



BULBINE FRUTESCENS SHRUBBY BULBINE

OUTSTANDING FEATURES: This South African native has succulent green leaves, reminiscent of an *Aloe*. Shrubby Bulbine is an interesting, lush-looking plant even when not in bloom. From fall through spring its delicate, unusual flower spikes attract attention. There are two varieties; the original yellow-flowering form, and a more compact orange-flowering selection called 'Hallmark'. These small, compact plants are ideal for grouping under desert trees, or tucking into tight planting areas.

DESCRIPTION: *Bulbine frutescens* is a shrubby, rhizomatous plant with succulent leaves. Plants spread by rhizomes (underground stems), creating low, wide-spreading clumps. The yellow-flowering form grows to 18 inches tall and 3 feet or more across. Its cylindrical, fleshy leaves are 4 to 6 inches long, usually upright to slightly spreading on the plant. 'Hallmark', the orange-flowering selection, is more compact, and its leaves are slightly smaller. In fall, winter, and spring the plants are topped by 12 to 18-inch-long spikes of yellow or orange flowers. Individual flowers are about 1 inch across and have numerous small hairs on the anther filaments.

CULTURE/MAINTENANCE: *Bulbine frutescens* is hardy to 10° F, although there may be some leaf damage in an extended hard frost. If there is leaf damage, new leaves grow out quickly in the spring. Because of its succulent leaves, *Bulbine frutescens* can withstand long periods of drought, and should be watered less frequently in fall and winter. It has a moderately-fast growth rate, which can be increased by applying some supplemental water in spring and summer. Plants grow best in a soil that has good drainage. Shrubby bulbine is very low maintenance, only needing occasional pruning when the stems become too top heavy. Also, spent flower spikes can be removed if desired.

IDENTIFICATION: Currently there are two selection of one species of *Bulbine* in cultivation in Arizona. The more commonly known form of *Bulbine frutescens* has 1 inch wide, yellow flowers. The other form, called 'Hallmark', is more dwarf and compact, and has orange petals on the flowers. Plants of *Bulbine frutescens* could also be confused with some species of *Bulbinella*. These two genera can be distinguished by the flowers. *Bulbine* species have hairs on the anther filaments while *Bulbinella* species do not.

LANDSCAPE APPLICATION: Use Shrubby Bulbine in full or filtered sun. In the hot low deserts, part shade is probably better, as leaf tips tend to burn in reflected heat locations. Plants form tighter, more compact clumps when grown in full sun; tending to be larger and looser in the shade. This accent combines well with other succulents in a cactus or rock garden. It can be used in raised planters, in tight planting



spaces along sidewalks or entryways, and as an understory planting beneath desert trees. Even though Bulbines are native to South Africa and not the Sonoran Desert, they blend well with many southwestern natives such as *Acacia* species, *Cercidium* species, and *Prosopis* species. They work well with perennials and small shrubs also. Some suggested

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GROUND
COVER

BULBINE FRUTESCENS
SHRUBBY BULBINE



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companion plants are *Dalea capitata* **Sierra Gold**™, *Eupatorium greggii* **Boothill**™, *Zephyranthes* species, *Penstemon* species, and *Zexmenia hispida* **Devil's River**™.

PRECAUTIONS: Be careful not to overwater *Bulbine frutescens*, especially in fall and winter. It is quite drought tolerant and can withstand several weeks without supplemental irrigation. So far, we have not observed any rabbit damage on this plant.



Close-up flowers of yellow-flowering *Bulbine frutescens* (above), and the dwarf orange clone called 'Hallmark' (left).



AT A GLANCE SUMMARY	
SIZE (HEIGHT x WIDTH)	2 Feet x 3 Feet ('Hallmark' is smaller)
FLOWER COLOR	Yellow, Orange ('Hallmark')
FLOWER SEASON	Fall, winter and spring
EXPOSURE	Full sun, part shade
WATER	Low
GROWTH RATE	Fast
HARDINESS	10° F USDA 8
PRUNING	Occasional thinning
HARDY IN THESE CITIES	Phoenix, Tucson, Palm Desert, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Austin, West Texas, El Paso, South Texas



A lush planting of *Bulbine frutescens* in the Los Angeles area.

For more information, call: toll-free (800) 840-8509 or (623) 247-8509
Mountain States Wholesale Nursery, PO Box 2500, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340-2500