



SRGC

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

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 01.....6th January 2016



**Erythroniums in Cultivation chapters -
Erythronium grandiflorum and Erythronium tuolummense**



A very happy and healthy New Year to all my Bulb Log readers, I hope you also have a great gardening year.

I would also like to say a big thank you to Len Rhind who has compiled an index to the Bulb log - updating it every year since the very start. Len very generously shares this work with all of us and you can access and download the latest version here- [Bulb Log Index](#)

Weather wise 2016 has not got off to a very good start in the UK and especially here in the northeast where we have had constant rain for over a week now. The rain has prevented me from getting on with my normal tasks of winter tree pruning along with tidying and

mulching the beds before the spring growth emerges. This small setback is trivial compared to the many people who have suffered flooding of both gardens and homes. I do hope that we get a dry period during January so I can achieve the tidy-up and mulching of the beds at least – the tree work can always be done later.



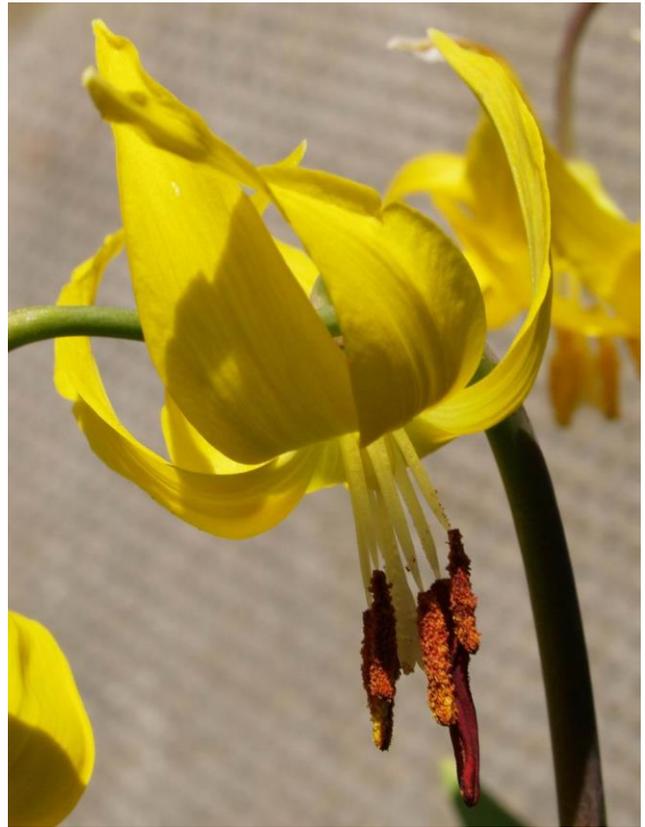
Cyclamen coum

The persistent rain clouds also bring the gloom at this time of year and we are in almost darkness all the time so it is very difficult to get any pictures taken. It is at times like this that areas near the house with the troughs and bonsai, this week's cover picture, show their year round decorative qualities. This Cyclamen coum opening in the sand bed caught my eye as I passed to check out the bulb houses. Two more chapters from Erythroniums in Cultivation follow.....

Erythronium grandiflorum



Erythronium grandiflorum has a wide distribution and can be found from Vancouver Island in Canada down through most of the western states to California. It is the best of the western yellows for the rock garden; it has good sized bright yellow flowers over plain green leaves.



Erythronium grandiflorum var. grandiflorum

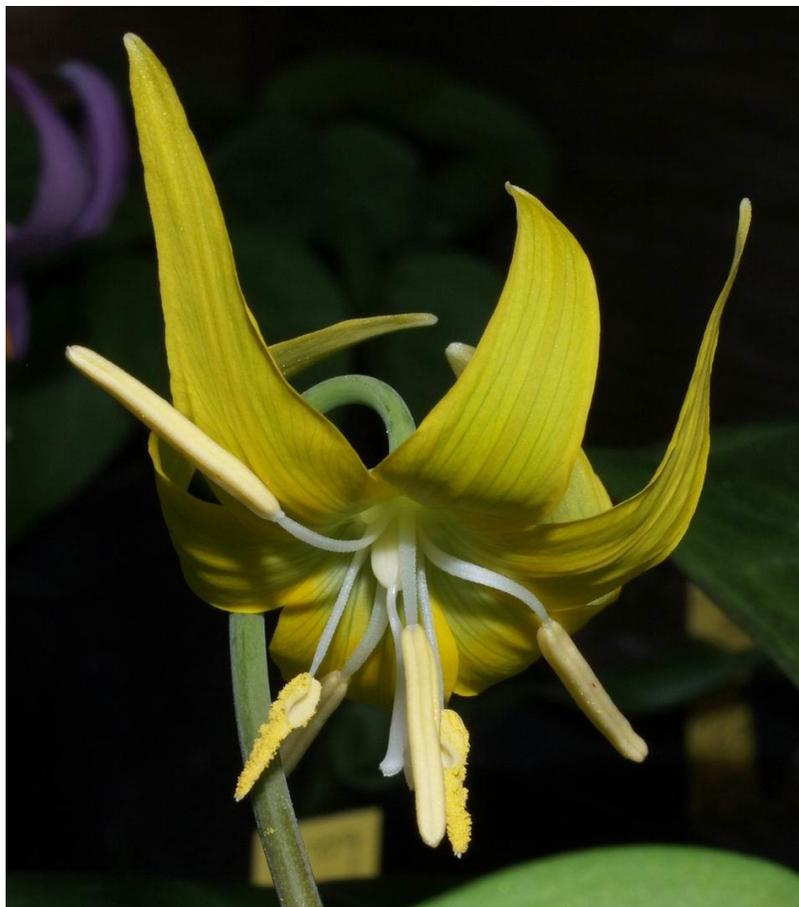
Three varieties are named depending on the colour of the anthers; var. grandiflorum has brown pollen, var. chrysandrum, yellow and var. pallidum, cream.



Erythronium grandiflorum var. chrysandrum



Erythronium grandiflorum var. pallidum



Erythronium grandiflorum

I have observed that in some forms of *Erythronium grandiflorum* var. *pallidum* the filaments were initially bent holding the anthers out to the side then they project forward as the anthers dehisce. Since I made first made this observation I have found this feature also in some of the other varieties. I am not sure if this feature is of any botanical significance.



Leaves

The leaves of *Erythronium grandiflorum* are plain green, occasionally with a thin dark line running around the edge.

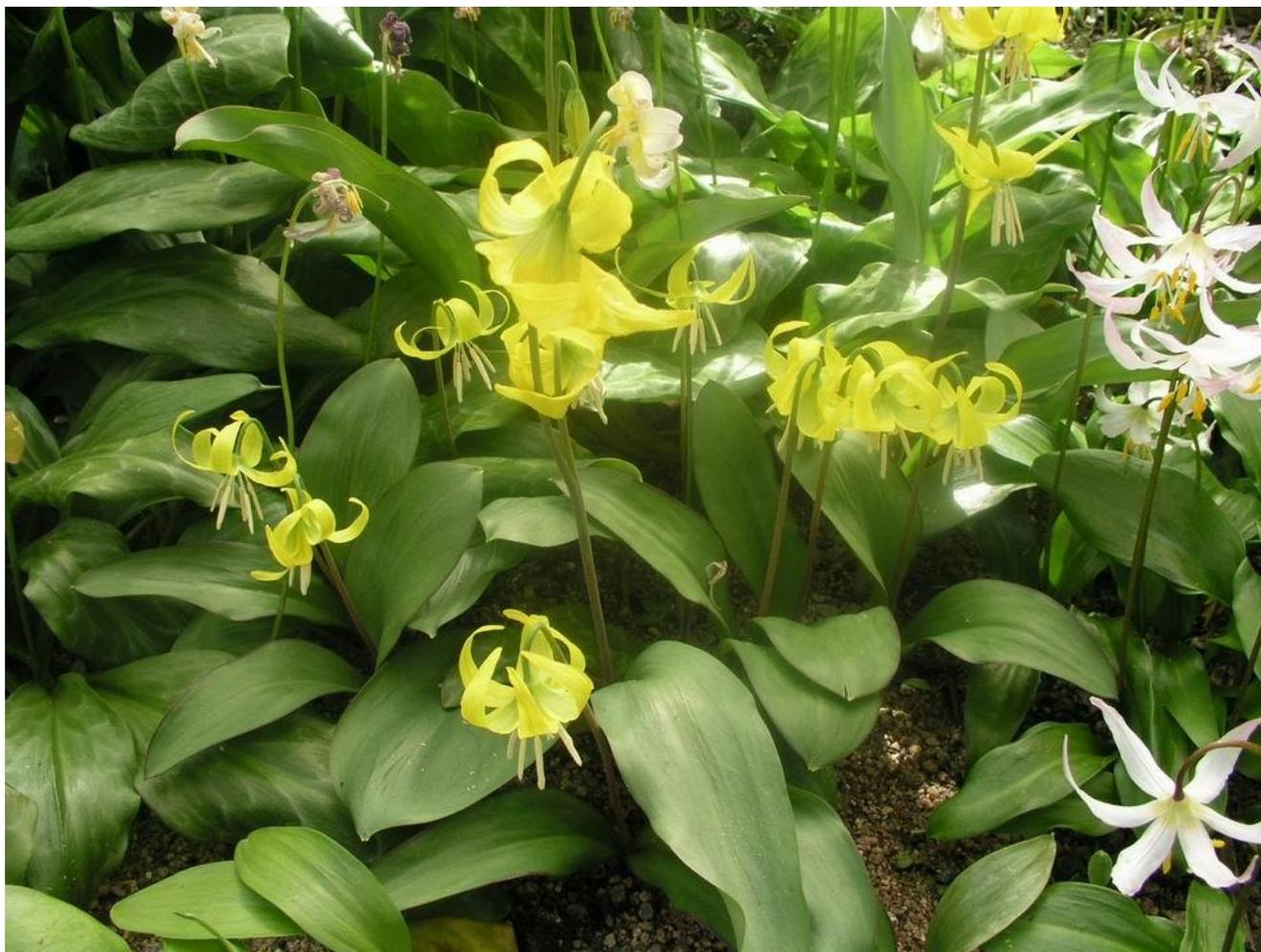


Erythronium grandiflorum leaves

Bulb

The bulbs are typical in shape with no particularly defining features to separate them from most other Western North American species. The bulbs rarely produce offsets.





Erythronium grandiflorum

Despite the fact that I have seen images showing massive areas of this species in habitat in full flower it remains uncommon in cultivation.

From my experience it is reluctant to increase by division of the bulb leaving seed as the main method of increase in the garden. We do not get a successful seed set on this species every year. Apart from this slow rate of increase *Erythronium grandiflorum* is not difficult to cultivate, growing in any of the beds where we have it planted. I think it is in the rock garden beds that it stands out the best. It is a pity that this beautiful species is not seen in more gardens.





Shown on the left is *Erythronium grandiflorum* var. *chrysandrum* growing in the rock garden and below is a mixed group growing in a sand bed.



Erythronium grandiflorum



Erythronium grandiflorum var. pallidum



Erythronium grandiflorum var. grandiflorum

Erythronium tuolumnense





Erythronium tuolumnense

Erythronium tuolumnense must be among the most commonly grown species in cultivation and that is largely down to the fact that the robust bulbs readily produce offsets allowing the plant to bulk up quickly.

Multiple yellow flowers are borne on a stem held above the plain green leaves.

It is native to Tuolumne County, California where its habitat is that of sloping wooded river banks. This shaded environment would explain why it has evolved the largest leaves of all the species, to capture maximum light.

Erythronium tuolumnense is easy to grow in cultivation and though it grows well in the shade it also thrives in an open aspect. While it does not require shade from sunshine in our garden it does require shelter from the strong winds which will damage the leaves.

Flower***Erythronium tuolumnense***

Erythronium tuolumnense flowers come in shades of yellow and the ripe anthers bear golden yellow pollen.

Being one of the few yellow species it is unlikely that you will mistake it for any of the others, the nearest being *Erythronium grandiflorum* – which is considerably smaller in stature.

There are a number of hybrids raised from this species such as *Erythronium* ‘Pagoda’ and these do look very similar to the species but most have some dark rings around the centre of the flower.



Erythronium tuolumnense seed

It is not the most generous species with its seed in our garden but we do get some seed set most years.

Bulbs



Erythronium tuolumnense seedling bulbs being repotted for the first time three years after sowing.



Erythronium tuolumnense bulbs

Not surprisingly mature bulbs of *Erythronium tuolumnense* are also the largest found in the genus.

When growing well each bulb will divide producing two flowering sized bulbs every year in addition to that they may also produce a number of smaller offsets.

Leaves



Erythronium tuolumnense has plain green leaves.

***Erythronium tuolumnense***

Although this is a fairly uniform species you will get some variation, in the depth of yellow of the flowers.

The most attractive forms are those where the open flowers are held well above the leaves.

On the left you can make out the subtle difference in these two clones as they start to open – then as mature flowers below.





Being the largest and one of the few yellow species, *Erythronium tuolumnense* makes an excellent garden plant. It is especially suited to growing in shade and will grow happily below trees and shrubs provided it has some head room.

As it is clump forming it should be divided regularly before the competition for nutrients and moisture between the closely packed bulbs restricts flowering.

Erythronium tuolumnense