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*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*

[Synonyms : *Chamaerops hystrix*, *Corypha hystrix*, *Rhapis arundinacea*, *Rhapis caroliniana*, *Sabal hystrix*]

**NEEDLE PALM** is a low shrubby, suckering, evergreen fan palm with virtually no trunk.

Native to south-eastern North America, it has matted brown fibre and to 15 in. long, dark brown or black spines from each leaf sheath; and small dense clusters of yellowish-brown flowers and reddish-brown fruit.

It is also known as Blue palmetto, Creeping palmetto, Dwarf palmetto, Hedgehog palm, *Nadelpalme* (German), *Nålepalme* (Norwegian), Needle palmetto, *Palmier à aiguilles* (French), Porcupine palm, Porcupine palmetto, and *Zhen zong* (Chinese).

The flowers are pollinated by a species of beetle.

The sharp stiff needles protect the plant (not least the flowers) from wildlife.

The State of Florida in the USA views the needle palm as endangered in the wild due to commercial exploitation.

This palm is believed to be able to tolerate -20°C.

*Hystrix* is derived from Greek *hystricho-* (porcupine) meaning 'bristly or porcupine-like' with reference to the thorns.

Needle palm is cultivated as an ornamental quite widely, not only in North America but also in northern Europe – not least because of its novelty in being able to tolerate some cold temperatures.