

Native Plant Spotlight by Krys Kirkwood

Erythronium oregonum – white fawn lily, Oregon fawn lily



This perennial herb in the lily family can grow 6-16 inches tall, and can be found in well-drained, open, grassy areas, or light woods, at low elevations. The leaves are lance-shaped, mottled with white, pale green, dark brown and/or greenish-black. Flowers are creamy white to white with a possible base color of orange-yellow. The tepals have a 'bent back' appearance. Usually there is a single, terminal, nodding flower, but could have up to 3. John Burroughs is said to have named this species 'fawn lily' because he thought the two leaves looked like the pricked ears of a fawn. More likely, 'fawn' alludes to the mottled leaf colouring. *Erythronium* comes from the greek



erythros for 'red', in reference to some pinkish-flowered species that was used in ancient times to make a dye.

I strongly urge leaving any of our native plants undisturbed. Enjoy them in their natural environment. Seek out nurseries and professionals who sell and/or deal with natives if you are wanting to add any to your garden.

- Photos: Krys Kirkwood
- Reference: Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Pojar and Mackinnon
Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest by Mark Turner and Phyllis Gustafson