

Romulea subfistulosa



David Litrun

Romulea subfistulosa - Taxonomy

- Family: Iridaceae (Iris)
- Genus: *Romulea* (after mythical co-founder of Rome) (90 spp.)
- Subgenus: *Spatalanthus*
- Specific epithet: *subfistulosa* (after curling leaves)
- Common name: Froetang or Frutang (Malay corruption of Port. *fruta*)



Alan Horstmann: <http://www.ispot.org.za/node/157959?nav=search>



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Romulea subfistulosa - Description

- South African Deciduous perennial
- Geophyte: corm
- Grows in winter: June-September
- Dormant during summer: December-March
- Bloom time: August-September
- Fruits of *Romulea* edible



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Romulea subfistulosa - Description

- Height: 5-10 in.
- Leaves: basal, occurring in groups of 4-9 (4-10 in.)
- Flowers: composed of 6 tepals (1.5-2.5 in.)
- Stems: subterranean during flowering, emerge during fruiting (to 3.5 in.)
- Corms: rounded at base with curved acuminate teeth (.6 x .75 in.)



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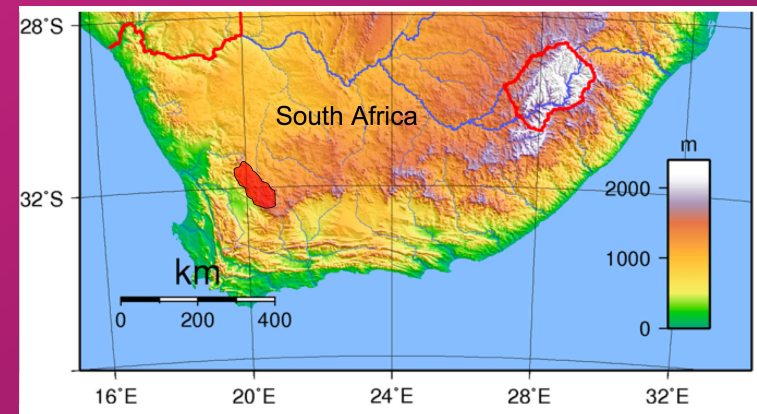
Mary Sue Ittner: <http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/SouthAfricanRomuleasFour#>

Romulea subfistulosa - Distribution

- Cape province: western edge of Karoo Plateau (Roggeveld Escarpment) from Calvinia to Sutherland
- Latitude distribution: 31°25' S to 32°24' S
- Elevation: 3180 to 5890 ft. (Alpine plant community)
- Temperatures (average):
37°F (winter)
86°F (summer)
Annual extreme min. 28°F (9a)



http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/south_africa_reliefmap.jpg



Romulea subfistulosa - Habitat

- Soils: dolerite, sandstone, shale parent material
- Sandy to sandy-clay texture
- Poor nutrient quality
- Neutral to alkaline pH
- Succulents and other geophytes



Dr Ori Fragman-Sapir http://www.bulbsociety.org/GALLERY_OF_THE_WORLDS_BULBS/GRAPHICS/Romulea/Romulea_subfistulosa/Romulea_subfistulosa.html



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Romulea subfistulosa - Propagation

- Four month growing period (June-September)
- Flowering occurs after second year if grown from seed
- Corm producing
- Vegetative prop.: offset cormel separation (50-68°F)
- Bulb forcing, scooping?



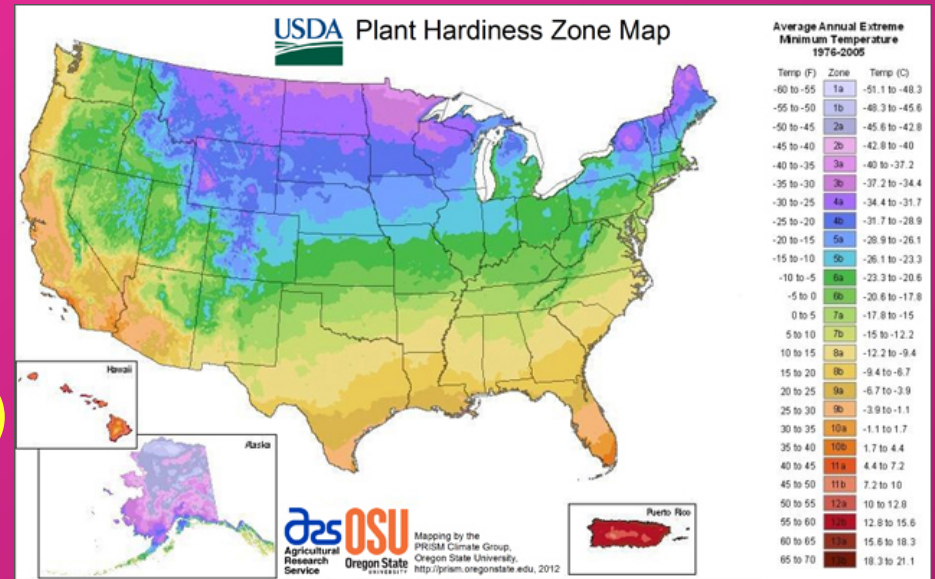
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Romulea subfistulosa - Products

- Potted houseplant (4-6 in.)
- Bulb pan
- Bedding plant (9a-11)
- Heat & drought tolerant
- Full sun
- Flowering: 41-50°F (day)
32-41°F (night)



<http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>



<http://back40feet.blogspot.com/2010/03/mid-spring-in-small-city-garden.html>

Romulea subfistulosa - Production

- Week 35: plant bulbs
 - Week 1: short day cond.
 - Week 5: flower
 - Week 13: flower cessation
 - Week 18: separate bulbs
(store dry 70-81°F)
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- Target sales: weeks 5-9
(Valentine's Day, Easter)
 - Shipping: weeks 3-4



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Romulea subfistulosa - Experiment

- 64 seeds (week 7)
- Germination mix, 128-plug tray, 32 covered with coarse vermiculite, 32 uncovered
- Week 18: 0% germination

“Many horticulturalists I have spoken to during this study are not just interested in *Romulea* because of their beautiful flowers, but also because growing seeds of *Romulea* to the flowering stage is considered somewhat of a horticultural feat and they aspire to the challenge” (Swart 2012).



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Questions - Discussion



<http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-gd63pODUZvY/Tx7sdWNGajI/AAAAAAAFXQ/InNF2f0IXI/s1600/FLOWER+-+ROMULEA+SUBFIDSTULOSA.jpg>



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