



~Gardening with Bulbs ~

The Bulb Garden

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April Bulb Displays - Vancouver, Canada and Beyond

Jo Canning is a certified Master Gardener who has been volunteering, teaching, and speaking on organic and sustainable gardening since she completed her training in 1996 at VanDusen Botanical Garden. She has gardened from Vancouver Island to Nova Scotia, from the American Southwest to the United Kingdom, bringing her experience and practical approach to her seminars. Her articles and photographs have been published in Canadian and USA magazines, and appear on the Master Gardeners Association of British Columbia's website.

coastal climate, from Victoria at 48.42 degrees north to Campbell River, at the 50th parallel.

Aconite, *Iris reticulata* and *Galanthus* ignore the February and March cold soil in gardens, *Erythronium* give way to *Dodecatheon* and *Fritillaria* in both wild and domestic settings. Everywhere, spring-flowering bulbs explode into bloom upon bloom until the end of May.

Vancouver Metro

In Vancouver, April is awash with spring blooms, but the truth of it is the

In the Pacific Northwest spring begins in February. From the south end of Puget Sound (about 60 miles south of Seattle) in USA's Washington State, then north into the greater metro area of Vancouver, Canada, then east into the Fraser Valley's hinterland behind Vancouver, the mild climate predominates. To the west, two hours by car and passenger ferry, Vancouver Island shares our mild temperate rainforest



Queen Elizabeth Park. Photo from TripAdviser.ca.

real stars are cherry blossoms along some of the neighbourhood streets and in parks, and

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About Snowdrops by Judy Glattstein

*Judy Glattstein has been gardening, particularly with bulbs, for more years than she will admit, and is the author of at least eight books (three on bulbs), many gardening articles, was an instructor for the New York Botanical Garden and Cook College of Rutgers University, and curated **Buried Treasures, The Nature and Art of Bulbs** at the gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of the New York Botanical Garden. Judy is down to earth, immensely knowledgeable and able to give great practical advice, but best of all, Judy has a sense of humor about our obsessions that all gardeners must possess to be successful, which is true of all our authors.*

In late February/early March, depending on winter's slackening grip on the landscape, I drive slowly as I travel local roads here in western New Jersey and nearby Pennsylvania. It's not that conditions are so difficult (though they can be). I'm looking for legacy patches of snowdrops in gardens, in used-to-be gardens, roadside verges, anywhere, and I find them. Snowdrops are a wonderful legacy bulb in old, even abandoned gardens.

In *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett, Martha, the housemaid, is explaining about bulbs to young Sarah. " 'They're things as helps themselves,' said Martha. 'That's why poor folk can afford to have 'em. If you don't trouble 'em, most of em'll work away underground for a lifetime an' spread out an' have little 'uns. There's a place in th' park woods here where there's snowdrops by the thousands. They're the prettiest sight in Yorkshire when th' spring comes. No one knows when they were first planted.' "

Most familiar is the common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*. It has the typical pair of grayish green leaves and a single flower with three outer petals, usually pure white, and an inner, shorter tube marked with green. Readily available in fall, the little bulbs



Galanthus nivalis. Photo by David Pilling.

do not appreciate their drying off travel time from the Netherlands, and more time sitting in the store until re-interred in the ground. If you need to sequence autumn bulb planting, keep in mind that smaller bulbs dry out more quickly than larger ones. Prioritize their planting. Dig a nice hole in loamy soil that neither stays excessively soggy in spring nor becomes overly dry in summer. Little bulbs, I find, are best in groups. Ten is a minimum for *Galanthus*, 25 is better, and 100 is wonderful. Unless we're discussing the very expensive, rare cultivars where even one bulb is a budgetary indulgence. With time, the galanthus will adjust their depth in the soil, pulling themselves deeper with contractile roots or massing up with offsets until they heave themselves out of the ground. One helpful technique when first planting – dig the hole approximately three times as deep as the bulb is tall. Loosen the soil, set the bulb(s), and begin back-filling. Stop when the hole is 2/3 filled and add a thin layer of yellow playbox sand before

filling all the way up. That way, if you happen to be digging in the area when the galanthus are dormant it will act as an *aide memoire* that something is planted beneath.

Sometimes bulbs (and other plants too) may have a personal value more for memories than any intrinsic worth. So it is for some "ordinary" snowdrops that I have. As a relatively new gardener I very much enjoyed reading *The Little Bulbs, A Tale of Two Gardens* by Elizabeth Lawrence. It is about her garden in North Carolina and in Lob's Wood, that of Mr. Krippendorf in Cincinnati, Ohio. Living in Connecticut at the time, my friend Sydney Eddison had a neighbor who was a relative of Mr. Krippendorf. Sydney had snowdrops that her neighbor had from Lob's Wood, and she shared some with me. So these "common" snowdrops are, I suppose,

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April Bulb Displays - Vancouver, Canada and Beyond *cont'd*

the *Rhododendrons* from late March through early June. The good news for us bulb-o-philes is geophytes are all part of the show, and an important part of this symphony of colour.

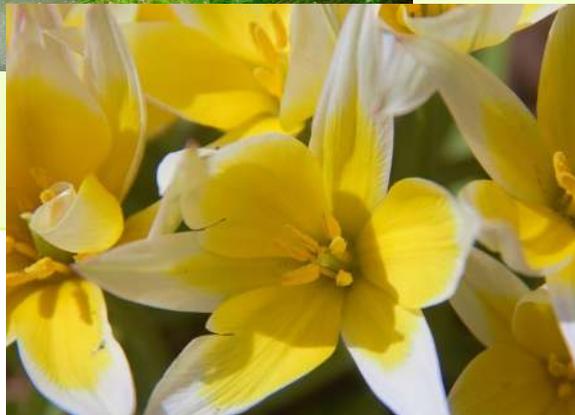
There are three primary focal points for bulb display in the city: Stanley Park on the northwest edge of the peninsula in the city's "downtown", VanDusen Botanical Garden in the western area of the city, and Queen Elizabeth Park, on the highest point of the city.

Stanley Park

In true Victorian fashion, setting aside in perpetuity the 4 square km (1.5 square miles) of Stanley Park for public enjoyment in 1886 was the first law passed by the



newly minted city of Vancouver. The park sits at the entry to the harbour, and is some of the country's most expensive real estate, but the city has stoutly fended off all development. There are three main gardens in the park: a rose garden, a rhododendron garden and a pictorial carpet bed at Prospect Point. The rose garden is part of a larger landscape of perennials, annuals and bulbs that slope down the causeway to the Stanley Park Pavilion. There are 3,500 plants on display and a great show of bulbs can be enjoyed late March through April before the rhododendrons come into full flower they in turn give way to June's roses. More information is at vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/stanley-park.aspx.



Above: Laburnum walk, VanDusen Botanical Garden. Photo: TripAdvisor.ca. Below: *Tulipa tarda* group. Photo by Jo Canning.

VanDusen Botanical Garden

If you can go to only one garden in the city, visit the 55 acres (22 hectares) of VanDusen Botanical Garden on Oak Street. This garden is administered jointly by the garden's society and the city, so it caters to a wide audience. It features formal collections ranging from Sino-Himalayan to Mediterranean, with ponds, a maze, sculptures, fountains, two cafes, and of course, a great lawn. At the entry there is a changing display of the interesting blossoms for that week, and if you ask one of the garden guides at the entry desk about the less showy or lesser-known bulbs, they can direct you to these hidden gems perhaps not so apparent when ambling through the brighter, showy beds. The following are on the garden's list of April's observed blooms: *Tulipa tardis*, *T. saxatilis*, *Leucojum*, *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Camassia cusikii* and *C. leichtlinii*. The hybrid tulips and hyacinths as well as the early alliums are featured in the display beds. You can visit the website at vandusenengarden.org/.

Queen Elizabeth Park

This 52-hectare (128-acre) municipal park (on Cambie Street) on the highest point of the city's west side, held Vancouver's first emergency reservoir. The spring bulb display in the re-purposed old granite quarry is pure eye-candy. The park's arboretum sports no less than 1,500 trees, and the tropical plants and aviary in the park's Bloedel Conservatory can provide a welcome respite if the day turns to rain. Starting from VanDusen Garden, Queen Elizabeth park is less than 20 minutes' walk on the flat through well-heeled neighbourhoods, or about 25 minutes by bus, so both are easily enjoyed on the same day. vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/queen-elizabeth-park.aspx

UBC Botanical Garden

Another garden worthy of a long visit is the botanical garden at the University of British Columbia. It perches on a bluff at the far west end of the city's peninsula, above the mouth of the

April Bulb Displays - Vancouver, Canada and Beyond *cont'd*



Beacon Hill Park: Camas Meadow. Photo: victoriaturism.com

Fraser River. You can view spring bulbs from all over the world in the alpine garden, but academic and botanical study dominate the purpose of its collections so fewer resources are spent on pure floral display aimed at the general public. However, the garden's 300+ metre (328+ yard) Greenheart Treewalk is worth a go if you've ever wanted to know what it is like to stroll 20 metres (22 yards) high through the tops of a temperate rainforest's giants. botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/

Both Vancouver's botanical gardens have entry fees, while the two municipal parks are free. All four destinations are easily accessible on the major public transit bus routes, and tickets are reasonably priced. If you are a senior, be sure to get the "concession" ticket costing only \$1.85 Canadian.

Vancouver Island

Getting to Victoria on Vancouver Island takes half a day sailing out of Tsawwassen terminal south of the city, and includes buses, ferry, and often, some patience. Bring a book as well as your camera. If you do not want to rent a car you'll need to reserve passage on public transit. The easiest way is to book the BC Ferries Connector Bus on their website. www.bcferriesvacations.com/connector. Taking the time to visit Beacon Hill Park and Butchart Gardens is worth the effort for any bulb-o-phile, so take the time, and you won't be sorry you did.

Beacon Hill Park

This municipal park is 25 hectares (62 acres), and is in the middle of the city, or rather at one edge along the ocean front. For the geophyte enthusiast it

offers a rare opportunity to leave the temperate rainforest climate and walk in one of the Island's pockets of the unique, Mediterranean ecosystem of the garry oaks (*Quercus garryana*). Here the early camas lilies (*Camassia quamash*) are usually in colour by late April. Other native blooms seen in Beacon Hill are western buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*), chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*) and prairie violet (*Viola praemorsa*). The first two are plentiful and easy to find, but it will be a challenge to find the retiring *F. lanceolata* which hide on the north side of the park. Even harder to find is *V. praemorsa*. This small but distinctive wild flower was discovered east of Beacon Hill in 2005. All of these can be found within walking



Butchart Gardens, the Sunken Garden in an old rock quarry. Photo from ButchartGardens.com

distance of downtown Victoria, equally famous for its many bulb displays and hanging baskets. The provincial capital competes with other Island towns for the most blooms within a given time frame. Yes, they actually count them for these friendly community competitions. Beacon Hill is a municipal park, so has no entrance fee. www.tourismvictoria.com/see-do/activities-attractions.

Butchart Gardens

National Geographic magazine lists this garden as one of the top display gardens in the world. It is owned by the Butchart family who began cultivating it before 1900, and has hosted visitors there since the 1920s. The garden features a spring display of close to 300,000 bulbs in a carefully orchestrated symphony of colour from mid-March to May. Tulips are the stars from mid-

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April Bulb Displays - Vancouver, Canada and Beyond *cont'd*

April through the first week of May, with over 160 varieties ranging from single flowered, lily, fringed and double-fringed types, in mass plantings, small groupings in perennial borders and in containers. The other eye-popping displays are of narcissus, and the garden features almost 90 unique cultivars in formal displays and naturalized woodland and meadow settings.

areas I love to visit. The first are two towns in the Fraser valley, the farm lands east of Vancouver. Both offer an April flower festival. These are accessible only by car, but if you rent one for the day you will be well rewarded. It is an easy drive east up this beautiful valley, and you'll have time for a good tour and good food, with a return to Vancouver by dusk.



Above: Abbotsford Tulip Festival. Photo from AbbotsfordTulipFestival.ca. Right: Skagit Tulip Festival, Mt. Vernon, WA tulip field. Photo by Jo Canning.



Entry fees to Butchart are reasonable, and some of the bus tours from downtown Victoria include the garden entry as part of their price. Scan several tour options at www.butchartgardens.com/.

The Flower Fields

As lovely as are the urban display gardens, my favourite excursions are outside the cities. There are two

First is the Abbotsford Bloom Tulip Festival. Check the website for rates and feature fields on your travel day at abbotsfordtulipfestival.ca. The trip is 55 km (34 miles) and takes about 55 minutes.

Only 15 minutes east of Abbotsford, Chilliwack has hosted Tulips of the Valley Festival for 12 years. It is the Lower Mainland's original tulip festival and Western Canada's largest, featuring almost 10 hectares (24 acres) of

fields filled with 30 different varieties of tulips and over seven million flowers. New for 2018 are two acres of hyacinths and three acres of peony-like double daffodils which allows the festival to open a couple of weeks earlier than in past years. Information can be found at <https://tulipsofthevalley.com>.

Washington State, USA

An hour and a half south of Vancouver is Mount Vernon, the picture perfect small town an hour north of Seattle which has hosted the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival for 35 years. The brochure says it all, so google it at <http://tulipfestival.org/pdfs/brochure-2018.pdf>. It is an easy drive by car (*remember your passport*), and La Connor, a charming village with boardwalk streets that is home to a wonderful quilt museum, is a delightful side trip. You can also take a day trip by tour bus from Vancouver. Enjoy Tour & Travel is a good place to start. www.enjoytourandtravel.com.

And there you have it: our unique climate, geophytes wild and domestic, urban and rural, two countries and a thousand images waiting to be captured.



About Snowdrops *cont'd*

three times ex Mr. Krippendorf's garden. I value them for memories of Sydney, and for the generosity of gardeners as we all wander down the garden path.

There was a time in the later part of the 20th century when I worked in a feed and grain store. We sold bird seed and grass seed, garden chemicals, tools and supplies, and flower bulbs from Van Eeden Bros. of the Netherlands. One year I ordered 100 *Galanthus nivalis* for myself. The next spring, most of what came up flowered double. About five were single flowered, with good green markings on the three outer petals. These, I determined after some research, were *G. nivalis* 'Virid-Apice'. They were charming, grew well, and have come with me through two moves. I was reminded just the other day that I had shared some of these bulbs with Wave Hill, a wonderful public garden in the Bronx, New York. That was in 1989. They still have it in their garden too.

I have another, different green tipped snowdrop. This one is a double, with paler green markings on the outer petals that look more like lines than like a blotch. Descriptions in Aaron P. Davis' *The Genus*

Galanthus seem to tally with 'Ophelia', one of the Greatorex doubles (a hybrid of *G. plicatis* and *G. nivalis* 'Flore Pleno' from hybridiser Heyrick G. Greatorex, Norfolk, UK). Having moved some

'Ophelia' bulbs from

Connecticut to New Jersey when we relocated a number of years ago they have now multiplied into a nice colony, actually an overgrown colony in need of division.

There are several schools of thought on digging and dividing snowdrops. One says to do it when you have a trowel or shovel in your hand and time to dig and replant. Another (I'm more or less in this one) suggests waiting until the flowers have faded but while the leaves are still green and vigorous. Both require prompt replanting so there's no chance of roots drying out. Further, I like to water them in with a dilute solution of liquid fertilizer

such as Jack's Classic with a 10-30-20 N-P-K analysis. Plants can absorb this through the leaves as well as uptake from the roots. A dilute solution means that if I have marked the calendar and remember to get out there I can repeat this in two weeks.

Brent Heath of <http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com> (an excellent source for both fall planted/



Above: *Galanthus regina-olgae*. Below: *Galanthus* 'Virid-Apice'. Both photos Copyright Judy Glattstein.

About Snowdrops *cont'd*

spring blooming and spring planted/summer blooming bulbs) is horrified by the idea of digging snowdrops before their leaves are yellowed and withering. Doing so “in the green” is, he claims, like yanking a dinner plate off the table. My problem is that in the spring rush the withering yellow leaves may transition to invisible dry little wisps. Out of sight, out of mind. Even if I remember, I cannot then find them.

Deer, rabbits, chipmunks, groundhogs – none are tempted to

eat snowdrops, shoots or roots. The bulbs happily make offsets and multiply. Then, of course, it is the rarest, most expensive ones that become absent, vanishing from where they once were thriving. Sometimes even dividing and replanting

is not sufficient to keep a snowdrop colony happily growing in my garden. I had a wonderful patch of *Galanthus reginae-olgae* with flowers which appeared in fall followed by foliage in spring. Periodically I would lift and divide in spring, adding good compost to refresh the site, and dilute fertilizer as described. John Grimshaw responded to an image I sent him by saying it was the nicest colony he'd seen outside of Greece. And then one October there were no flowers. Nor any leaves the following spring. Gone, all gone. Why? No idea, except it was a rare galanthus that flowered in October, sadly missed.

Galanthus, from the Greek *gala* (milk) and *anthos* (flower), is a beloved early spring bulb. The 1991 edition of the *International Checklist for Hyacinths and Miscellaneous Bulbs* has 11 pages of *Galanthus* species and



Galanthus in snow at Bellewood. Copyright Judy Glattstein.

cultivars. Galanthophiles, as snowdrop lovers are named, eagerly pursue each and every one. Some I can readily distinguish. Others offer more of a challenge. Welcome in the garden, snowdrops are also charming in dainty bouquets early in the year. Set the small vase on a mirror, to charmingly reflect the dangling flowers and allow a view of their interior. Just as do we, honeybees welcome these early flowers, one of the first sources for pollen and nectar. Enjoy. Copyright Judy Glattstein. (Judy's blog is at www.bellewood-gardens.com.)



New Bookmark Designs



Anne has generously agreed to allow a few of her art works to grace the next printing of bookmarks which PBS uses as informational handouts, provided her work is acknowledged on the bookmarks.

Her exquisite paintings are available as cards with envelopes at a very reasonable price by contacting her website for ordering information. The above painting of *Crocus korolkowii* is by Anne Wright of Dryad Nursery. It is a small mail-order-only nursery run by Anne, based in Tockwith, North Yorkshire, UK. She grows and breeds miniature narcissi, snowdrops, and woodland plants such as hepaticas and trilliums.

The nursery was set up originally simply as a way of disposing of excess bulbs from her hobby, and still has this function, but she also now propagates the plants especially for the list. Everything is on a small scale though – it has to fit into her back-garden. (Quoted from Anne's

Growing Cyclamen in Denver by Robert Nold

Bob Nold gardens in the Denver, Colorado area under extreme conditions at 5,000 feet on the east side of the Rocky Mountains (Front Range to native Coloradans), with clay soil and erratic snow and rainfall. "Born on the banks of the Cape Fear River. Moved to southern California where he ate a Destroying Angel mushroom at the age of two; his first introduction to horticulture. Learned gardening from his grandfather in Los Angeles. Dragged kicking and screaming to Denver in 1961. Still screaming, sometimes.

Author of three books, *Penstemons, Columbines, and High and Dry*, which were illustrated by his late wife. Maintains a weed-choked garden in the extreme western suburbs of Denver, where, due to the increasing awfulness of the weather, he has completely abandoned summer gardening, and concentrates on autumn, winter, and what passes for spring, mostly growing bulbs."

It all started with a box of plants sent to me in the mail from a gardener in New York who thought I might like to try some *Cyclamen*, along with some eastern North American woodland plants. Of course the woodland plants died within a week or two of my planting them, but the cyclamen, which were *Cyclamen coum*, did not.

At first I thought the *Cyclamen* had died, because the leaves shriveled away to nothing every winter (a bad sign for winter-flowering plants), but new leaves were produced in late winter, and eventually the cyc-



lamen began to seed around the garden. Now, after twenty-five years, there are some sixty large clumps, which can begin to flower right after the beginning of the new year, though mid-March is typical.

This success, with minimal work on my part, was encouraging enough for me to try more species: *Cyclamen hederifolium* in a different part of the garden; *Cc. cilicium*, *mirabile*, *intaminatum*, *purpurascens*, and *pseudibericum* in the same garden as *C. coum*. All have been perfectly hardy here, but only *C. cilici-*

um and *hederifolium* have self-sown to any degree.

I can already sense that some of you are reading this with a considerable amount of doubt, thinking about what the literature says about the hardiness of various species of cyclamen, or the conditions of their native habitats. None of that has anything to do with the cyclamen growing here. There may be a hardiness dividing line created by the ability to produce cryoprotective sugars, but that's the only factor that seems relevant to me.

Discovering which species produce the sugars, or



Left: *Cyclamen mirabile*. Above: *Cyclamen intaminatum*. Below: *Cyclamen purpurascens*, silver form. All photos by Robert Nold.



"antifreeze", and which do not, can be moderately interesting if you don't mind losing a few tubers now and then. Obviously all of the species I mentioned above are capable of producing sugars and therefore withstanding the occa-

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Book Announcement

The Tian Shan and its Flowers, a new book by Vojtěch Holubec and David Horák .

Vojtech Holubec, the principal author of *The Tian Shan and its Flowers*, is a research scientist with the Gene Bank of the Crop Research Institute in Prague. But more importantly from our perspective, he is one of several Czech collectors/suppliers of alpine seeds. Vojtech has traveled to collect seeds and while there to photograph plants and mountain massifs at locations around the world; in the Euro-Asian mountains from the Pyrenees and Sierra Nevada in Spain, through the Alps and Balkans to Turkey, from the Caucasus and mountains of Central Asia to Tibet and China, all the way to Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island. He shared his love and knowledge of the Caucasus Mountains in *The Caucasus and its Flowers* (2006) a beautiful book so often admired by my friends. Soon *The Caucasus and Its Flowers* will be joined by its younger brother *The Tian Shan and its Flowers*. The book will be just as beautiful and impressive as the first one, perhaps even more so. It will describe Tian Shan (The Heavenly Mountain) geology and climate, orography and vegetation focused on the description of some 500 species. The environment where plants grow in Tian Shan ranges from steppe and semi-desert to alpine between glaciers and treeline subalpine. Many plants from such terrains are candidates for rock gardens in North America. The 400-page book is richly illustrated with 1000 colour photographs. For each plant there is the usual diagnostic description as well as a description of the habitat, distribution and, for the benefit of rock gardeners, the authors also include cultivation notes.

The Tian Shan and its Flowers, with such a load of illustrations, is a window to lands very few of us will ever see. I was lucky to be there in August and September last year collecting seeds and photographing. But having seen the rugged mountains and gravel plains, screes and alpine grasslands and glaciers and avalanche chutes of the Tian Shan and other ranges in Kyrgyzstan, I am so much looking forward to Vojtech and David's book as they were there when flowers were in bloom. The book will be a pleasure to anyone who hopes to have some of the plants growing in his or her rock garden but also to our friends who love mountains for their own sake.

It is probably worth pointing out to all who might be interested in owning this book that the authors are self-publishing this book to reduce the cost. The pre-publication price is 50 EUROS + 18 EUROS mail to the USA. The latest date of printing is late March 2018 (*Ed. Now delayed to late April, early May*). *Contributed by*

Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2017

| | YEAR END 2017 |
|--|-----------------------|
| Balance Jan. 1 2017 | \$ 41,398.50 |
| U.S. Members | \$ 4,900.00 |
| Overseas Members | \$ 3,675.00 |
| BX Receipts | \$ 8,310.79 |
| Investment results | \$ 5,642.51 |
| Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa | \$ 2,820.00 |
| INCOME | \$ 25,348.30 |
| BX/SX Postage | \$ (3,673.97) |
| BX/SX Supplies | \$ (734.56) |
| BX/SX helpers Expenses | \$ (90.30) |
| Board Conference call | \$ (558.96) |
| Domain registration | \$ (53.10) |
| Treasurer's Supplies | \$ (1,098.97) |
| Treasur's expense | \$ (319.20) |
| Publications | \$ (5,655.00) |
| Publication postage | \$ (3,265.82) |
| PayPal expense | \$ (748.18) |
| MSI Grant | \$ (1,500.00) |
| Bulb Garden editing | \$ (2,200.00) |
| Accountant Expense | \$ (1,500.00) |
| Amaryllidaceae of South Africa | \$ (2,820.00) |
| EXPENSES | \$ (24,218.06) |
| Balance Dec. 31, 2017 | \$ 42,528.74 |

Yaro Horachek <yaro.horachek@telus.net>.

Contact Yaro for ordering information.

For example, lovely *Callianthemum alatavicum* (see below):

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Habitat: | alpine zone, cold fine screes with loamy gravel, moraines at 3000-3500 m; |
| Distribution: | Tian Shan, Dzhungar, Pamiro-Alai, |
| Cultivation: | in screes, in cold drained conditions. |



Growing Cyclamen in Denver, Colorado *cont'd*

sional winter lows of about -15° F (-26° C) - or worse - which afflict this garden, always with snow cover and never for more than a night.

All of the cyclamen growing here are growing in clay. No organic matter has ever been dug in, but the soil texture has changed enough over the years that I can dig in it, even in the summer.



Clay soil in Bob's garden.

I water the gardens with cyclamen in them about once a week for fifteen minutes, from about July until October, unless rain falls (which it does, sometimes). I'm not sure that this watering does much good, but the cyclamen still live.

In a semi-arid climate like this one (The garden here receives about twelve inches of precipitation a year, mostly from January to July.), clay is drier than sand or gravel, except in spring when the amount of melting snow is sufficient to wet the clay deeply enough to be of benefit to roots. At other times of the year the clay is essentially impenetrable unless it's irrigated. Since it never rains in the winter here, the cyclamen growing in the clay are completely dry, unless warm daytime temperatures (common here in December and January) cause snow to melt into the ground so that the soil freezes.

Preventing the soil from freezing, with a mulch of pine needles for instance, seems to be the best way

to keep the leaves green all winter; not that I always do this, of course. Plants of *Cyclamen coum* growing in full sun (with no snow on them) can be in flower here the first week of January.

I tend to plant the tubers too shallowly, sometimes just below the surface of the soil; the self-sown tubers are often an inch (2.5 cm) or more deep. This shallow planting causes problems with frost-heaving, but I think that the shallow planting allows the tubers to root more quickly after being watered, which is why I don't plant the tubers as deep as the self-sown ones. Tubers planted after early September almost never root here before cold weather comes; overwintering the plants in pots and then planting out in spring or summer is more practical here.

The reason late-planted tubers rarely root here is because, in this century anyway, I reasonably expect the amount of precipitation after mid-July until the end of the year to be about zero. Certainly not enough to wake up autumn-flowering bulbs, let alone root cyclamen tubers. So out comes the sprinkler. I usually forget to water newly-planted cyclamen (and any other newly-planted bulbs).

Tubers grown from seed can be planted in the garden here, with varying success; sometimes pinning the tubers to the ground with a cyclamen-tuber-pin made from a paper clip is effective in keeping tubers the size of green peas from being thrown out of the soil in their first winter. It's a good idea to remove the pin after the first year.



Cyclamen coum. Both photos above by Robert Nold.

In fact the form of *Cyclamen purpurascens* sometimes called *C. fatrense* was the first cyclamen I grew from seed, about twenty-five years ago. Its flowering, at the end of July, marks the beginning of the cyclamen year for me. *Cyclamen purpurascens* certainly needs more summer water than the other species, and aside from *C. fatrense* which is growing in deep shade, only one, the 'Extra Fancy' form from Seneca Hill Nursery, has survived here.

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Growing Cyclamen in Denver, Colorado *cont'd*

Not counting tubers which failed to root, species which have died here are *Cyclamen libanoticum* (a tiny pathetic tuber grown from seed), and *C. graecum* (overwintered one year but gave up from exhaustion the



Cyclamen coum f. albissimum 'Lake Effect'. Photo by Robert Nold.

next year).

There are no pests attacking cyclamen here unless you count a two-month-old purebred border collie, who discovered that digging up large tubers of *Cyclamen confusum* and running around the garden with them was one of the delights of his new life here. Half-chewed tubers never survive being replanted. ♣

Editor's Notes

Minutes for the last board meeting were not available as we went to press but will be available in the next edition of the journal.

Word has been received from South Africa of the abduction and probable slaying of Rachel and Rod Saunders of Silverhill Seeds, whom many of you either know personally, have ordered seeds from their nursery or have heard them speak. They were in the field and had been filming a program for the BBC (England). They were understood to be in final preparation for publication of a book on species *Gladiolus*. Further information is available from the PBS list and more will be forthcoming in the next journal edition. If you would like to contribute memories, stories and/or information on the history of Silverhill Seeds, please contact me privately at robin@hansennursery.com.

New Bookmark Designs *cont'd*

web page <http://www.dryad-home.co.uk/pages/cardsnew.html>.)

(Below is *Crocus sieberi* 'Tricolor' by Anne Wright.) ♣



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**Thanks again for your continued support of
the Pacific Bulb Society!**

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Gardening with Bulbs



Tulip display in spring, Butchart Gardens.

Inside This Edition:

April Bulb Displays - Vancouver, Canada
and Beyond by *Jo Canning*

About Snowdrops by *Judy Glattstein*

Growing Cyclamen in Denver, CO by

Robert Nold

The Tian Shan and Its Plants

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The Bulb Garden is the newsletter of the Pacific Bulb Society (PBS). It is published, if enough articles are submitted, around the third week of each quarter and is available to PBS members. This newsletter provides gardening or bulb related articles, news of interest to members, and announcements of the PBS organization.

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