



BULB LOG 04..... 23rd January 2008

WESTERN NORTH AMERICA

The biggest diversity of species is found down the western side of North America from Vancouver Island in the North to California in the South.



Erythronium revolutum

Erythronium revolutum has one of the widest ranges and can be found growing all the way from California up to Vancouver Island. It should be no surprise that a species with that wide a distribution will show quite a variation.



Flower section

It is easy to identify *revolutum* as it is the only pink *erythronium dens-canis*. The pollen while mostly golden yellow can occasionally be cream or white. The filaments which connect the pollen-laden anthers to the flower are expanded like Dutchman's breeches.



Leaves

The variable brown pattern on the leaves of *revolutum* can be very dramatic and follows the veins of the leaves. When you look carefully you can see it is quite different from the random blotching seen in *dens-canis*.



Erythronium revolutum 'Johnsonii'

Large dark flowered forms like this are often called var. johnsonii.



Erythronium revolutum col form

Above is another form of revolutum, grown from wild collected seed, which is smaller than the others.



Erythronium revolutum col form flower

It has dark pink/red flowers with very steeply swept back petals, there is also pink on the filaments and style. It is very attractive and comes true from seed.



Erythronium oregonum

Erythronium oregonum is the nearest species to revolutum and shares many of the same flower characteristics except its petals are predominantly white. It also shares a similar wide distribution and is found from Oregon up to British Columbia and Vancouver Island.



Oregonum flower good marks



Oregonum flower greenback

In our most attractive forms there is a good brown and yellow zone towards the centre of the flower making it very attractive; many also have a nice green ring at the back of the petals.



Oregonium sulphur form

Sulphur yellow forms of *E. oregonum*, often with cream anthers, are also common in cultivation in the UK. I have often seen these sulphur forms wrongly labelled as *E. citrinum*. It is very easy to tell them apart by the filaments; in *oregonum* they are wide at the centre like Dutchmans breeches and in *citrinum* they are thin and thread like.



Erythronium californicum

Erythronium californicum, comes from California, as the name suggests. It is one of the many creamy white erythroniums with a yellow centre; all have patterned leaves which vary from a slight silvery trace to dramatic patterns with dark shiny brown areas.



Erythronium white beauty



‘White Beauty’

Probably the most commonly grown erythronium in the form of ‘**White Beauty**’ which has a series of red/brown zig zag markings on the yellow throat.

It was regularly seen described as *E. revolutum* ‘White Beauty’ and I have also seen it listed as a form of oregonum, both of which are incorrect. It does not seem to be anything other than a vigorous form of *E.*

californicum and only a DNA study will tell us if it is a hybrid with any other species.



Erythronium multiscapoideum

Also from California, **Erythronium multiscapoideum** is superficially similar to *E. californicum* and is doing well in cultivation. It produces several flowers on a stem that splits unseen below the level of the leaves making it very distinct as well as giving the impression that several stems are rising from a single bulb and hence the specific name.



Erythronium helenae



Erythronium helenae is one of my favourites with the same basic formula of a creamy white flower with a central yellow zone, it too is native to California. The distinguishing features of this species are there is a distinct change from the central yellow to the white, like a fried egg, and the style is normally bent downwards by as much as 90 degrees. It also has a beautiful scent.



Erythronium citrinum & howellii

Two very similar species in this closely related group are **Erythronium citrinum** (above) & **howellii** (below) both can be found growing in Oregon. The only taxonomic difference being that **howellii** does not have the swollen appendages at the base of the flower segments. As I have mentioned above, nearly all the plants I have seen labelled as **citrinum** in the UK are either the sulphur forms of oregonum or are **citrinum** hybrids.



Citrinum roderickii

A very beautiful, recently described variety of **Erythronium citrinum**, which is appearing in some seed lists is **var. roderickii**, differing from the type in having brown anthers. I also find it to be a shorter than our other forms of this species.