



SRGC

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

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BULB LOG 51.....23rd December 2015



Includes *Erythronium hendersonii* chapter



Narcissus romieuxii; this is the same plant as shown on the cover – you will notice the flowers are a pale yellow colour as they emerge getting paler as the flower matures - this form never turns pure white.

I am amazed to see from pictures on the forum just how far advanced some people's bulbs are this year. We tend to say it is earlier or later than normal - but what is normal?

One thing we need to be aware of is that, unlike us, plants do not go by the calendar they simply respond to conditions.

One of my theories is that if the temperatures remain mild after I water the bulbs *Narcissus romieuxii* and the likes flower quite

quickly – if it turns cold the same plants may not flower until January, February or even March so why have we fewer flowers open just now than I would expect? The answer is the cold summer we had meant there was not a sharp enough temperature drop to indicate that we were in autumn- in fact there was no change in temperature at all. We have had some days recently in December that were warmer than we those we had in July when on some days the temperatures struggled to reach double figures.

The other problem we face this far north are short days with low light levels in winter. This lack of quality light causes the growth to etiolate and fall over and this year the growth has been encouraged by the unusually mild conditions. This group has further suffered from being close to the door where the wind blows in. I rarely ever shut the glasshouse doors and if I do it is only during prolonged periods of freezing.





Two pots just starting to flower are *Narcissus romieuxii mesatlanticus* and a *Narcissus romieuxii* hybrid and in front of that a pot of *Colchicum* leaves some with damage and mould setting in. I showed how I deal with this in the last

[video diary](#) I loaded a few weeks back – I remove the damaged end of the leaf by holding it firmly on the “good” part and ripping off the damaged area.

Torn Leaf

This may sound extreme but I find that tearing off the damaged section of leaf allows it to heal much better than cutting it with scissors or a knife. Here is the perfectly healed torn edge of the leaf some two weeks on.





Narcissus hybrid

I have quite a lot of hybrids involving *Narcissus romieuxii* and *Narcissus cantabricus*; many are complex hybrids crossed back onto a parent.



Narcissus hybrids

On the left is the face-on view of the previous plants while the right hand one is a sister seedling whose side view I show below allowing you to spot the subtle variations.



See more of these Narcissus in an up-dated [Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#).

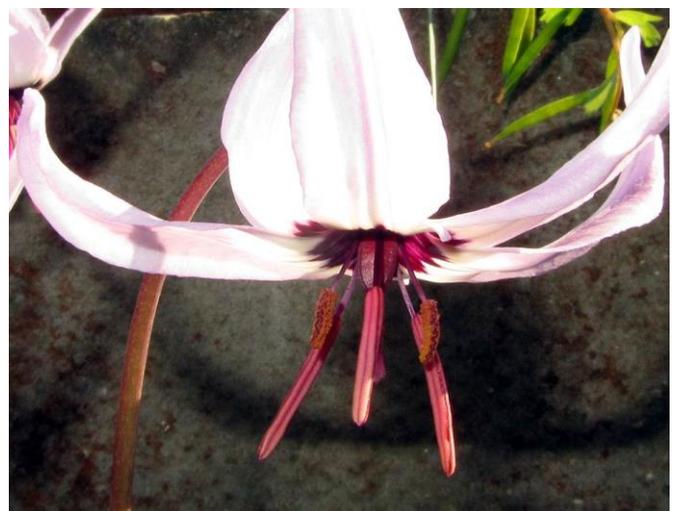
Another chapter from Erythroniums in Cultivation follows below...

Erythronium hendersonii





Erythronium hendersonii flowers have the most attractive combination of colours of all the North American species – with pink to white petals combined with varying degrees of dark blackcurrant staining towards the centre they are highly appealing. The pollen colour can vary from violet through dark brown to yellow while the ovary and style are dark violet – at least in all the plants that I have seen. You are unlikely to confuse *Erythronium hendersonii* with any other apart from its own hybrids of which there are a number around. These hybrids usually have some yellowy areas in the central zone.



As with all the *Erythronium*s the anthers do not all dehisce at the same time they ripen in two lots of three with those attached to the outer three tepals maturing first.



Erythronium hendersonii flowers

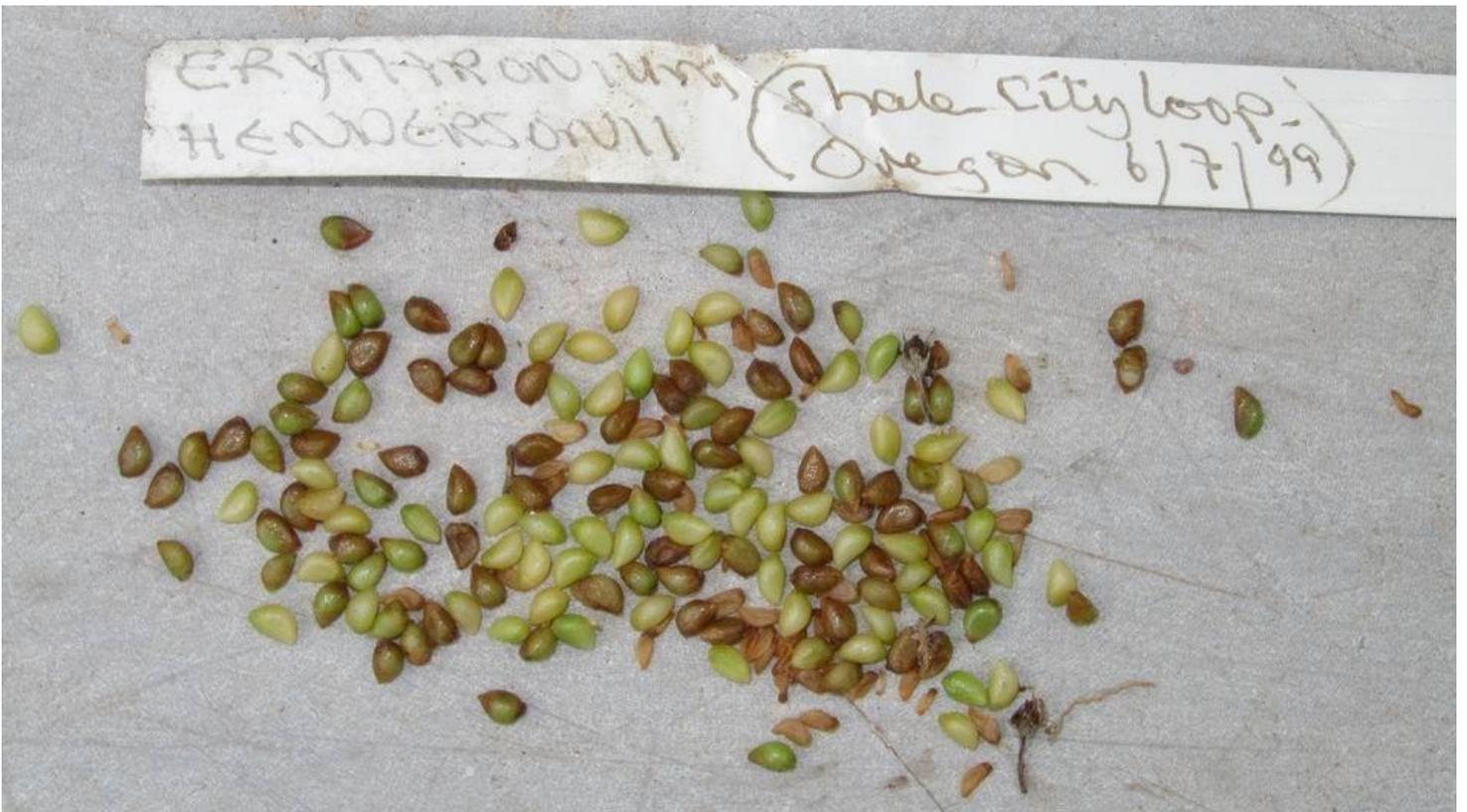


Erythronium hendersonii flower section showing the botanical details – note the style is club shaped or only slightly divided into three

Seed



Seed is produced most years in the garden and is the main way of increasing this species as it is most reluctant to form secondary bulbs.



Erythronium hendersonii seed



The seed is collected and stored over the summer in paper bags.



The stored seed (left) is prepared in late August by soaking it overnight (right) before sowing.

Leaves

**Erythronium hendersonii leaves**

Erythronium hendersonii has patterned leaves which like other species can vary from having only faint dark areas of markings to having a dramatic contrast between green and dark brown. In some leaves the pattern is formed between contrasting silver green and green (see below).



Bulb**Erythronium hendersonii bulbs**

There are no particular features that allow you to distinguish *Erythronium hendersonii* bulbs from other similar species.

Most bulbs remain as a single bulb and so this species is not inclined to bulk up and form clumps. The clump-forming plants I have seen here in the UK have always shown signs of being a hybrid of *Erythronium hendersonii* with the addition of some yellow colour around the central zone of the flower,



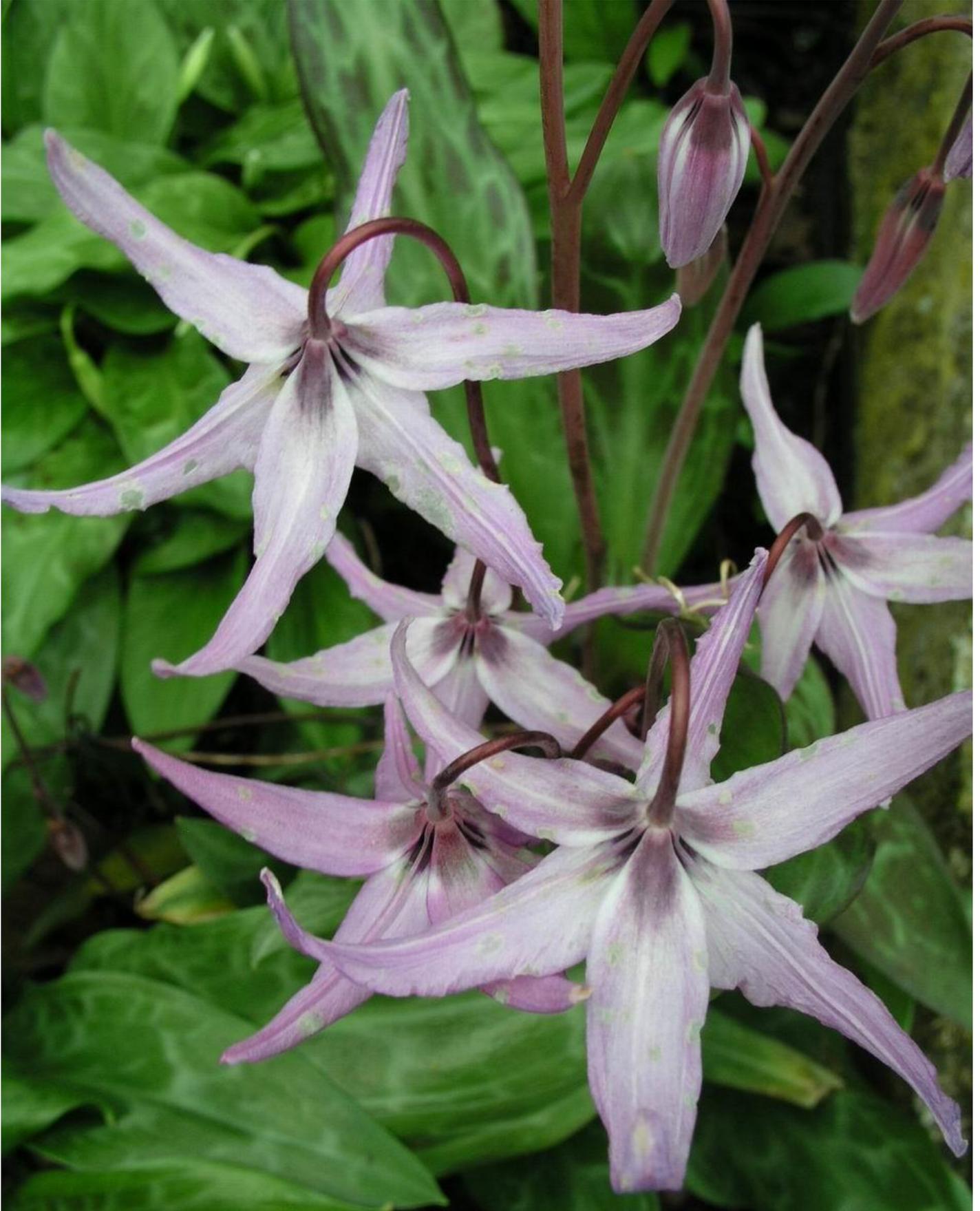
Mature plants of *Erythronium hendersonii* can have multiple flowers per stem - in our garden we commonly see three sometimes five flowers on a single stem.

This species grows well in most situations in the garden and it is only the fact that it does not increase well by division that causes it not to be grown more widely.

This is where the hybrids that do form clumps can come into play as they retain all that makes this species so attractive with the added benefit of increasing.



Erythronium hendersonii



Erythronium hendersonii



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Erythronium hendersonii



Erythronium hendersonii