



BULB LOG 41.....7<sup>th</sup> October 2020



*Eucomis bicolor* and *Crocus speciosus*



**Crocus speciosus**



Crocus speciosus is among the most readily available and widely grown - it is not the first to flower in our garden but heralds a second wave of autumn flowering crocus.

As you can tell from the cover image the corm forms secondary buds so it increases forming clumps over time. Crocus speciosus has not seeded around as freely in our garden as some of the other species I have been showing such as Crocus kotschyanus, pulchellus and nudiflorus.

Here we have **Crocus speciosus** flowering alongside **Colchicum x agrippinum** showing that their flowers are of a similar size, both having good strong colour and markings, making for an attractive plant combination.



**Colchicum x agrippinum and Crocus speciosus**



**Colchicum  
x agrippinum  
and  
Crocus speciosus**

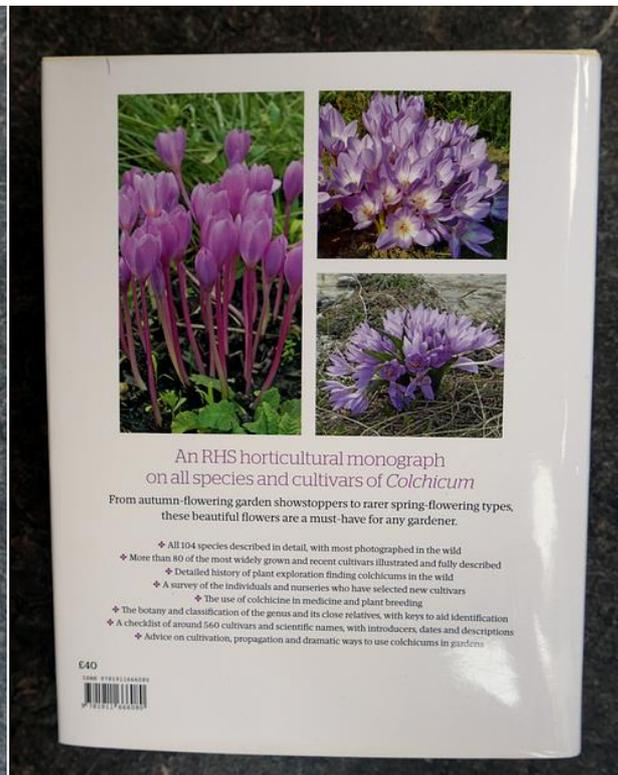
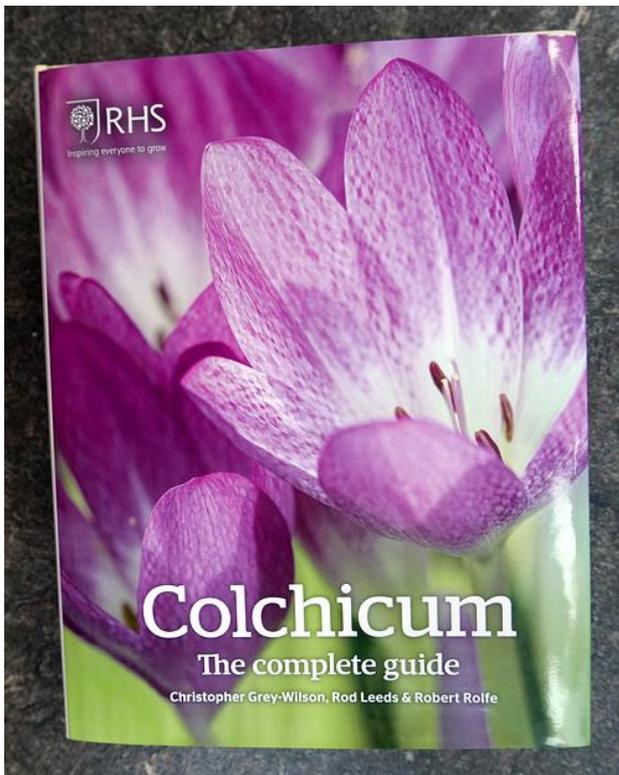


Many years ago an elderly friend gave us a bag of bulbs labelled as *Colchicum x agrippinum* which have grown very well for us but when they first flowered I recognised that they were different to our other *Colchicum x agrippinum*. The flowers were paler and the leaves wider but there were no books that could help me identify this plant however I did read that there was only one clone of *Colchicum x agrippinum* so I put a question mark against this one.



**Colchicum ?davisii**

It has been difficult to positively identify but now we have received the recently published book it has allowed me to detect a number of characteristics; one being the relatively short styles curved towards the stigma leading me towards deciding it is most likely to be *Colchicum davisii*.



I can highly recommend 'Colchicum: The complete guide' by Christopher Grey-Wilson, Rod Leeds and Robert Rolfe and published by the RHS.

From my first dips into reading it is indeed a complete guide with plenty of detailed information and pictures making it valuable for botanists and gardeners of all

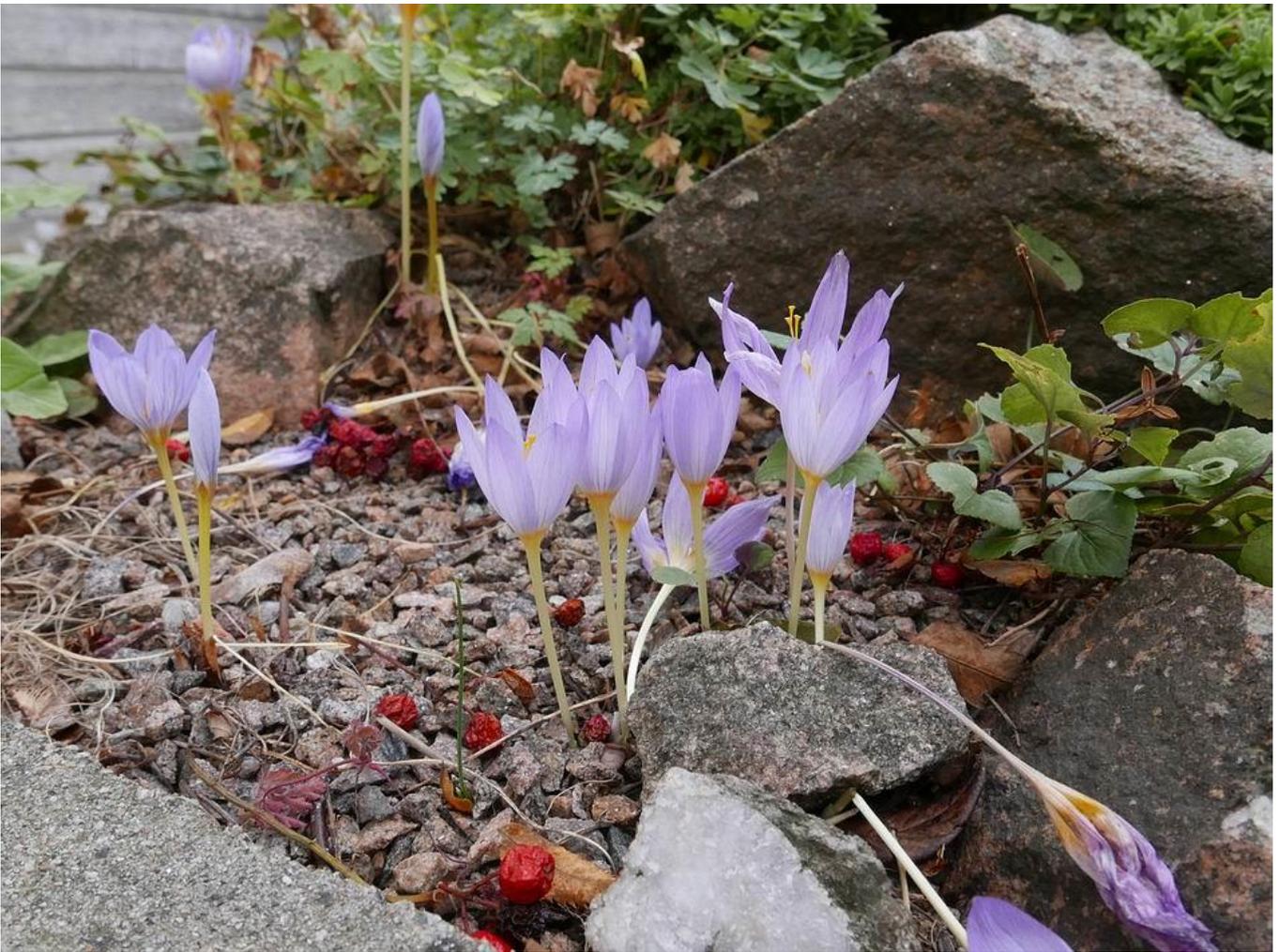
levels. It is available direct from the RHS or if, like us, you are a member of the AGS, there is a special offer - click the link: <https://www.alpinegardensociety.net/shop/colchicum-the-complete-guide/>



**Colchicum  
autumnale  
album**



**Crocus nudiflorus alba – this is the form named 'Orla'.**



**Crocus pulchellus**

I took most of the pictures last week before we were hit by Storm Francis which delivered the average rainfall for the entire month of October in around 48 hours. The plus side is the garden had been getting a bit dry but now it has plenty of water; the down side is that many of the autumn flowers were battered by the heavy rain and wind.



**Crocus pulchellus**

Although they are perfectly hardy in the open garden I also grow some of crocus in the bulb houses where we can enjoy their flowers unaffected by the weather. The storm raging outside reminds me it is time to apply the second storm in the bulb houses except in a calm controlled way that will not damage any flowers.



***Crocus pulchellus***

The wet flat surface of the sand beds indicates that I have applied the second storm and in the next few days I will cultivate the surface by roughing the sand up to prevent it forming an impervious cap.





While delivering the second storm I paused watering the pots to photograph the spectacular eruption in the centre.



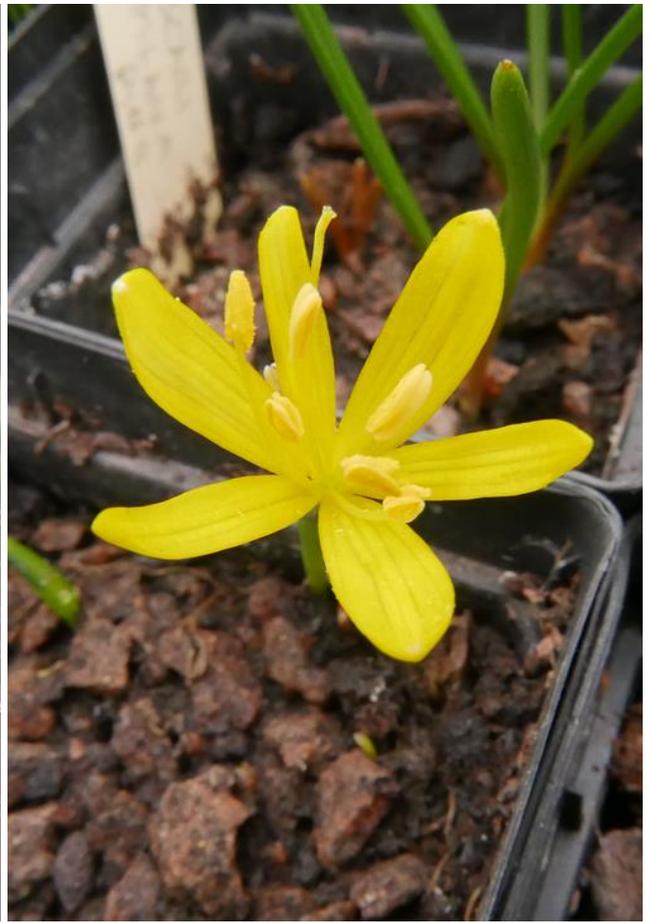
The upward mass of new growth from the Narcissus bulbs is heaving the compost upwards.



The force of the water washes the compost down allowing the mass of blanched leaves which were forcing it upwards to break through the surface – now exposed to the light they will soon green up.



Spending the time carefully watering also allows me to observe the growth and here I spotted the first Narcissus bud of this season.



***Sternbergia greuteriana***

Some of the early flowers include *Sternbergia greuteriana*, the smallest of the genus – we have a few different clones of this species and this is by far the smallest and most distinct of them – I wrote about my observations on *Sternbergia* in [Bulb Log 4009](#).



***Galanthus reginae olgae* 'Blanc de Chine'**

*Galanthus reginae olgae* has not survived growing unprotected in our garden so we grow it under glass – this year some kind friends gave us new clones to try, this is one of them.



***Crocus speciosus*** flowers push their way through these collapsing and yellowing *Arisaema* and *Roscoea* leaves.





On the rock garden bed more Roscoea leaves bring one last punch of colour turning bright yellow before they disappear underground until next July.



The colour in this bed is not over for the year yet as evidenced by these *Crocus banaticus* flower shoots which can also be seen in the top right corner of the previous picture.



**Crocus speciosus albus and nudiflorus**

At the other end of the same bed the flowers of **Crocus speciosus albus and nudiflorus**, photographed before the storm, rise through the retreating foliage.



**Crocus banaticus**

Crocus banaticus grows very well in our garden increasing at the corm as well as seeding around, where we find many subtle variations of colour and size in the flowers. I have used my hand to give some idea of just how large some of these flowers are.



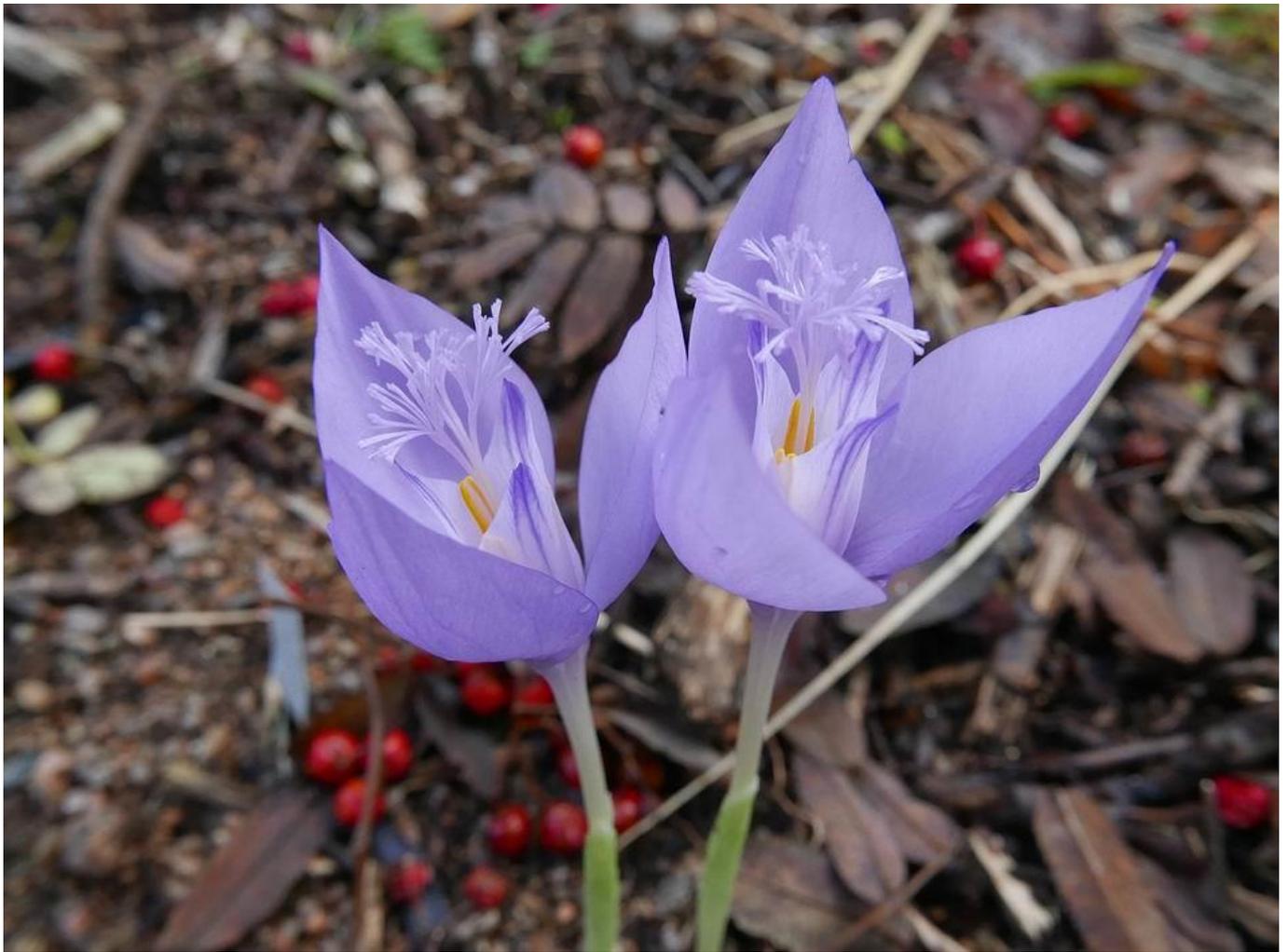


**Crocus banaticus**



**Crocus  
banaticus**

Note the different colours displayed by both the floral segments and the multi branched style in these *Crocus banaticus*



**Crocus banaticus**



**Crocus banaticus and vallicola** enjoying some sunshine.



**Crocus speciosus**



**Colchicum x agrippinum and Crocus speciosus**



**Crocus hybrid**

I will wind up this week with this *Crocus pulchellus* hybrid, seeded between the paving slabs, bathing in the sunshine.....