



BULB LOG 49.....9<sup>th</sup> December 2015



## Cover picture, *Fritillaria caucasica*.

After posting last week's Bulb Log I made a video diary showing the Bulb houses and the Narcissus pictured on the cover, if you have not found it already here is the link [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#).

Plants have survived successfully over such a long time because they have evolved – constantly adapting to changing conditions - we should learn from that.

When I first became interested in plants the only place I could see pictures or read about them was by borrowing books from the City Library -some of the books were in the reference section and could not be borrowed so I had to stay and look at them there. Eventually I found out about and joined the [Scottish Rock Garden Club](#) (SRGC) then a whole new world opened up for me.

I enjoyed the Journal, twice a year, crammed full of pictures and advice, went to the well-attended Local Meetings where I met lots of people and watched slide shows of trips and gardens full of plants - it was wonderful.

Now, like all groups across the world, numbers attending the Aberdeen group's meetings is dropping - mostly because the Members are getting older and not so inclined to drive at night especially in the winter conditions and few 'younger' people come along: we have to ask ourselves why.

The first point is that this fall in membership is not confined to Aberdeen, nor to the SRGC, nor even to plant groups but all types of clubs and societies all over the world – something is happening! Yes indeed something is happening because of the internet the world is changing and faster than ever before so, just like the plants, we need to evolve and adapt if our clubs and societies are to survive in this new environment.

The SRGC Journal used to be the place where I could read rock garden information it was also the only place that I could submit work to be printed allowing me to share my experiences among the Membership.

Now we can all share our information and pictures instantly in the SRGC Forum, on Facebook, in Twitter and even post videos on YouTube. As well as being a great place to contact and share on line the SRGC forum is a wonderful searchable resource of information that is easy to find. I cannot tell you how often I see something interesting on Facebook and then it disappears and I cannot find it again - Facebook is fun but I like to post to Facebook and the forum not one or the other.

## *Crocus laevigatus*

I started writing the Bulb Log at the beginning of January 2003 posting a new one every single week - it is read by tens of thousands of plant lovers.

Eight months ago I started [the Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#) on YouTube and have reached 7700 views.

The [International Rock Gardener](#) has been published every month since January 2010 and is about to reach number 72 - it too is read many thousands of times – however it can only appear if people are prepared to contribute sharing their pictures and text so I ask you to

please consider submitting some from your garden or plant related experiences. You do not need to be an expert the experiences of a beginner starting out on the wonderful Rock Garden journey can be more helpful to others in a similar position and will be enjoyed by the thousands of readers.

[The Editor](#) is waiting to hear from **you** with material or ideas.



Also remember The Rock Garden, the printed Journal of the SRGC – our Members enjoy this format, as indeed I do, and [the Journal Editor](#) there would also welcome any contributions.

With all the wealth of information and pictures available online and accessible without leaving home where is the need for members to travel any distance to sit in a darkened room watching a talk for an hour?

The one thing we cannot do online is gather together, face to face, in one place and that is why we need to evolve a way to keep meetings at local, national and international levels. I love the internet, it is a great bonus and a wonderful platform but it is no substitute to meeting people in person and sharing their company. I for one enjoy listening to, as well as giving, talks for that is where the personality of the speaker can be experienced.



### **Narcissus romieuxii**

Crowdfunding via the internet is now being adopted as way to raise money for plant related projects – I think it is a brilliant innovation allowing Maggi and I to contribute directly to projects being undertaken by two of our younger plants-people.

Matt Topsfield, familiar to forum regulars, plans a trip to Spain, following in the footsteps of John Blanchard, to see Narcissus - you can read more about how you can contribute from his post in the [forum](#) or go direct to his [Crowdfunder page](#).

The other is Robbie Blackhall-Miles who plans to open a plant conservation nursery and you can contribute and read more about his project [here](#). I encourage you all to read about these projects and consider making a contribution.

While membership numbers among the Groups and The SRGC has fallen from historical highs, the outreach and number of people reading and following the Club's online presence has grown massively - it may be that what we have known historically as 'membership' also has to evolve into followers, supporters, contributors, etc. There are many members who are not online and for whom the conventional methods of taking part will be preserved. Online, the SRGC forum has approaching three thousand registered members and many more readers, the IRG, the Bulb Log and other of our website resources are enjoyed by many thousands more. The £10 per annum SRGC online "e-subscription" rate gives access to all benefits of membership in electronic form.

The SRGC is in very good health and has stayed ahead of many others by developing our online presence and I hope the Club like the new Fritillaria shoot growing up from the old bulb on the cover picture, can use all the knowledge, experience and the best from our past as we slowly evolve with the changing world we live in.

The Chapter on Erythronium oregonum from Erythroniums in Cultivation follows.....

*Erythronium oregonum*



**Erythronium oregonum**

As the name suggests this plants grows in Oregon and other states of Western North America. While it is relatively easy to grow in our garden I find it slow to increase. None of the original plants raised from seed collected in the wild are inclined to form clumps – where offsets do form it takes many years before one bulb becomes two flowering sized bulbs - I have found the bulbs that do clump up quickly mostly turn out to have hybridised. Collecting our garden seed is the way we increase this plant but I find seed of this species is not so freely produced here as it is on the closely related *Erythronium revolutum*.

**Flower****Erythronium oregonum**

The filaments broaden out toward the base of the flower and are similar in shape to those of *Erythronium revolutum* however the flower colour is always white to cream, making it easy to distinguish these two species. It is much more likely that it will be confused with the other white species such as *Erythronium californicum*, (which has narrow thread-like filaments) so referring to the broad shape of the filaments of *Erythronium oregonum* helps aid identification. The shape of the swollen appendages towards the base of the petals can be used to further confirm the identity of this species.



### **Erythronium oregonum**

Dissecting the flower shows clearly the shape of the filaments: these are widest in width towards the centre tapering at both ends - also of note is how the style divides into three at the tip.

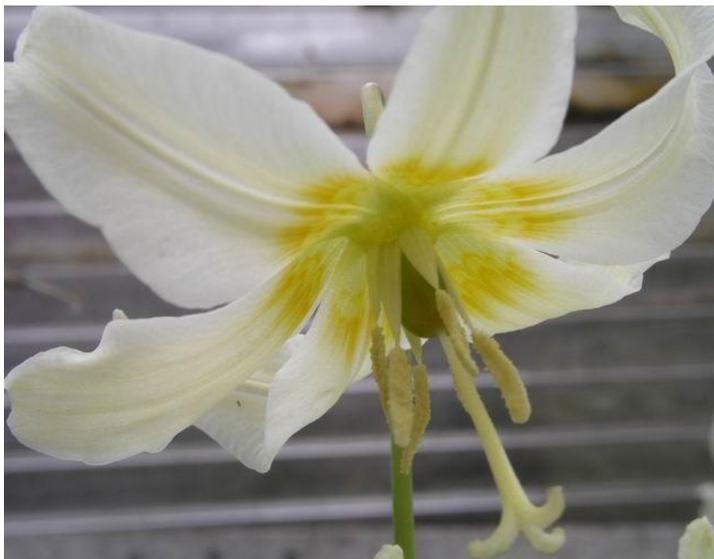


If you look back at the first picture of the complete flower the filaments appear to be broad at the bottom - the narrow section of the filaments where it attaches to the flower is only revealed when you pull a flower apart revealing this taper.



**Erythronium oregonum**

Here are some variations of the flower colour which ranges from pure white to creamy shades of white, the markings in the centre also vary: those with the dark zig-zag markings are my favourite.



**Erythronium oregonum**

The pollen is mostly deep golden yellow although there are forms, usually those with creamy-coloured flowers, which have pale pollen.

Mature plants can have two or three flowers per stem and the following sequence of pictures illustrates some of the range and variations of the flower colours within the *Erythronium oregonum* that are growing in our garden.



**Erythronium oregonum**



**Erythronium oregonum**

The flowers with the dark zig-zag markings mostly also have dark markings on the outside of the petals while and the pale centred ones sometimes display a green reverse.

**Erythronium oregonum**

Green reverse on the petals.



Creamy or yellowish petals on this form of *Erythronium oregonum* are often an indicator that it will also have pale coloured pollen, see below.



**Erythronium oregonum with pale pollen**

**Erythronium oregonum**

Every year the flower on this one plant faces upwards, reminding us of their tulip relatives.



Seed



Seed pods and ripe seed.



I try and collect and sow some seed every year as this is the best way of buiding up numbers.

## Bulb

**Erythronium oregonum bulbs**

This selection of bulbs was raised from seed and you will see some small offsets that have mostly formed towards the top of the bulb: these will take a number of years to reach flowering size especially if they are left bedside the parent in the garden.

This seed, collected in our garden, was open pollinated so I will have to check each plant for evidence of hybridisation.



### Leaves

Some forms have beautifully marked leaves especially as they first emerge. As with all the Erythronium the contrast of the pattern reduces as the dark colour fades somewhat as the leaf ages.



Some of the most decorative leaves combine green, brown and silver.

Most Erythroniums have a character to the leaves and with experience and familiarity it is almost possible to recognise the species from the pattern and colouration of their leaves but I will emphasise the 'almost'.





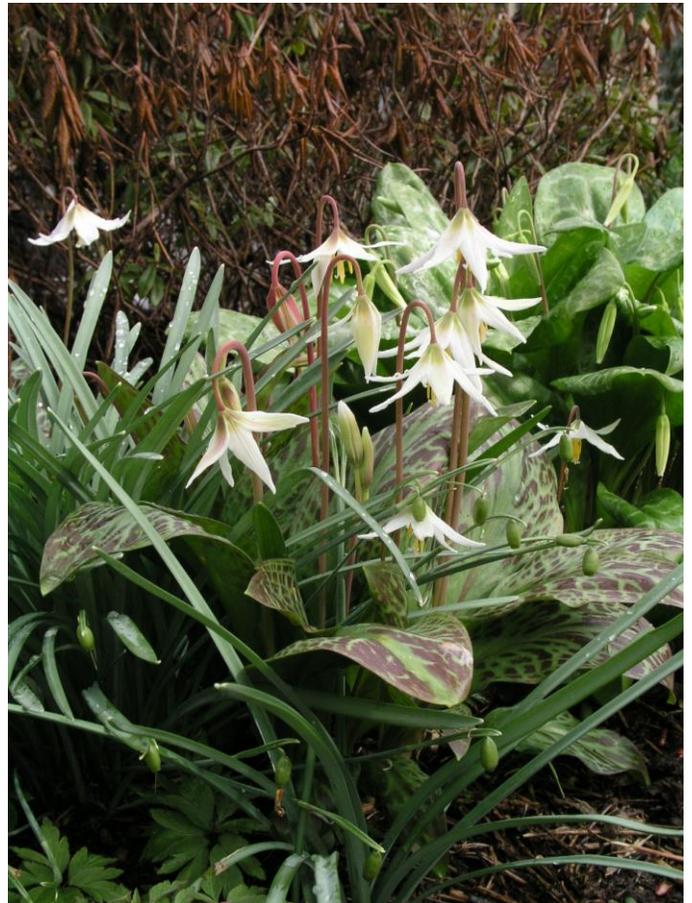
I plant out *Erythronium oregonum* in groups of seedlings as clutches of different clones can cross pollinate giving a better chance of seed set.

The bulbs are planted out in July and August when they are dormant and when I am repotting the seed pots and plunge baskets. Some groups of original bulbs from a known wild source, as shown on the left, I grow in mesh baskets plunged in sharp sand.

Erythronium oregonum grows in many aspects in our garden both in the open and under some light shade where its flowers can catch the light.



**Erythronium oregonum**





**Erythronium oregonum**