



If you do not live somewhere like the British Isles you must wonder why we keep going on about the weather – you would only need to come here for a day or less to understand. Over the last few weeks our weather has been very changeable - in one hour we can go from having clear blue skies to wind, rain, sleet, snow, hail and back to sunshine. I had to make a compromise in the exposure when taking the opening picture so the lowest bright part of



the sky you see has been burned out- it was a lovely blue, while the big black cloud was much more dramatic in reality than the camera is able to record. These are the swings in weather that we and our plants have to live with. It is easy for us to get frustrated by our weather and in particular by these changes but we also need to remember it is precisely because of our moderate, relatively cool, moist, climate that we are able to grow many of the plants that fill our garden. While the sudden drop in temperature,

pounding by hail or battering by wind may harm the flowers of the Erythronium, Trillium and the likes, it does not generally damage the long-term health of the plant. We may not always get as much seed as we would like, because of the cold and/or the wet conditions when the pollen is ripe, but the plants can grow on for a relatively long period. In comparison other places where the temperatures will rise and the ground dry out much more quickly than ours, plants will retreat to their underground state much sooner than ours giving them a shorter growing period.



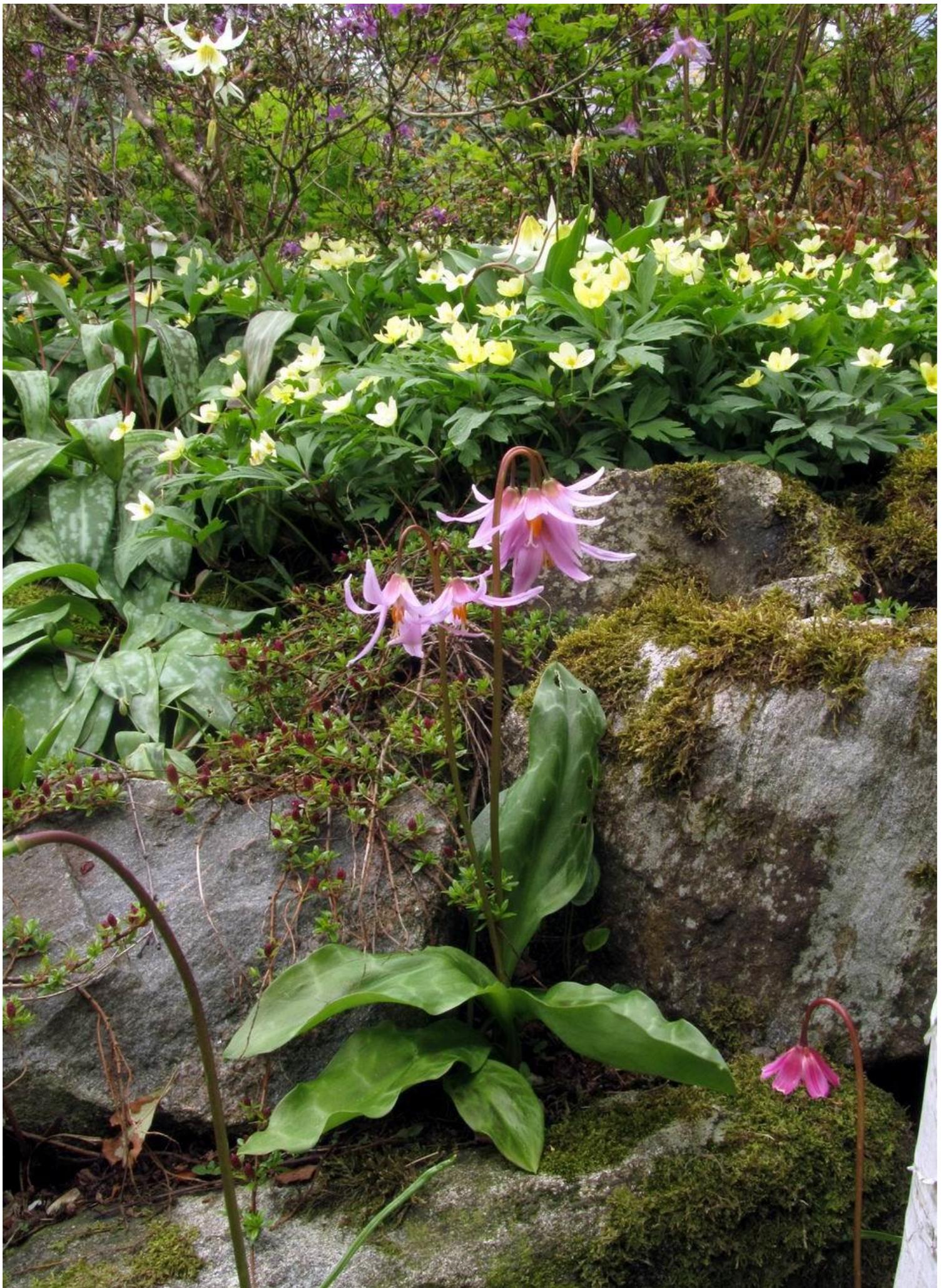
Having said that we do get a reasonable amount of seed from Erythronium most years as these seedlings that have sown themselves into the gravel area of the path illustrate. This is an interesting and very distinct form of **Erythronium revolutum** - originally I raised it from seed collected near Lake Cowichan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. It is always smaller than other forms of this species we grow and generally has single darker flowers that reflex more abruptly than other forms.



Erythronium self-seeding in the gravel area of the path.



These are a mixture of **Erythronium revoltum** and its hybrids that have most likely crossed with E. 'White Beauty' or Erythronium oregonum both of which grow in the same raised bed above the path. You can see clearly the influence of the darker form.



This seedling, an ***Erythronium revolutum* hybrid**, has sown itself into the gap between the rocks of the wall – it is interesting how the multiple flowers are in a cluster at the top of the stem - they are normally more widely spaced.



Erythronium revolutum hybrid – you can see that the main stem has four flowers, all right at the top of the stem.



**Erythronium
'yuk'**

Occasionally I will find manifestations like this mutated form where two flowers are conjoined giving extra petals, two stigma and extra stamens. Thankfully I think this is an aberration that will not be stable and this plant will appear normal next year.



Anemone nemorosa forms create a lovely carpet after the early bulbs have passed and later flowering bulbs can rise up through their leaves.



When the rain/hail showers come I can retreat to the shelter of the bulb houses - here I find many of the early Narcissus and Crocus are already retreating underground. I sometimes think that they are going back too soon until I work out that they started to come into leaf in October so have been actively growing for seven or eight months.



I now have to water very carefully to ensure that plants still growing like the **Tecophilaea** above get sufficient moisture while those bulbs whose leaves are yellowing are left to dry out.



My single seed raised bulb of **Allium derderianum** flowers again but it has neither increased nor set any seed for me in the many years I have been growing it.



The sand plunge in the bulb house, that I replaced last year, still has some growth and I will be adding a lot more bulbs and seeds this year when I repot. I have placed some dried juniper branches in the right hand corner to support **Tropaeolum azureum**. For years I tried to germinate the seeds of this plant and found that it does best when the seeds I missed fell into the sand plunges – there they germinated and grew in profusion becoming almost a weed. My aim is to leave it to seed around in the sand then encouraging it to form a complete blue back to the plunge.



Tropaeolum azureum



An *Ornithogalum* also brings some later flowers to the bulb houses.



Back in the garden *Erythronium elegans* with white flowers over plain green leaves is a real beauty and also seeds around for us.



Erythronium montanum



Erythronium montanum also has plain green leaves and white flowers, similar to *E. elegans*, but the flowers are larger and the petals have a twist to them. It is also much more of a challenge to grow this species in the garden.

Erythronium montanum has the shortest growing season of all the species we grow –it is last to appear and first to set seed in our garden. It is a truly beautiful species but it is not enjoying the inclement weather, especially the rain, we are currently getting.



At the other end of the garden-worthy scale is **Erythronium 'White Beauty'** - a wonderfully reliable plant that seems able to grow in most conditions. The flowers shut when it is cold, dark or wet and quickly open and reflex when dry and warm. It is also a very good increaser as the bulb divides and offsets at a good rate - a welcome feature that is passed on through seed to any offspring.



Erythronium 'White Beauty'



When we replanted the front garden a few years ago I planted all the pots of *Erythronium* seedlings from the frames there and this is a group of unknown parentage, possibly a hybrid involving *E. oregonum*.



One individual plant stood out and attracted my eye, those of you who follow me on Facebook will recognise it. It has large flowers that were pure white with a green back when they first opened but have developed a pink flush as they age.



The cream anthers and the shape of the filaments also suggest that E 'White Beauty' could also be a parent. Other features are three flowers on a mature stem and the flowers face more outwards than downwards when they open.



Erythronium hybrid



This **Erythronium revolutum hybrid**, left and below, is growing close by and is again one of many that I am watching and assessing. I have a number growing in pots so that I can see how well they increase as multiplication is critical if any of them are going to be established in circulation. Check out the [Bulb Log video diary supplements](#) where I look at

some of our [Erythronium revolutum hybrids](#).



Erythronium revolutum hybrid



It is not just Erythroniums that hybridise in gardens - we have a number of Trillium hybrids such as this
Trillium flexipes x erectum



Corydalis flexuosa, Trillium albidum and Primula vulgaris flowers with spotted Dactylorhiza leaves.



My parting shot this week is yet another **Erythronium revolutum hybrid** – if you are getting weary of my Erythroniums don't worry, the flowering season will soon be over – but then I am working on the other chapters of Erythroniums in Cultivation where I will look at them in much more detail – these will appear throughout this year.....