



With the weather fluctuating between cold, unseasonably mild and then back to cold again, it is not surprising some plants are not sure what they are doing. While always earlier than the other members of the genus, *Fritillaria striata*'s appearance above the gravel is earlier than ever this year:



Some plants can produce the odd flower at almost any time, such as these Erigerons:



*Erigeron chrysopsidis* var. *brevifolius*



*Erigeron aureus* 'Canary Bird'

*Campanula garganica* 'W. H. Paine' has been outstanding in being in continuous bloom for several months and is still going strong right now:



The first of the Narcissus are also in bloom. This is *N. cantabricus* ssp. *cantabricus* var *foliosus*:



Our South African bulb collection continues to give us lots of interest in the Display House. Not looking at all like a typical *Lachenalia*, *L. pusilla* is a diminutive plant with a central ball of white flowers that have a strong scent of coconuts. There seems to be two forms around in general cultivation, one with wide and spotted leaves, the other with narrower, plain leaves. The former clearly has more merit than the latter. Here are both to compare:



The Polyxenas continue to attract attention. My own favourite is *P. pygmaea* which in it's best forms has the flowers as compact balls nestled between the two leaves:



*Polyxena paucifolia* has also looked good this year with the more mature bulbs making a much better display than the rather feeble attempts offered up when they were younger.



I am not sure why the above species in particular is named *paucifolia* ("few leaves") – there are only 6 or 7 species of *Polyxena* and almost all have just 2 or 3 leaves. But all the species make excellent subjects for containers, being easy to grow and also quick and easy to raise from seed.

A couple of logs ago I showed some *Petrocosmea*. Since then another has started flowering that has proven most floriferous – *P. minor*:



The landscaped house next door still shows some colour. Even common things like *Erodiums* can make quite a show at this time of year, such as this *E. corsicum* 'Rubrum':



Finally this week, more of the *Saxifraga fortunei* varieties are in flower. There are two with reddish flower colours but very different leaves. 'Cherry Pie' has green leaves while in 'Black Ruby' the very dark purple-black leaves make a wonderful contrast to the red flowers:

