



**Erythronium plunge beds**

All the rhododendrons from last week are now either cut up and composting or have been moved to a new site and I am now back into repotting the Erythroniums in the mesh planting baskets that I keep in the sand plunges.



**Mesh basket**

These mesh pond baskets are an ideal way to grow bigger quantities of some bulbs especially the ones that like to be kept cool and moist all the time.

It has been at least two years since some of these baskets were last planted during which time tree and shrub roots have penetrated the mesh to get at the leaf mould and bone meal that I add to the compost.



## **Erythronium toulumnense bulbs**

You can see how well some of the species will multiply and E. toulumnense is among the best when it comes to vegetative increase.



## **Erythronium toulumnense bulbs replanted and extra**

In an ideal world I would like to replace all the compost every time I replot these baskets. However I have so many baskets that I would need tonnes of compost so I have to compromise and just refresh it. I discard roughly one third of the compost and replace that volume with approximately equal proportions of leaf mould and 6mm grit which I mix in well, along with a scattering of bone meal with the remainder of the old compost. This makes a nice rich medium to replant the Erythronium bulbs back into and from the results that I have had over the years most of the Erythroniums are also happy with that mix.

There are not many Erythronium species that increase so freely as E. tuolumnense does and that is perhaps why so many of the ones we see offered in general garden centres are the hybrids that involve this species. Unfortunately they are not the best representatives to introduce people to this fantastic species as many have too much leaf and not enough flower for my liking – but they do grow well. I have been selecting the better, more decorative, forms of this species for a long number of years now and have some very good selections which hold bold spikes of flowers well clear of their not-too-big leaves. The surplus bulbs will not be wasted as I will plant some of them into the area we cleared of shrubs last week.



**Erythronium oregonum bulbs**

These are the bulbs of *Erythronium oregonum* that I sowed as seed way back in 1998 and this is one of the species that can be very slow to increase vegetatively, meaning that seed is the only real option. However you will see some small bulbs above that have formed as offsets. These have developed just at the top of the bulb by the remains of this season's stem.



**Erythronium oregonum bulbs**

One of the many interesting things that you can learn by not repotting the bulbs every year is how some of them do increase better than others. Over the last three years this *E. oregonum* bulb has formed quite a cluster and you get a better idea of the increase from the picture on the right where I have separated them out a bit. If this is *E. oregonum* this is a good form to collect seed from on an attempt to raise individuals that will increase freely. However when I check the record that I keep on the label this was not raised from my own seed and I have somehow managed to miss out verifying this pot is correctly named when it is in flower – this I must do so next spring.



**Cleared bed**

I am tipping all the surplus compost into the holes left after we removed the shrubs from this bed - that was the subject of last weeks bulb log - and all the surplus erythronium bulbs that I have after the repotting will be planted out here.



**Trillium grandiflorum  
pink flush seeds**

Just like I described last week one task inevitably leads to another and as I was walking up and down to tip the compost into the bed I noticed that the seeds of the pink flushed Trillium grandiflorum were shedding so I had to stop and collect them.

Then the rain came on and when I say rain it was more of a deluge as a flood crashed from the skies accompanied by the body piercing sound of thunder rumbling from the black clouds. It is a long time since we have had rain that heavy.



**Bulb house**

The rain storm forced me to change my task and I retreated to the shelter of bulb house where I made a start on the next great task of repotting all the pots in three glasshouses before the beginning of September and the first (man made) storm.



### **Crocus kotschyanus corms**

I just love to see the bulging sides of a plastic pot distorted by the growth of the bulbs.

Crocus kotschyanus is one of the species that will increase vegetatively producing both extra corms and rice grain bulbils when growing well.

## ***Crocus kotschyanus* corms replanted**

I have shown before that I like to cram as many bulbs into a pot as I can get and they seem to grow best when grown crowded like this. The one down side with this method is that when the flowers appear they can sometimes be over crowded making it difficult to see the beauty of each individual flower. The mass spectacle however is fantastic and I have planted a few corms spaced out into a small pot.



## ***Crocus pulchellus* seeds**

I am still finding some uncollected *Crocus* seeds many of which do not appear above the gravel until the pods are ripe and ready to split open.



**Crocus carpetanus seeds**

I was very pleased to get some seeds on my Crocus carpetanus something that does not happen every year for me.



**Crocus caspius**

Crocus caspius on the other hand sets seed most years but I only find it when I go to replot them because the seed pods never come above the gravel – they even open under ground. I am not sure if this just happens in cultivation but if they also behave like this in the wild it is fascinating to speculate how the seed dispersal would work and what other factor / creatures might be involved.



## **Erythronium americanum**

The rain is off again and I can continue with the repotting: these bulbs of *E. americanum* are a very different shape to the Western North American species: they are much more of a classic bulb shape. These are from my selection which I call *Erythronium* 'Craigton Flower'; it increases slowly by division and does not revert to making masses of juvenile bulbils that

never flower like some forms of this species do.



## **Erythronium montanum bulbs**

These are some of the first bulbs of *Erythronium montanum* that I grew - the original seed was sown in 1986 and they have increased slowly by division as you can see - I also get seed of them most years.

As I have described previously removing the chains from the dominant bulb will stimulate lots of bulbils to form and speed up the increase.





**Seed on *Rhodohypoxis deflexa***

As I trot back and forward between the annoying rain showers between repotting the erythroniums and the bulb house I notice some more seeds that need collecting from the seedheads on *Rhodohypoxis deflexa*. Notice how quickly these seeds ripen and are shed as the flower falls away revealing already ripe seeds.



**Seed on *Rhodohypoxis deflexa***

I just got this plant on a recent visit to Gothenburg Botanic Gardens and I am delighted to get seeds on both this white form and the more typical pink form.