



BULB LOG 15.....11 April 2012



If you are used to a continental climate you may wonder why we in these Islands are so fixated on and always discussing the weather.



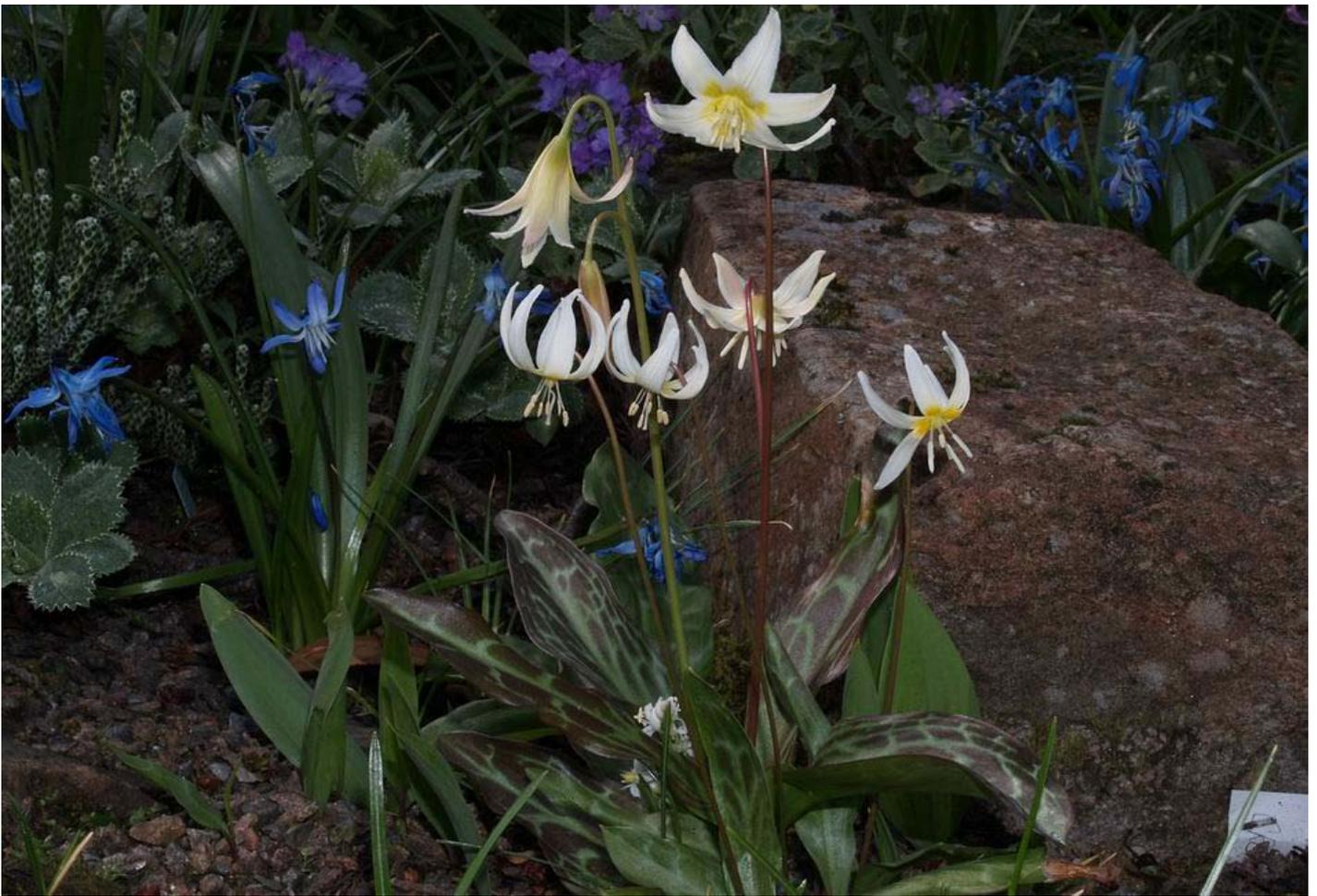
When I wrote last week's Bulb Log Aberdeen seemed to be the centre of heat wave but before I even posted it on line the temperature had dropped some 20C as winter briefly returned and we awoke to a covering of around 7cms of wet snow. As the garden was much drier than normal for this time of year the moisture was welcome but I would have preferred it to fall as soft rain.



All the flowers that had been tempted out by the warm conditions had now to survive the onslaught of winter's brief return.



The snow disappeared almost as quickly as it arrived when the temperature rose - not to the levels of the heat wave but to nearer the seasonal average of around 8C and the garden started to recover. Most of the bulbs and plants in flower do occasionally experience these conditions in the wild and so have evolved some resistance.



Erythronium citrinum

Last week I showed a picture of *Erythronium citrinum* growing along with *Trillium rivale* in Southern Oregon, here is a group in our garden and I will plant some *Trillium rivale* seedlings beside it as I continue to work through the older pots in the seed frames.



Erythronium citrinum* var *roderickii

I find var. *roderickii* most beautiful it is differentiated by having dark brown pollen and this is the first to flower in a pot of seedlings which I can now confirm is true to type.



Erythronium hendersonii

Erythronium hendersonii is always among the earliest of the Western North American species to flower in our garden and it is a true beauty.



Erythronium hendersonii

The beauty of the pink to white tepals along with the deep blackcurrant colour of the throat make it a stunning combination. The pollen above is a lovely chocolate brown and this is the most common colour among the plants I grow and the ones I saw in Oregon.



Erythronium hendersonii

However I have a number of plants with golden yellow pollen, a colour I also observed in the wild – I am not aware of any varietal status names applied to plants with different pollen colour for this species.



Erythronium hendersonii

This detail shows the ripe pollen grains ready to be transferred to a stigma. I was out with my paint brush before the snow cross fertilising the different clones but this cold weather will not exactly help the pollen tube to grow down and complete the fertilisation process.



Erythronium hendersonii hybrid (above and below)

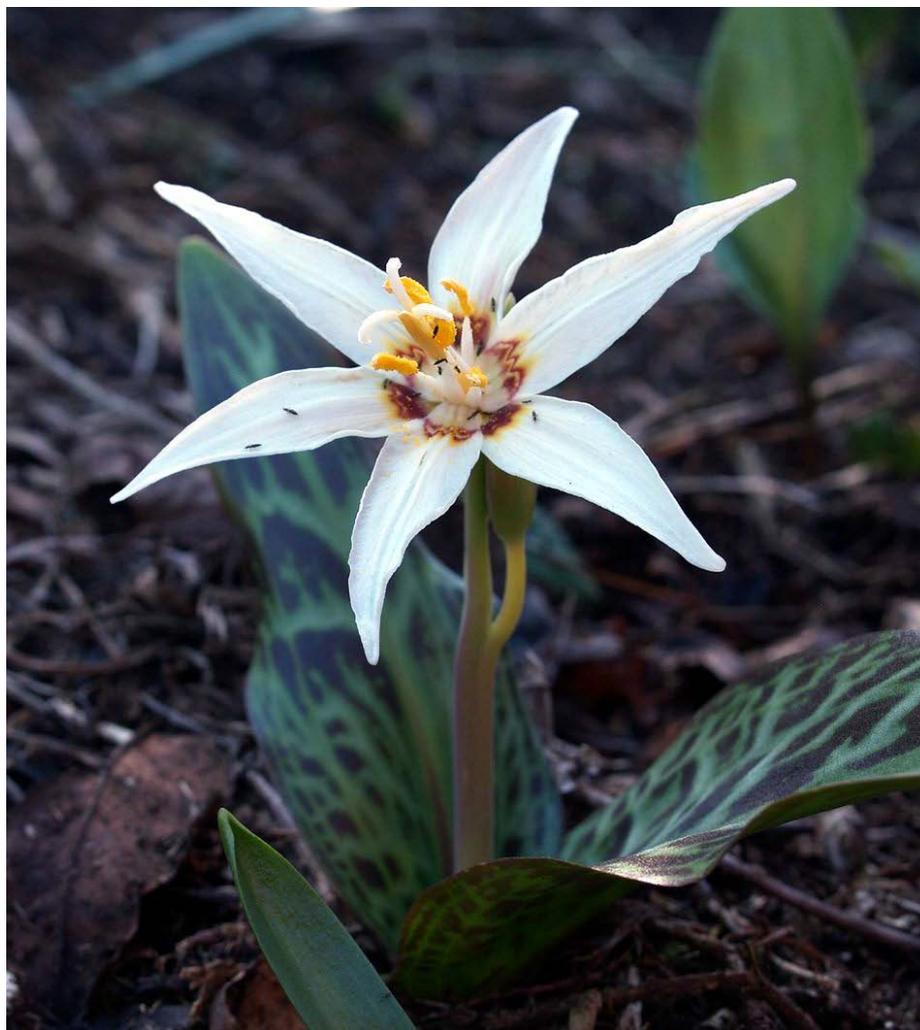


I have seen a number of really nice plants called “Erythronium hendersonii” that clump up, appearing on the show bench and in the gardens of some lucky people. All the ones that I have seen have some degree of yellow towards the centre, as above, and this indicates to me that it is a hybrid plant. None of the many Erythronium hendersonii seedlings that I have raised have ever clumped up – if they are growing well they will eventually

make an offset but it take a few more years for it to reach flowering size. So the fact that all the forms that I have seen that clump also have yellow on the tepals leads me to believe that they are of hybrid origin. There are known hybrids in the wild between Erythronium hendersonii and Erythronium citrinum so even if the seed was collected in habitat it could be a hybrid. From my experience these hybrids, like many Erythronium hybrids, not only increase vegetatively but are also fertile and so can be raised from seed.



Erythronium revolutum



I have often seen so called white forms of *Erythronium revolutum* but so far they have always turned out to be *Erythronium oregonum* (left) which is very similar in many ways.

Erythronium oregonum was first described by Elmer Ivan Applegate in his wonderful monograph article of 1935 – still the best authority available to gardeners.

These two species will also freely hybridise in gardens.

Ed Alverson has just posted a picture of a lovely red/brown anthered form of *Erythronium oregonum* in the [forum](#) - the first time any one has seen this variation as far as I know.

Erythronium oregonum



Erythronium revolutum white form

I have never doubted that white forms must exist or be possible as they do in the majority of coloured flowers but I had just never seen a picture or a plant of one. This week I found this seedling pure white flower growing in an area where we are allowing *E. revolutum* to naturalise in our garden (see below) and I became very excited. I can see no evidence of any other species other than *E. revolutum* so I am fairly sure that it is a white flowered form. As the flower aged a just a hint of pink appeared towards the tips of the tepals.



Erythronium revolutum bed



Erythronium sibericum



The first of our *Erythronium sibericum* flowers are just opening.





Trillium seedlings germinating

It is wise advice not to throw away ungerminated seed pots too quickly. There are certain genera, Pulsatilla springs to mind, that you can quickly discount if they do not appear in the first year or two but it is always worth holding on



to bulbous seed pots. Many Trilliums go through a two phase germination where the root emerges in the first year and starts to form the small rhizome and it will be the second year before the first signs of a leaf appear above ground. We often blame stored seed for tardy germination but this is a pot of our own garden seed sown fresh in July 2009 and it is only now showing seed leaves. What makes them suddenly germinate in the seed frame after lying dormant for so long is not fully understood. This is not the only pot to behave this way so I wonder if the very cold winter of 2010/11 was the trigger the seeds needed to break their deep dormancy and it is only now a year on that I am seeing the leaves appear.

The picture to the left shows some pots of Trillium seedlings of varying ages. You will notice that it takes around three years of growth before the leaf starts to resemble an adult leaf and it takes another few years after that before the fully mature leaf markings appear.

It is the same with the Erythroniums that have marked leaves – it is year three before you see the first signs of the pattern.



***Galanthus plicatus* leaf**

It is very rewarding to keep a careful eye on your plants as you will find odd things sometimes happen like this *Galanthus* leaf bearing a pedicle and seed pod. The stem and leaf edge have become fused so the leaf is doubling up as a stem – weird. I did not notice this at flowering time.



Fritillaria crassicaulis

This is one of the Asian fritillaries I inherited from the late Kath Dryden – I think it is *Fritillaria crassicaulis*.



Fritillaria crassicaulis



Fritillaria imperialis

This is a group of seed raised *Fritillaria imperialis* that I planted out around three years ago – many of them flowered last year as well. The seed came from a plant we had received as a bulb some years ago and I know as well as self pollinating I cross fertilised it with *Fritillaria raddeana*. Most seedlings look typical *F. imperialis* but the one below looks different.



Fritillaria eduardii ?

The plant on the left, close up below, looks very like what I know as *Fritillaria eduardii* and I think it has been long thought that this cross was the origin of that plant - I will be interested to see if it is fertile.



Fritillaria imperialis

