

# ACANTHUS FAMILY ALBUM

## ACANTHACEAE

### Movers and Shakers

The name for this clan comes from the Greek word *acanthos* (thorny, spiny), but spiny plants are not typical of the family. One member commonly seen in sculpture, if not in living form, is *Acanthus spinosus* (spiny bear's breeches), whose leaves grace the Corinthian columns of classical architecture.

For the most part, members of the family are colorful tropical plants. One feature that unites the family is the ability to propel seeds outwards by means of a spring-like hook on the seeds.

The Acanthaceae are rapidly evolving along several fronts: according to one researcher, plant-pollinator relationships are developing virtually "overnight." The adaptation for hummingbird pollination has evolved independently at least seven times in the family; and the variance of pollen shape and surface texture is among the most diverse of any seen in flowering plants.



© top tropicals.com



G.A. Cooper @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS



G.A. Cooper @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS



G.A. Cooper @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS