

Coast Range fawn lily (*Erythronium elegans*)



THREATENED



Flower (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of Coast Range fawn lily. Photos by Melissa Carr (left and right) and Gerald Carr (center). If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

Family

Liliaceae

Plant description

Coast Range fawn lily is a perennial arising from a corm 2-5.5 cm long by 0.8-1.5 cm wide, which produces new cormlets laterally. Leaves are uniformly deep green or faintly mottled with brown or white. Non-flowering plants bear a single leaf, 6-8 cm long by 4-5 cm wide, the broad ovate-lanceolate blade usually abruptly narrowed to a slender, nearly wingless petiole. Flowering plants bear two more or less prostrate leaves 7-20 cm long by 2-4 (-8) cm wide, the narrowly lanceolate blade, often with wavy margins, gradually narrowed to a short, winged petiole. Flowers are nodding, number 1-2 (-4), and are borne on a scape 10-30 cm tall. The perianth is strongly reflexed in bright sunlight to only slightly spreading in low light conditions. Tepals are lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, 2-4 (-5) cm long, inner tepals more or less white and auriculate at the base, outer tepals more or less white and tinged (often strongly) with pink, particularly abaxially and along the midline; both inner and outer tepals have a yellow band at the base, become more pinkish throughout with age, and are darker on abaxial surfaces. Stamens are 1.3-2.2 cm long, the filaments white, flattened, linear to lanceolate, and 0.5-2 mm wide, the anthers yellow. The style is white, 1-3 cm long, the stigma deeply divided with slender, usually recurved lobes 2-4 mm long. Capsules are obovoid to oblong, 2-5 cm long.

Distinguishing characteristics

The distributions of three other species of *Erythronium* overlap with that of Coast Range fawn lily: *E. grandiflorum*, *E. oregonum*, and *E. revolutum*. *Erythronium grandiflorum* is distinguished from Coast Range fawn lily by its yellow tepals (versus white to pinkish tepals with a yellow band at the base); *E. oregonum* and *E. revolutum* both usually occur at lower elevations than Coast Range fawn lily and have distinctly mottled leaves (versus solid or faintly mottled) and dilated stamen filaments 2-3 mm wide (versus 0.5-2 mm wide).

When to survey

Surveys for Coast Range fawn lily should be completed when the species is in flower, from the beginning of May to early June.

Habitat

This species is found in a variety of Coast Range habitats, including meadows, rocky cliffs, brushland, open and closed coniferous forest, and the edges of sphagnum bogs at elevations above 790 m (2600 ft).

Associated plant species include *Abies amabilis*, *A. procera*, *Acer circinatum*, *Amelanchier alnifolia*, *Arabis* sp., *Camassia quamash*, *Carex* spp., *Cladothamnus* sp., *Fragaria virginiana*, *Fritillaria camschatcensis*, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Lupinus* sp., *Maianthemum dilatatum*, *Menziesia* sp., *Montia* sp., *Penstemon* sp., *Picea* sp., *Pinus monticola*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Ribes* sp., *Rosa* sp., *Rubus ursinus*, *Senecio sylvaticus*, *Thuja plicata*, *Tsuga heterophylla*, *Vaccinium* spp., *Viola adunca*, *Xerophyllum tenax*, and a variety of mosses and grasses.

Range

Coast Range fawn lily is restricted to the Coast Range of northern Oregon. It is known from six primary sites, each occurring on prominent peaks and ridges separated by up to 48 km (30 miles), resulting in a fragmented distribution among high-elevation islands of habitat separated by lower elevation coniferous forests.

Oregon counties

Lincoln, Polk, Tillamook, Yamhill

Federal status

Species of Concern

Threats

A major threat to the Coast Range fawn lily is vegetative competition from encroaching shrubs and trees due to changes in natural disturbance regimes, including fire suppression. Studies indicate that a larger portion of Coast Range fawn lily plants found under heavy canopy cover appear to be non-reproductive compared to plants in more open areas. Other significant threats to this rare lily include herbivory by elk and deer, exotic plant invasions, and timber harvest and management activities.

Conservation planning

An interagency [Conservation Assessment](#) for Coast Range fawn lily was completed by the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management in 2009.

Did you know?

Coast Range fawn lily was first described relatively recently by botanists Paul Hammond and Kenton Chambers in 1985, based on plants discovered on Mt. Hebo in 1982. Morphological and molecular data indicate the species is of hybrid origin, likely the result of crosses between *Erythronium montanum*, a montane to subalpine species, and either of two lowland species, *E. oregonum* or *E. revolutum*. It is also possible that the lowland ancestor of Coast Range fawn lily was a hybrid between *E. oregonum* and *E. revolutum*.

References

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