Some Rare Erythroniums.

To the Editor of GARDEN AND FOREST:

Sir,—In 1883, the late Sherlock Watson, published his revision of the American Erythroniums. Mr. Watson gave a very careful study to the subject, and his work gives the student a safe guide, although in one or two instances his species seem so closely together that only the skillful observer can distinguish them. Now a new species have been added to the list in the revised, but several good color forms have been brought to light, of which Erythronium Johnsonii is the most notable addition to the flower garden. It is to be expected that a thorough explorer of the shores of the Great Lakes and interior of the United States will turn up many color forms, if not new species. Few know what vast tracts of the north-west have never been explored at all by trained botanists. Nothing emphasizes this more nearly as the fact that many species collected by the early explorers have been lost sight of and have come to be considered as mythical. I have found several species of great beauty which were not in any of the great herbaria and were thought to be errors of the authors. Even in localities near the homes of skilled observers, species are sometimes so local as to be easily overlooked.

Perhaps the most striking of the Pacific coast Erythroniums is the group related to E. revolutum. Only one of this group is much known in our gardens. E. revolutum, var. Bolanderi, better known as E. Smithii, has long been in cultivation. Of the other species of E. Johnsonii was sent out last year, and the rest are unknown in the garden.

To be appreciated properly the Erythroniums should be seen in their own homes; in the slender canons among the woods plants, with their motled leaves of immense size, most as beautiful as the flowers, and their tall graceful scapes and lovely lily-like flowers, I can imagine no more beautiful mass than a large bed of these Dog-tooth Violets.

In all of the Erythronium group the leaves are motled: in the type and Erythronium Johnsonii the motting is in rich brown or mahogany; in the others in green and white. As compared with the previous group, the scapes are stout, the flowers have more substance, and the petals, while recent, yet more widely spreading; the stamens have broad, ovate, pointed filaments, and the anthers at the base of the inner petal are distinct in all. The color of the group is expressed closely in the filaments of E. revolutum and its varieties are hardly as graceful as the exquisitely formed E. giganteum (E. grandiflorum of our gardens), but excel it in the substance and color of the flowers.

Erythronium revolutum (type) is a plant of medium size, leaves motled in mahogany, scape one to three flowered. In color from almost a pure white, with a most delicate greenish cast and brown and purple markings at base of petals, to a rich yellow similarly marked.

Erythronium Johnsonii is in leaf and habit the same, except that the color of the efflorescence is different. In coloring the flowers are a bright clear red, shading to dark red toward the middle, and the centre a fine orange.

Erythronium revolutum, var. Bolanderi (E. Smithii), is a native of the Redwood forests of the northern part of Mendocino County, California. Its northward range has not been determined, but from its own habitat an almost unknown (botanically) region stretches far to the north. In this habit, the leaves mostly in white, seldom more than one flowered, and the widely spread blossoms opening a pure white at last becoming purplish.

I had the pleasure this spring of discovering a new variety of Erythronium revolutum, or, perhaps, only rediscovering this beautiful plant. Its leaves are motled in white and green. The flowers, as is usually the case with this hybrid, are yellow, ranging from ten inches to nineteen inches high. The petals are narrower than in the other forms of E. revolutum. Of those seen a very few were white, deeply suffused with pink, on opening, and soon changing to a deep wine-purplish. In far the greatest number of flowers they opened up a bluish red, and turned while still fresh to wine-purplish. This is the largest of the group.

Its home is in the Redwood region of Mendocino County, in a meadow near the coast. In a note in his revision Watson says about Erythronium revolutum: “Described by Smith as having purple flowers, and an original specimen in Herbarium, Kew, bears the note by Sir W. J. Hooker, fl. rubro, purp., but it is rarely that the petals assume the purple coloring.” This statement is unknown. No purple-flowered species is now found on Vancouver Island where Menzies’s specimens were collected.

My new form corresponds very closely to Smith’s description, and I have no doubt it is identical. It is certainly strange if the counterpart of a species collected over a hundred years ago, and not since seen, should be found so far away.

The Increase of Redwood Forests.

To the Editor of GARDEN AND FOREST:

Sir,—In an article in your paper a few years since I called attention to the rapidity with which the woodlands in the Coast Range of northern California are encroaching on the grassy and brushy portions. Close observations since and conversations with my many country friends, have convinced me that the only point upon which I did not then touch was brought to my notice in a conversation with an intelligent pioneer. The Redwood forest of to-day is a tangle underfoot and a mass of broken limbs and fallen trees, all overgrown with Huckleberries and various Cantholus and other undergrowth, which make travel, except by roads or trails, almost impossible across country. The pioneer referred to me that in the earlier days a man could go by hanging up a single trail, the interior to the coast in almost any direction, as the woods were almost free of undergrowth. He was told by the Indians then that they made a yearly practice of firing the grass,—preparing the same, when new grown, to drive out the mice and other vermin. They now use roads in every direction across the forest belt, and the interests of the settlers are against sweeping fires, so that they are becoming less frequent with each year.

In the valleys the interest of every sheep rancher is against fires, and they do not sweep through close-cropped ranges as they did when the grass grew waist-high.

The Wild Garden.

To the Editor of GARDEN AND FOREST:

Sir,—No spot in the flower garden yields me so much pleasure as that which is devoted to the native plants which I gather from the woods and fields. While the Crocuses were yet in bloom, the snowdrops were not yet appointed at any spot followed by the Dog-tooth Violet and the beautiful little Dicentra cucullaria, or Dutchman’s Breeches. Soon after these followed two species of Trillium, and then the sky-blue Lungwort, Meritizia Virginica, with Phlox polemonium and different Violets. By the middle of May the feathery spikes of Tiarella were giving place to the graceful native Columbine, the Viola Cicely. Aside from the beauty of the plants that this plot furnishes, there is an opportunity for studying the habits of various plants, which one does not enjoy unless they are constantly under the eye. The most interesting problem is the constant struggle for existence among them. If above, the wild Columbine, Viola cucullaria, Thalictrum, Menyanthes, Latium maculatum, Lysimachia quadrifolia and Onoclea sensibilis will soon smoother out their neighbors. Lungwort, Bloodroot, Moon Seed, the Violets, Spring Beauty, Dog-tooth Violets, some of the Ferns like Osmunda and

Garden and Forest.