



SRGC

----- Bulb Log Diary -----

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With over 200 pictures in this week's bulb log folder it is difficult to choose what to show never mind what to say.



Corydalis malkensis seed

One timely reminder is to watch for Corydalis seed ripening if you want to collect it. It can be very deceiving as the capsule still looks green but the seeds are ripe and ready to drop. Another tip I can give you as we start the seed collecting season is do not put your bulbous seeds into the fridge – the seed continues to ripen after it is shed by the plant and putting it in cold conditions will arrest this development and could make the seed unviable. Corydalis seed is best sown immediately but if you do need to store it I would advise storing it in sand.



Corydalis ornata

I do not have very much Corydalis ornata and am keen to build up our stocks so I have been carefully hand pollinating the flowers. On the left you can see some promising seedpods that indicate my pollination of this earlier flowering plant was successful.



Trillium rivale and Narcissus cyclamineus



Erythronium dens-canis with Trillium rivale



The clump of *Erythronium dens-canis* above has increased vegetatively so all the plants are a single clone – on the left a group of seedlings from the same plant shows the variation in colours you will get if you raise your plants from seed.

Erythronium dens-canis

It also shows the problems we have with slugs and snails eating the flowers. Recently I noticed whole *Erythronium* flowers disappearing – removed from the top of the stem. This was most frustrating as two of my three flowering plants of *Erythronium caucasicum* I had hoped would set seed were lost. I was at a loss to

know what was doing this until Maggi said “look, there is a chicken in the garden” - as we got a better view we realised it was not a chicken but a black pheasant! I was not quick enough to get a photograph before it flew from the garden making a dreadful noise of alarm – if it comes back to eat my bulbs it will be alarmed.



***Erythronium* plunge bed**

In the foreground of this picture of one of the *Erythronium* plunge beds is a basket of *Erythronium dens-canis* seedlings showing the variation in flower colour and leaf pattern..



Spring bed

At the time other types of gardeners are still checking the temperature of their soil to see when they can start to sow and plant, our garden is in its third phase of flowering when Primula and Anemone also start to bloom. This is what I call the spring flush with the previous flowering phases being late winter ones.

The flowers, right, are of Western North American species of Erythronium, pink *E. revolutum* and white *E. oregonum* - you can also see their leaves in the foreground. The more random blotched leaves behind are those of *Erythronium dens-canis* which are always easily told apart both by the shape and the random nature of the dark blotches. While the Western North American species also have dark patterns they tend not to cross the veins of the plant.





Erythronium californicum

Some Erythronium are clump forming – we have forms of Erythronium californicum that take many years to form a single offset bulb while other forms clumps in just a few years. Erythronium ‘White Beauty’ is one of the best clump forming ones and is a must-have plant for every garden.



There are a number of basically white flowered yellow-centred species such as **Erythronium citrinum** and **Erythronium helenae** shown above growing in the rock garden.



Sometimes I find an *Erythronium* whose precise identity confuses me - like the one above. My first thoughts are that it is ***Erythronium helenae***; almost all the characteristics fit that species except the much divided style is not typical of the other forms I grow. One thing I cannot share with you here is that it has a lovely scent.



Inevitably growing so many *Erythronium*s in a relatively small garden we get hybrids appearing.

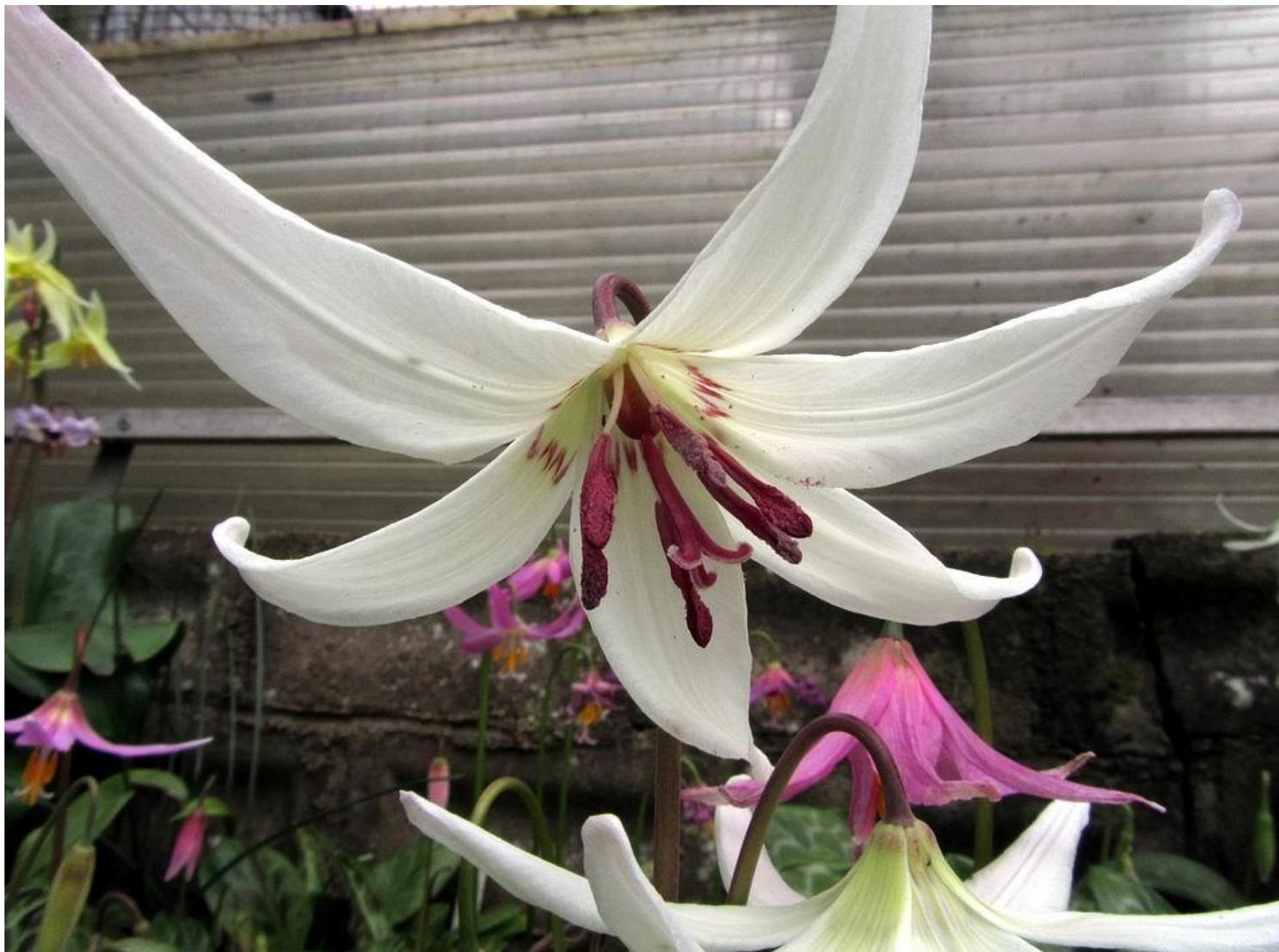


Erythronium 'Susannah'

Raised by the late John Walker, Erythronium 'Susannah' is a superb garden hybrid involving Erythronium tuolumnense- it is in my opinion a far better plant than the older established hybrids such as 'Pagoda' and 'Kondo'. It has larger flowers that sit well clear of the leaves as does the sister seedling Erythronium 'Eirene', shown below, which is of a similar look but with paler coloured flowers.



Erythronium 'Eirene'



Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss'

Another recent cultivar I have been given is Erythronium 'Ardovie Bliss' presumably it is a hybrid involving Erythronium hendersonii – it has large beautifully coloured flowers and I hope to be able to build up the numbers from this single bulb I was given.



Hybrid

I have a number of hybrids between E. hendersonii and E. californicum that have inherited the lovely dark blackcurrent colouring seen in E. hendersonii. This one has smaller flowers than 'Ardovie Bliss' which reflex right back and the pollen is white.



Above and below are two more hybrids that have occurred in our own seedlings.





Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'

I named and released this clump forming pink *Erythronium revolutum* hybrid a number of years ago. Certainly for us it has proved to be a good garden plant increasing well, the clump above has increased from a single bulb in about three years.



Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'

I am trialling a number of other similar hybrids that have darker pink flowers and darker brown patterns on the leaves – they are all good looking plants but the critical property to make them a good garden plant is they must increase well so they can be spread around. I will show them when their flowers open.



Erythronium oregonum

Sorting out which are hybrids and which are just variations within a species is not easy – botany is not that easy in the field but it becomes a whole lot more problematic in the garden where we grow almost all the described species of Erythronium, plus we have a few undescribed species so hybrids can occur. Both the flowers above are true Erythronium oregonum and show some of the colour variation you get in the flowers.



Erythronium revolutum naturalising under some of our bigger Rhododendrons



Erythronium revolutum self-seeded into the gravel pathway.



Although all basically pink the flower colour of **Erythronium revolutum** can vary in hue and tone, the stems can be green or purple, the markings on the leaves can be pale or dramatically dark as these two self-sown clumps illustrate.



I will leave you this week with a picture of **Narcissus watieri** and some Corydalis growing in a sand bed with Erythroniums growing in the humus bed behind - so much to see in the garden just now.....