

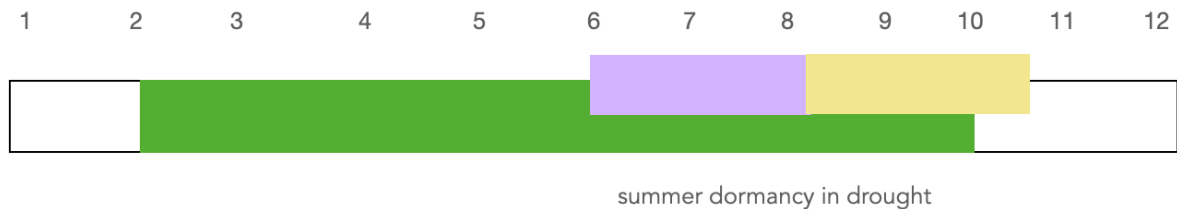
ACANTHUS - *Acanthaceae*

Bears' Breeches

30 species, from southern Europe, Middle East, parts of Africa. Warmer climate species often shrubby.

A. spinosus

Southern Europe; light woodland, scrub, shade



Height	0.3-0.8m (foliage), 1.4-2.0m (in flower)
Spread	0.5m +
Foliage	Large, coarsely divided, spines at tips, dark green
Architecture	B2 - Flowers held well above clumps of lower foliage
Flowers	Off-white with purple bracts in large spikes
Post-flowering	2-3 months seed head interest
Longevity	Notably long-lived, indestructible
Spread mode	Rhizocaulophyte. Guerrilla
Underground	Adventitious shoots can form from damaged roots.
Spread Rate	Rapid
Persistence	Highly persistent
Clump Density	High
Standing	Firm
Seeding	Minimal
Soil	Average, prefers humus-rich. Tolerant of woody plant root pressure.
Moisture	High tolerance of summer drought, but dormancy normal.
Light	Sun, shade at lower latitudes
Hardiness	USDA zone 5

Very slow to establish, often taking several years before flowering and showing its true character as a very strongly-spreading plant, frequently used for ground cover in Mediterranean countries. Technically, it is not rhizomatous, but produces shoots directly from the far-reaching roots, making removal of established plants very difficult. Growth will start at relatively low temperatures, but will become summer dormant in dry periods.

Spinosissimus Group

A name that covers forms with more deeply-incised leaves, with spiny tips.

A. hungaricus

Very similar to *A. spinosus* except that the leaves are not so deeply cut.

A. mollis is similar but with broader, lusher-looking foliage. In active growth during winter in mild climate zones. The classic Mediterranean species. USDA zone 7

(**Latifolius Group**) '**Rue Ledan**' has pure white flowers on 2m stems with leaves to 1.2m!



A. spinosus in early spring, showing adventitious shoots emerging from ground



A. mollis in spring, early season growth is an advantage in mild winter climate regions.



A. spinosus foliage in spring

Images

A. mollis

<https://www.architecturalplants.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/428769172.jpg>

<https://www.alpinenurseries.com.au/alpine/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Acanthus-mollis-2.jpg>

A. spinosus

<https://www.architecturalplants.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/1365405278.jpg>

https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/seeds-plants-gardening/product-images/op/z/1306_1.jpg

Labelled *A. mollis*, actually *A. spinosus*

<https://i0.wp.com/sugarcreekgardens.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Acanthus-spinosus-Bears-Breeches-1.jpg?fit=1000%2C750&ssl=1>