



BULB LOG 02.....9<sup>th</sup> January 2019





The Narcissus flowering in the bulb house sand beds continue to give us great pleasure and the challenge of trying to work out what the parentage of these open pollinated seedlings may be. The cover picture shows three forms or



possibly hybrids of **Narcissus romieuxii** and the white one is related to **Narcissus albidus**, the deeper yellow ones seen in the second picture are forms/hybrids of **Narcissus bulbocodium**.

The leaves of *Sternbergia sicula*, *Cyclamen mirabile* with *Tropaeolum azureum* scrambling over it are positioned to the left with more variations of *Narcissus* flower seedling flowering.



In this picture I wanted to convey the difference in the size of the flowers along with the variation on the length of stem. The stems will continue to grow until the flower fades and even beyond that if it has been successfully pollinated and is setting seed.

Our recent weather has been bright, not especially cold and with no hard frosts forecast I decided it was time to water the sand plunges and the bulbs in pots. You should not water the bulbs when you are likely to get freezing conditions so it is important to keep a watch of the weather forecast to find that window of opportunity.

People often forget that even though it is mid-winter these plants are growing and require water and nutrients to sustain that growth. Without sufficient water the bulbs will resort to using up the resources stored in the bulb which will lead to them reducing in size and in some cases breaking down into several very small bulbs which will not flower next year.



Two pictures of the same flowers to show in this form the corona is very flat at the mouth even to the extent of rolling back on itself.



I am especially attracted to the flowers where the anthers and filament protrude beyond the corona like the one on the left in the picture above and shown in detail below.





I selected this seedling a number of years ago because I was attracted to both the clean white neatly pleated corona and its diminutive size – I like it a lot but I am not yet persuaded it is sufficiently different to be named or shared.

Here in the this sand plunge, which was planted in 2014, you can see how the bulbs have increased to the point that they have to compete for space and light so, this summer, when they are dormant, I intend to greatly reduce the number of bulbs.



If you have not seen it yet click the link to view the latest [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) showing the Narcissus in the sand plunges which I made after I posted last week's Bulb Log.



Shoots are always a welcome sight to be studied and appreciated especially those that emerge this early in the year when there is not much other growth around to distract the eye. Sometimes these shoots are very decorative such as these emerging leaves of **Galanthus 'Morgana'** (above) which are an attractive grey/green colour with one leaf clasped by the other, the term supervolute is used to describe this arrangement.



In contrast as they emerge the leaves **Galanthus 'Kath Dryden'** are clasped flat together which is referred to as appanate.



I also like the narrow green twisted leaves of **Galanthus gracilis**.



The shoots of **Eranthis pinnatifida** also appear very early in the year where rather than being protected in a bud the stems are hooked over as they push through the ground to protect the still growing exposed flowers and leaves.



Also growing in the garden I find the first ***Eranthis pinnatifida*** emerging.



It is the time I work on the front drive ways to get all that remains of the old growths and the fallen leaves cleared away.



It is a much easier task to lift the leaves after a dry spell and my first actions are to use a three pronged rake to pull all the leaves onto the slabs.



The three widely placed prongs allow me to rake the leaves off without damaging the shoots of bulbs that are emerging.



There are plenty of shoots appearing under the carpet of leaves some of which are being drawn up and blanched by the temporary cover.



A with many such tasks the scene gets worse before it gets better.



Now the bulk of the leaves are collected into a big green bag to be transported through the back garden to the leaf mould heaps, so I can get down to cutting away the dried remains of the Geranium stems, removing any obvious weeds and using the leaf blower to remove further debris.



After this initial big clear up I get down to checking for further weeds and enjoying the many shoots appearing.



Crocus



Narcissus



More Crocus.



I am not 100 percent sure but I think this is *Dactylorhiza*.



The wall also needs some work to remove the excessive growths of Ivy which if left would smother the narrow bed between the top of the wall and the hedge where there are lots of bulbs planted.



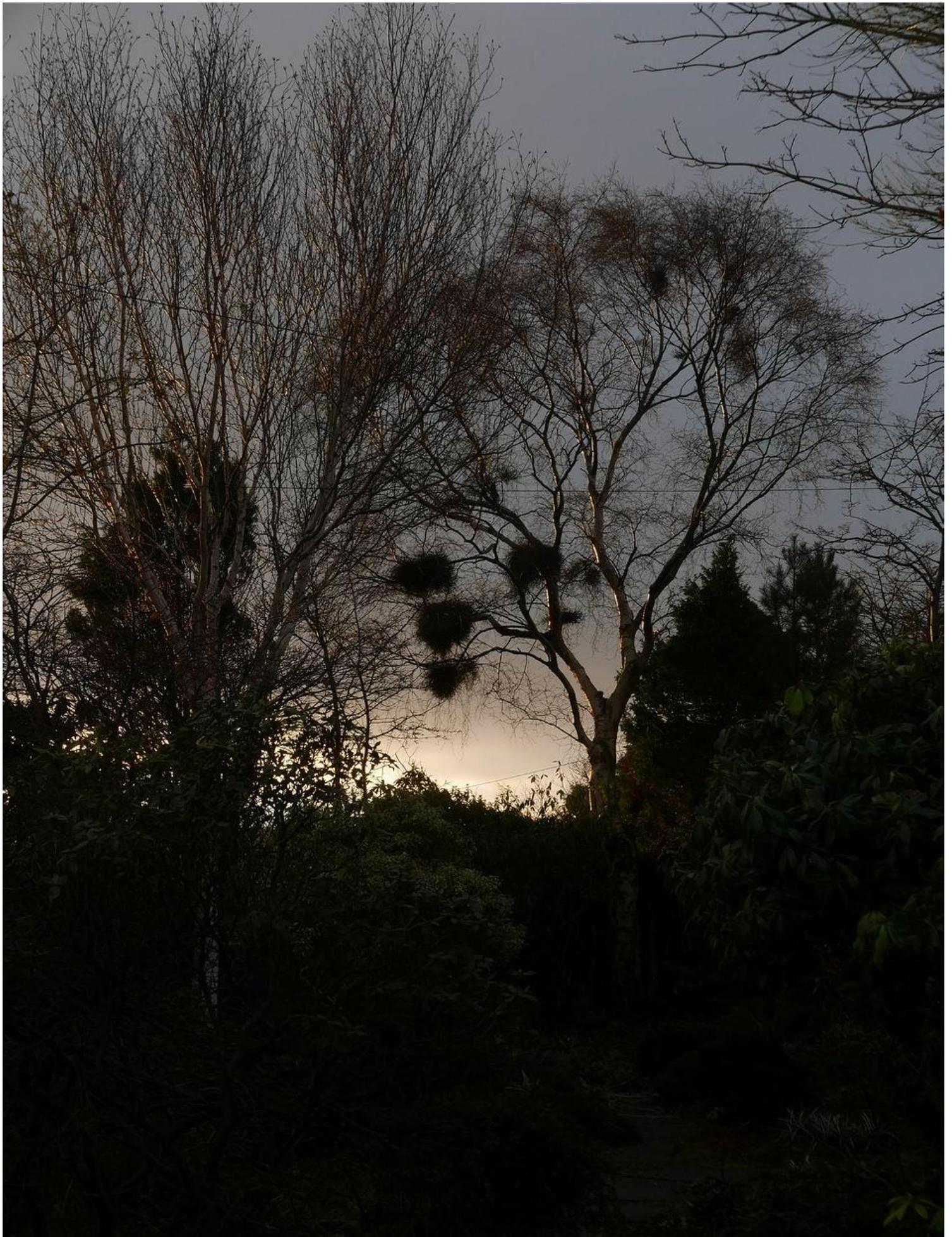
After first phase of work.



It has been suggested that I grow Cyclamen in the driveway planting and indeed they would further add to the long flowering season. I did sow some early on when I was establishing this planting but found their leaves, which are in growth through the winter, made the task of tidying up more of a problem so I choose not to have them here.



Dawn over the garden.



I love the highlights on the Betula illuminated by the rising sun standing out against the black clouds. If you would like to see pictures of the driveway through the year then click this link to a Driveway Planting Special edition of the [Bulb Log](#).....