



BULB LOG 16.....21st April 2010



Erythronium sibiricum

I am so delighted to have yet more baskets of *Erythronium sibiricum* seedlings that are now mature and starting to flower so well. The one above is flowering for the first time while the group below started to flower a year ago.



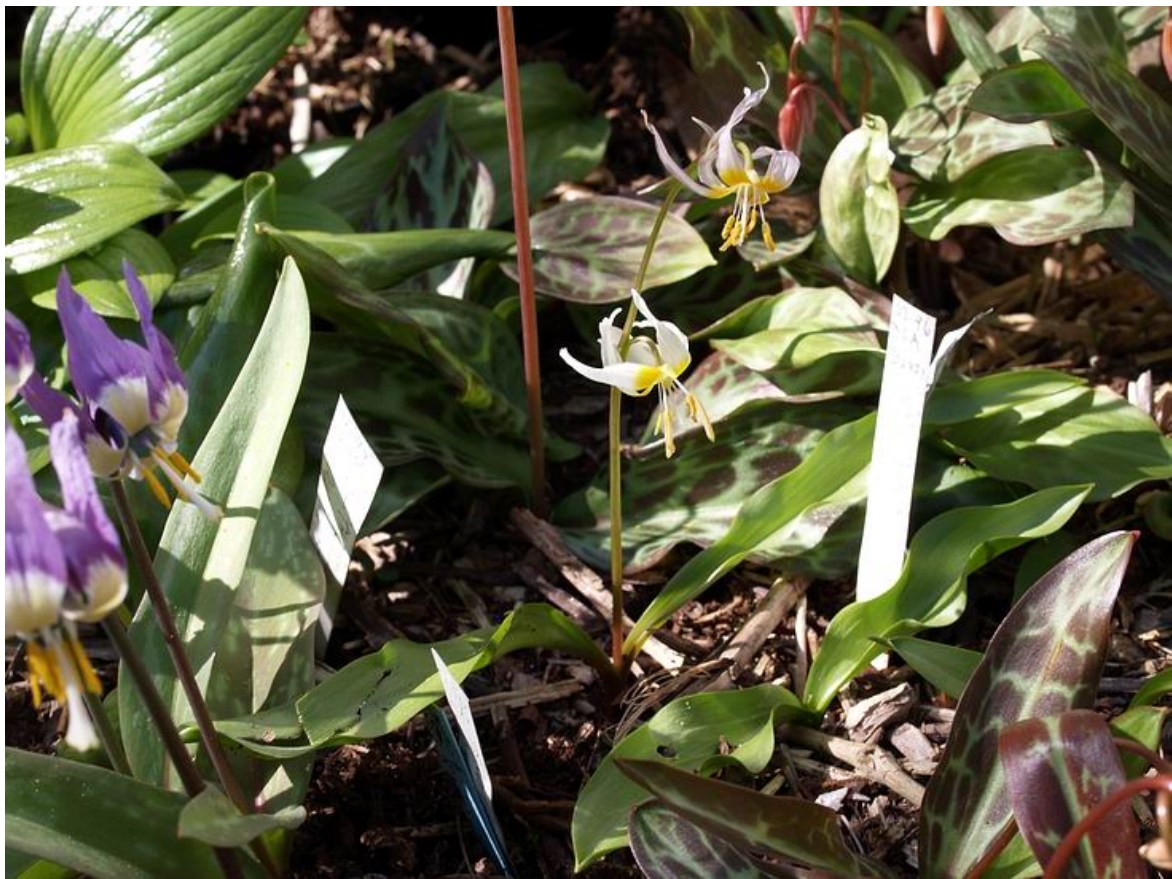


Erythronium albidum

I have been growing and looking at Erythroniums for many years now and every year I learn more about them and observe new facts. It was only when I was bending down to get close enough to photograph this Erythronium albidum that I noticed that its filaments are yellow for most of their length- matching the colour in the centre of the petals – I have not noticed that before.



Erythronium albidum flower



Erythronium purpurascens in frame



Erythronium purpurascens

Erythronium purpurascens is one of the higher altitude species of Erythronium and this Californian endemic is not such an easy species to keep happy in our garden.

However after years of raising it from seed I am now having some success in getting it to grow and flower normally. It is another of the species that likes a cold winter followed by a warm spring to encourage its stem to grow before the flowers open fully.

It has quite small flowers when compared to most other species but it makes up by having a number of flowers per stem. This example is still very young and so has only two flowers.

I have a number of other examples planted out in the beds where it is also flowering well just now. I am carefully cross pollinating them in the hope of getting my own seeds for the very first time which will help me select a line that grows well in our conditions.

The specific name of purpurascens refers to the colour the flowers take on as they are starting to go over which can be seen a bit more clearly in the picture below.



Erythronium purpurascens flower going over



Erythronium grandiflorum

There are only two yellow *Erythronium* species found in Western North America that we are likely to come into contact with in our gardens. *Erythronium tuloumnense* has a fairly restricted range while *Erythronium grandiflorum*, above, has a wide distribution from Vancouver all the way down to Southern Oregon and perhaps even further. There are a few other possible new species that have been discovered that may eventually be described once they have been studied.



Erythronium grandiflorum

Another feature that I have not consciously noted before is that the three anthers that have not dehisced on the variety with the yellow pollen, are bent through 90 degrees before they ripen. The other two varieties that I grow with the dark pollen in the picture above and the creamy white pollen (not shown here) do not display this characteristic. In all Erythroniums there are three anthers always ripen

some time before the second three giving the impression that they are of significant uneven lengths but this difference all but evens out in most species when all the anthers mature – the filaments that connect the anthers to the flower are almost equal in length in all the American species.



Narcissus bulbocodium

All over the garden we have clumps of *Narcissus bulbocodium* flowering. I do not always collect the seed when it is ripe so these are mostly the result of plants self seeding although I do sometimes help with the distribution if I see a capsule open I grab some seeds scattering them as I walk round the garden.



Narcissus bulbocodium

There are lots of single flower stems around some flower with the leaves and some flower before the leaves appear displaying the great variation that there is in this species. After a few years most of them start to form clumps then they get too congested and will start to produce less flowers this indicates to me that they need splitting to reduce the competition - I would split them just as they go dormant.



Narcissus x cazorlanus

I am not sure what the current correct name for this plant is but I have always known it as *Narcissus x cazorlanus*. A hybrid between *Narcissus triandrus* and *Narcissus bulbocodium* it is a lovely plant that will have two flowers per stem when it is growing well.



Narcissus bulbocodium

The form of *Narcissus bulbocodium* above has smallish mostly upward looking flowers while the form below is a pot of seedlings raised from *Narcissus bulbocodium obesus* and it has much larger flowers. I have scattered seeds of both these types into the garden with good success.



Narcissus bulbocodium obesus



Tristagma leichtlinii

My original seeds of *Tristagma leichtlinii* were collected in South America by John Watson many years ago. Above is a pot of seedlings raised from my own seeds taken from those original plants that I raised and this year I hope to be collecting seeds from this pot. This is exactly how responsible collecting and plant hunting should be conducted where a small sustainable amount of seed is collected in the field to allow the establishment of that species in cultivation. It is then our responsibility as growers to conserve and preserve these plants in cultivation by collecting and distributing the seeds whenever possible.



Tristagma leichtlinii

It is not the most showy of bulbs but I am very fond of this species with its clusters of small white flowers that have varying degrees of a purple/violet stripe running up the back of the petals. I was delighted to get some seed of three other species from the seed exchanges this year – *Tristagma nivale*, *sessile* and *patagonica*.



Fritillaria house

The cold winter followed by some bright sunny days has resulted in most of the Fritillaria rushing in and out of flower very quickly this year. This is disappointing for me as I do not have such a long time window to photograph and enjoy them but it is probably more like the conditions that they would have in the wild where they have a relatively short growing season.



Fritillaria reuteri

The elegant shape and dramatic colour of Fritillara reuteri makes it a favourite of mine.



Fritillaria tortifolia

Fritillaria tortifolia is one of the Chinese species that has come into cultivation in the west in large numbers in recent years. It is often masquerading under many names and I know lots of people that have received what they thought was lots of different Chinese species only to find out when they flower that they have this one. It is disappointing when that happens but I think that this is among the showiest and best of the Chinese frits for both the garden and under cold glass.



You can just make out *Fritillaria tortifolia* in the background of this picture of an **outside frame** growing happily alongside *Fritillaria cirrhosa*, *F. burnatii* and various forms of *Fritillaria tubiformis*.



Fritillaria tubiformis x2

and Fritillaria burnatii

I have *Fritillaria tubiformis* in a range of colours from deepest purple to a pale yellow all covered in a white bloom like you see on the best black grapes. The form known as *F. tubiformis* ssp *moggeridgii* is also yellow but seems to have less of a bloom to it.



Erythronium

I will leave you this week with yet another picture of *Erythronium*s; be prepared for many more in the coming weeks.