Needle Palm

Rhapidophyllum hystrix



Needle Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

This variety is a clumping, shrubby, nearly trunkless fan palm; extremely hardy for a palm; large, glossy, deeply divided, fan shaped leaves on long, upright petioles; each leaf has long, sharply pointed, needle-like black spines; a great garden accent



Needle Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Needle Palm is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its ornamental upright and spreading habit of growth. It has attractive green evergreen foliage. The large spiny fan-shaped palmate leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Needle Palm is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and may require the occasional pruning to look its best. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Needle Palm is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Needle Palm will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It has a low canopy, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Needle Palm makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.