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Bulb Log Diary

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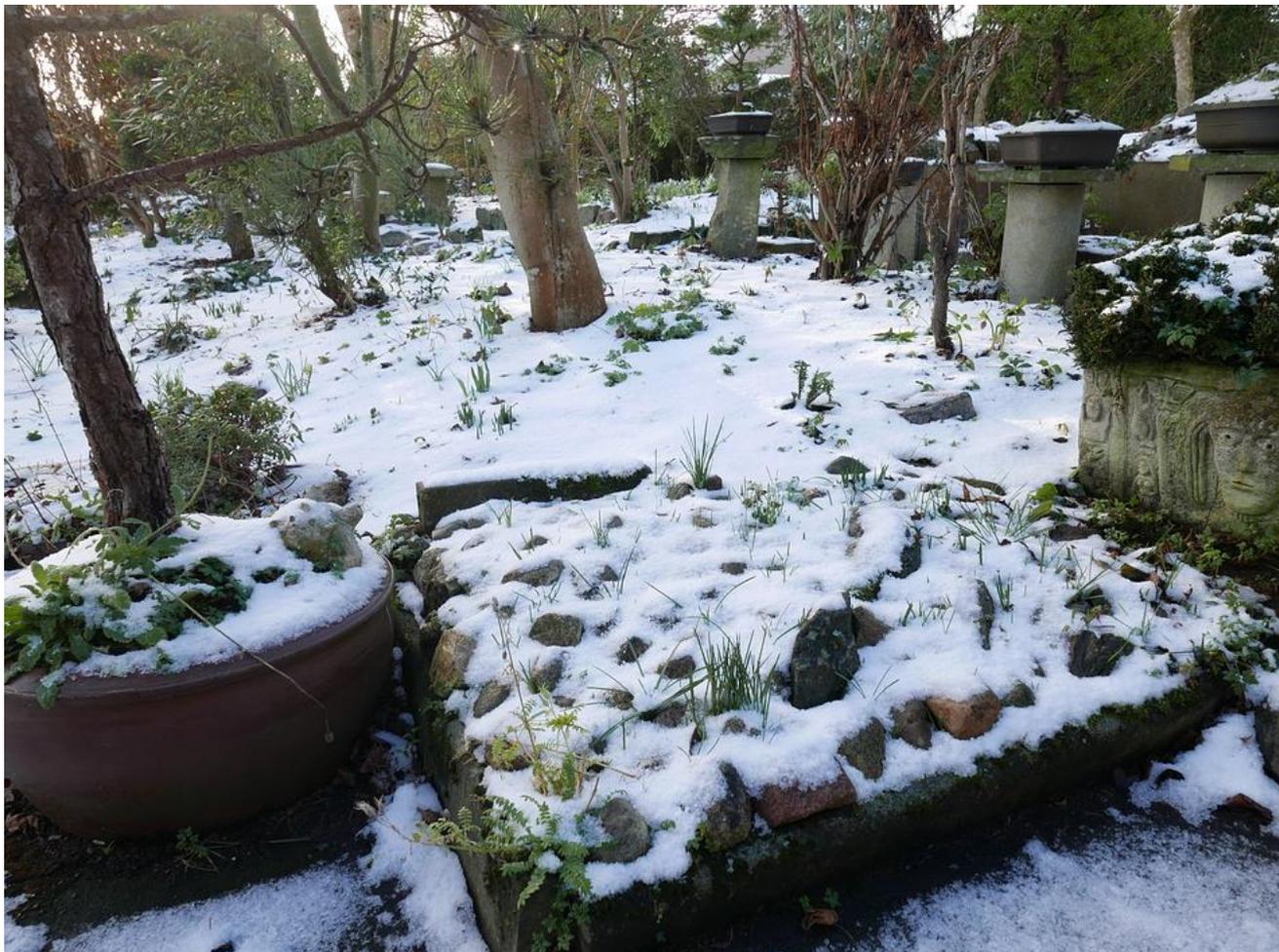
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BULB LOG 04.....23rd January 2019





We have enjoyed a gentle start to winter so far however this week we did briefly get a light covering of snow which I always like to see. Ideally it would suit the majority of plants we grow if we had a covering of snow from December through to March followed by a proper spring staling in April however our weather is never that stable nor predictable. Although it has been relatively mild so far our coldest winter months are still to come.



I am glad that I got some of the tiding and mulching of the beds done before this snow fall arrived.



Recently I mentioned the hardened tips that many of the early bulbs have on their shoots and here it is well illustrated on these Galanthus.



You can see both the reinforced tip of the leaf and the way the spathes clasp up the sides of the flower to form a toughened point to push through the hard ground – on the right is a narcissus flower bud which also features a pointed tip.

It seems to me that the melting of the snow causes a sudden push in the growth of many plants, maybe it is just the flush of water that causes it or it could be because the slow steady growth has been hidden from my view for a few days by the snow. It is always an exciting time to walk around observing the ground carefully and here I spot a Crocus flower.



Eranthis flowers emerge from the ground semiformal held downwards as the bend in the stem pushes through the surface.



The blanket formed by the partial snow cover makes the new growths stand out even more, contrasting as they do with the white background.



I am excited by the emergence of new growth at any time of the year but I have a special attraction to these first shoots of the year so I enjoy spending time going around searching the ground for the very first signs of them.



Helleborus stems bend over in the freezing air as the plant pulls water from them to help prevent the cells being damaged by the frost - the stems will rise again with the temperature.



A clump of *Narcissus hispanicus* is well advanced with the flower buds waiting for favourable conditions to open, revealing their yellow trumpets.



The perfectly hardy mat green leaves of *Allium* and *Galanthus* stand out against the snow covered ground.



In contrast these are the shiny green leaves of ***Galanthus woronowii*** whose impatient flowers cannot wait to open.



The presence and importance of the trees and shrubs becomes more obvious when the ground is covered in snow.



I am especially looking forward to seeing how the growth of the *Erythronium sibiricum* and others have progressed as we approach the second spring since I constructed and planted this new bed



The flowers of a pink **Hepatica nobilis** seedling are showing some early colour.



I was surprised to find these reticulate Iris which have reached this advanced stage of bud without me noticing, perhaps the evidence is in the leaves that have not been tidied suggesting I have not been paying attention here.



The growth and progression in the bulb house sand beds continues with the mass flowering of the early Narcissus.



The Bulb House where I am still growing them in plastic pots is also in bloom although I have observed that the same species and clones flower slightly later in pots than they do planted directly into the sand beds.



The former *Fritillaria* house where the sand bed on the left was the most recently converted from plunged pots.



Now for a series of pictures showing some of the many flowers starting with a *Narcissus romieuxii* type seedling.



Mixed seedlings



Mixed seedlings



Mixed seedlings



Narcissus romieuxii



With white floral parts including the filaments and styles the seedlings above and below are related to *Narcissus albidus*.





Mixed Narcissus seedlings and some Crocus



I will leave you this week with what I think may be Crocus atticus – I will be able to confirm when it opens.....