
SULCOREBUTIA tarijensis Ritter nom.nud. Cactaceae

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Original Field No. FR 1154 Tarija, Bolivia

By John Donald

This plant has not yet been described by Friedrich Ritter but it is becoming quite familiar in cultivation and distributed by a number of cactus nurseries. The plant illustrated was collected by Alfred Lau on the road from Iscayachi to Tarija at 3000 m, Lau 411. Walter Rausch has also collected the plant from the same area, 'between Sama and Tarija - the most southerly *Sulcorebutia* habitat known'.

Roberto Vasquez and Karel Knize are also known to have collected the plant and the latter form KK 864 has been the most widely distributed.

Rausch 491 and Lau 411 have had a much more limited distribution to collections. There appears little variation in all these separate acquisitions from the wild and it seems reasonable to assume that it is the same race that is sampled each time. Like so many of the *Sulcorebutias* it seems to be very local in habitat distribution, endemic to a very limited area and thus in danger of over collection and exploitation. Happily it is easy to cultivate and modern techniques of vegetative propagation should ensure that it is not necessary to plunder the original - habitat in order to satisfy demands for this strikingly beautiful dwarf cactus. It is equally easily raised from seed, which also should soon be plentifully available, flowering plants can be grown in three to four years from sowing.



The following description is taken from Lau 411.

Bright green, globular to short cylindrical bodies, freely offsetting, individual heads up to 40 mm wide by 40 mm high, with ca., 12 ribs resolved into low 5-7 mm diam. tubercles in which the long narrow, 4 mm long by 1 mm wide, areoles lie set in a deep groove. There are 5-6 pairs of lateral, pectinate, reflexed yellow or brown to black curved spines 5-10 mm long. The flower bud is dark green, with broad naked scales. The perianth opens up to 40 mm wide with blood-red spatulate petals, which reflex to form a flat circle in full sun. The pericarp is crimson with short olive-green naked scales and the receptacle is similarly coloured but is remarkably short ca. only 5 mm long and 4 mm wide, more reminiscent of a *Weingartia* than a *Sulcorebutia* in shape. The throat is reddish-orange. The filaments are purple and extend upright beyond the corolla with the anthers level with the stigma, reminiscent somewhat of certain *Aylosteras*. The style is green with 4-5 lobed 2 mm stigma. The fruit is a flattened dark reddish berry ca. 5 mm in diam. The seeds are black and typical of *Sulcorebutia-Weingartia*.

KK 865 differ slightly in that most of the samples seen have somewhat slimmer and slightly longer individual heads than the Lau 411 plants. Epidermal colours can also be shades darker than for the Lau plants, spination and flowers are identical.

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