



Saw Palmetto - <i>Serenoa repens</i>	
Description	The saw palmetto is a small palm tree that grows wild in the USA. It has spiny saw-toothed stems that lie at the base of each leaf.
Traditional Use	Saw palmetto has a long history of folk use, including supporting the health of the urinary tract, relieving persistent coughs and aiding digestion. It is now mainly used to relieve the symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland.
Commercial Availability & Dosage	Supplements are generally made from extracts standardised to contain 85% to 95% fatty acids and sterols - the active ingredients responsible for its therapeutic qualities. Dosage range: 2-5g dried berry daily; 320mg daily liposterolic extract daily ¹ .
Precautions / Contra-Indications¹	Before self-medicating with saw palmetto, patients should get a firm diagnosis relating to their prostate condition. Although saw palmetto can relieve symptoms of Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH), it does not shrink the prostate; therefore, the condition should be closely monitored by a health care professional.
Pregnancy & Breastfeeding¹	Not to be taken if pregnant or breast-feeding due to its hormonal effects.
Adverse Effects¹	Side effects are relatively uncommon, but include mild abdominal pain, nausea, dizziness and headache.
Interactions¹	Due to its hormonal effects, Saw Palmetto may affect oral contraceptives and HRT.
References	1. Braun & Cohen. Herbs and Natural Supplements: An evidence-based guide. Churchill Livingstone, 2005.