

California Fan Palm, *Desert Fan Palm*

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: low, medium
Salinity/ppm	: very high (25000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

SHAPE

Type	: palms
Height	: 15 m-25 m
Spread	: 3 m-5 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pastel white
Size	: 200 cm
Period	: March - June

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: drupe
Fruit size	: 0.8 cm

This palm is grown in all frost-free climates for its tough nature and pretty appearance. The Desert Fan Palm is indigenous to northwest Mexico, western Arizona and California, where it reaches 25 metres height in favourable conditions. In cultivation, it may not exceed a height of 15 metres, but in any case the width ranges from 3 to 5 metres. It is a very successful fan palm in Ar-riyadh. Its large leaves consist of a strong petiole that is armed with sharp hooks along the edges, and a round blade which is folded many times in section. Often, they are divided in sections exposing fibres in between. Additionally, the tips are brushy and refer to the species' name filifera, which means 'wearing filaments'. Young leaves always emerge from the crown's terminus, unfold and slowly bend down when mature to eventually persist when dry to form an ornamental skirt which led to its other common name, Petticoat Palm. White flowers appear on stalks that are often several metres long. When pollinated, they turn into dark-brown, oval fruit. This species develops a much wider trunk than its relative, *Washingtonia robusta*. Hybrids may occur both in the wild and in cultivation. Desert Fan Palms take all types of well-drained soils, even alkaline and poor conditions. Overwatering may result in rotting which kills the plant. Frost and drought are tolerated, and the palm thrives in both full sun and semi-shade locations alike. Growth can be accelerated by frequent watering and all-purpose fertilisers.

