

The Common Palms of Surfside Beach

Areaceae is the family name given to the 2500⁺ species of palms that have been identified worldwide. Only two of the six subfamilies, *Arecoideae* and *Coryphoideae*, contain species that thrive in Surfside. Although palms are called trees, scientifically they are classified as grasses because of their growth patterns. The following information should be helpful when trying to identify these palms, all of which (except for the Needle Palm) were photographed in Surfside Beach.

Saw Palmetto/Scrub Palm (*Serenoa repens*)



Creeping Trunks that Root
Saw-tooth Like Leaf Stems
Low (3 ft), Aggressive Spreader

Dwarf Palmetto (*Sabal minor*)



Short or Buried Trunk
Up to 4 to 5 feet High and Wide
Split 'V' in Middle of Foliage

Needle Palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*)



Sharp Needles on Crown
Deep Green Fan Leaves with Silvery Undersides
World's Hardest Palm

Jelly/Pindo Palm (*Butia capitata*)



Feathered (pinnate) Fronds
Grey-Green to Blue-Green Fronds
Commonly 10 to 20 Feet Tall

California Fan Palm (*Washingtonia filifera*)



Large Trunk -up to 2 Feet
Up to 100 Feet Tall
Largest Native Palm in Continental US

Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)



Fan shaped (palmate) Fronds
Commonly to 30 Feet Tall
South Carolinas State Tree

Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortune*)



Burlap-like Substance Covering Single Trunk
Trunk often Wider at the Top than Bottom
Average Mature Height of 20 Feet

Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*)



Resembles California Fan Palm when Young
Trunk Usually Less than 1 Foot Across

**Mediterranean or European Fan Palm
(*Chamaerops humilis*)**



Clumping Fan Palm with Stiff Leaves
Up to 5 Feet in Height

Please Note:

Because Sago “Palms” are not true Palms, they are not listed above. The Sago is a member of the Cycadaceae Family.

A few Canary Palms can also be found in Surfside Beach.

This information was developed by the Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful (KSBB) Committee and The Clemson Cooperative Extension.