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Puya raimondii

[Synonyms : *Pourretia gigantea*]

PUYA is an evergreen perennial. Native to Bolivia and Peru it has ultimately small greenish-white flowers.

The plant flowers when it is 80-150 years old and dies after flowering. When the plant is in flower (to about 8,000 flowers on a towering spike) the leaf tuft droops like a skirt.

Local South American Indian tribes used to set fire to this plant (and may still do so) when it has flowered. Young plants are often cut down as their sharp-edged leaves are low enough for them to be a hazard to sheep which can be blinded by them.