

inevitably appear. While I think it is difficult - if not impossible - to improve on the beauty of the species erythroniums, we can surely work on how well they increase by offsetting. Most of the hybrids seem to inherit this feature even if the parents do not increase.

## Hybrids

Few named *Erythronium* hybrids are available other than the larger *E. tuolumnense* hybrids like 'Kondo' and 'Pagoda' that have been around for many years.

The best of the *E. tuolumnense* hybrids I have seen is the large stately yellow *E. 'Susannah'*, one of many fine hybrids raised by the late John Walker; it can easily produce 9 flowers when it is growing strongly.

Another of John Walker's hybrids sometimes available is *Erythronium 'Mini Ha Ha'*, vigorous white and clump-forming, related to and very similar to *E. oregonum*.

Two similar plants, raised by E B Anderson and passed to Kath Dryden as EBA 4656, have been named by her. *Erythronium 'Jeanette Brickell'* and *E. 'Margaret Mathew'* are creamy-white and resemble *E. 'White Beauty'* superficially, sharing the same ease of cultivation. *E. 'Jeanette Brickell'* is not pink as shown in the excellent book 'Bulbs' by Roger Phillips and Martin Rix - perhaps a trick of the printer's ink.

Another *E. tuolumnense* hybrid sometimes listed is



*Erythronium 'Mini Ha Ha'*



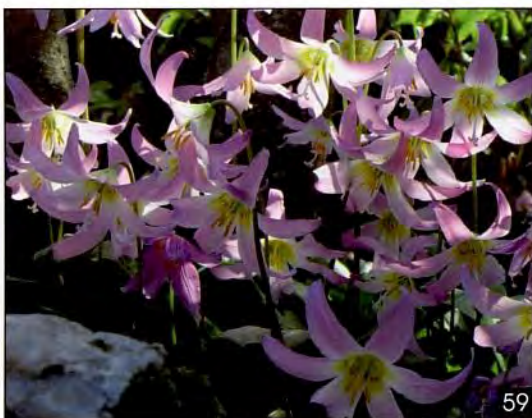
*Erythronium 'Joanna'*



*Erythronium citrinum x hendersonii*

*E. 'Joanna'*. A pink tint overlies the yellow outer petals - not the most attractive colour but not muddy like other hybrids with yellow and pink parents.

Many hybrids are unrecognised and masquerade as species. I have seen several fine plants on the show benches that deserve names; they obviously increase well and I hope one day we will sort them all out. Some natural hybrid populations occur where the



*Erythronium 'Craigton Cover Girl'*

ranges of two species overlap. Nearly all the *Erythronium* hybrids I have grown are fertile and produce seed in most years. Part of the hybrid



*Erythronium 'Craigton Cream'*





Hybrid white pale pink anthers

naming problem is therefore that, although the resulting seedlings vary slightly, they resemble the parent; this is why we see hybrids appearing with species names.

There are some very nice wild hybrids between *Erythronium citrinum* and *E. hendersonii* which are often fertile with a good range of colour forms but none, to my knowledge, is increasing quickly enough as a clone to justify a cultivar name. Some

of the numerous fine hybrids involving *Erythronium revolutum* are now being named. We called our best 'Craigton Cover Girl', selected for its beauty and a good rate of increase - a single bulb soon forming a clump. Like many of our best hybrids it was raised from seed from an open pollinated flower recorded as *E. oregonum*; the other parent must be



Hybrid rose anthers



63 - Hybrid pink tips & green back cream anthers

*E. revolutum*. The flower shows no obvious signs of *E. oregonum* but its features make *E. californicum* look a more likely parent. Despite careful records of all hybridisation, mistakes and confusion occur. I admit that my attempts at specific crosses have failed and that all the best hybrids I have raised have been open pollinated. I have seen several other hybrids, old and new, similar to 'Craigton Cover Girl'. Look out for these; they are all worth having if you are looking for a pink *Erythronium* that increases well.

Another of our open pollinated hybrids, 'Craigton Cream', was raised from the seed of *E. helenae* - the clone I named was once again selected for its beauty and speed of increase. We have many other interesting hybrids with potential, all open pollinated. Most involve *E. revolutum* & *californicum* in their parentage.

Some people disapprove of naming too many but I am not worried by a lot of named hybrids. If someone raises and distributes a new plant, they should name it so that we may trace it. If it is not named before distribution we risk several people naming the same plant differently. As time passes, only the best forms persist while the others slowly disappear along with their names. I know that selection from species and hybrids has the potential to produce good garden erythroniums that will be easier to grow and will increase freely in a wide range of soils and conditions. When it takes up to seven years to flower one generation, buying bulbs will never be cheap so I encourage you all to start raising your own erythroniums - both species and hybrids - from seed.