



## Chocolate Lily or Indian Rice



### Identification

The perennial herb *Fritillaria camschatcensis* (Chocolate Lily or Indian Rice) shows three whorls of lance-shaped leaves and bronze-to-brown flowers in spring (Pojar 1994). The stems reach 16 inches, commonly with one or two flowers but as many as nine. Bulbs have overlapping scales with many small bulblets – resembling rice grains – surrounding the main bulb (Pratt 1997).



### Habitat

Chocolate Lily thrives along coastal parts of the Pacific Northwest, Alaska and into Asia on shorelines, edges of salt marshes and stream banks (Pojar 1994).

### Uses and Cultivation

Coastal Natives eat bulblets (Indian Rice) raw, cooked or dried in soups or pounded into flour (Moerman 1998). As far as cultivation goes, Chocolate Lily prefers moist sites with hummus soil and light shade. Use in borders or rock beds on dry sites (Kruckeberg 1996).



### Propagation

Bulblets (Indian Rice) from mother bulbs were collected locally in August and October 2005 and then sowed into flats with a media of one part sand (one-inch cover), loam and peat moss. Flats were over-wintered in a cold frame and placed in a shaded bed during the summer. Bulblets will need at least one more growing season before transplanting into beds.

Seeds can be fall sown on a media of 1:1:1 sand: loam: peat and lightly covered with 5 mm (1/4 in.) grit, sand or perlite. Seed-grown plants take three years or more to produce flowers. Bulblets are faster and easier.

## 2004 Trials (Pratt and Jefferson-Brown. 1997)

**Plant Material:** bulblet. **Collection Date/Location:** 10/03/04, Molly Kabler's backyard, Sitka

**Sowing Date:** 10/03/05.

**Sowing Unit/number:** 6-inch square containers.

**Potting Media:** 1:1:1 sand: loam: peat covered with 1-inch sand.

**Maintenance:** In the fall, removed sand from container tops to determine condition of bulblets. Bulbs looked less like grains of rice than when planted. Bulblets were oblong with tops and bottoms and small roots.

**Survival:** multiple bulblets formed in all pots; four pots have bulbs.

**Location:** pots sunk in rock bed. Also one bulb and bulblets collected from Harbor Mountain in fall 2005 were planted in soil close to road.

## 2004 Trials (Pratt and Jefferson-Brown. 1997)

**Plant Material:** seed.

**Collection Date/Location:** 08/07/04, Sitka, Starrigavan Estuary.

**Sowing Date:** 10/03/04.

**Sowing Unit:** one tray of 28, 2-inch round, 3-inch deep plugs.

**Sowing Media:** 1:1:1 sand: loam: peat and covered with 1/4-inch sand.

**Maintenance:** over-wintered in cold frame/summer in shaded bed.

**Fertilizer:** grit, sand or perlite.

**Germination:** three seeds germinated 4/24/05.

**Survival:** to be determined spring 2006

**Location:** sowing unit in cold frame for winter.

## References:

Kruckeberg, Arthur R. 1996. *Gardening With Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press: Seattle, Wash. 282p.

Moerman, Daniel E. 1998. *Native American Ethnobotany*. Timber Press. Portland, Ore. 240p.

Pojar, J., Mackinnon, A. 1994. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska*. Lone Pine Publishing: Vancouver, British Columbia. 527p.

Pratt, Kevin, Jefferson-Brown, M. 1997. *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Fritillaries*. Timber Press, Portland, Ore. 160p.

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