forms between these three entities.



***Sternbergia sicula* (Polyrrhenia, Crete)**

The shape and the way these flowers open is very different to other forms of *Sternbergia sicula* we grow some authorities lump this species in with *Sternbergia lutea* and it may be indeed be a polymorphic species.



***Sternbergia sicula* (Polyrrhenia, Crete)**



Sternbergia greuteriana



Sternbergia lutea



Bulb house sand bed.

For many plants Autumn is seen as the end of their growing season when they prepare for the onset of winter but for these bulbs it is the start of their growth cycle and that is reflected in the growth that has emerged in the sand beds since I watered them a little over a month ago.



Cyclamen mirabile and Crocus



Crocus ex mathewii JKP 98-117

Raised from seed I received as *Crocus mathewii*, grown in cultivation, this is certainly not characteristic of that species I suspect this is a hybrid with some other species possibly *Crocus asumaniae* – note how it changes colour in time this is the same flower 4 days apart.



I am always delighted to flower any of the autumn Narcissus, they are not well adapted to growing in our cool climate and I hope that this flower on **Narcissus serotinus** is a sign that they prefer the sand bed to a pot.



Narcissus serotinus



Galanthus reginae-olgae

Most people only know *Narcissus* and *Galanthus* for their late winter or spring flowers but once you get interested in bulbs you start to discover the wealth of bulbs that also have autumn flowering forms.



You may remember I showed a picture of this group of *Colchicum autumnale album* growing under the leaves of *Arisaema candidissimum* in [Bulb Log 3918](#) - now those leaves are turning yellow and collapsing letting the *Colchicum*s see the light.



Crocus banaticus

Sometimes it is a difficult decision which picture to place on the cover so I will close with the other option I had to choose from this week, which would you have gone for?.....