

Dwarf Fan Palm

GENERAL	
Origin	: sub-Mediterranean, Mediterranean
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: moderate
CONDITIONS	
Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1800 ppm)
Hardiness	: -12°C
SHAPE	
Type	: shrub
Height	: 1 m-4 m
Spread	: 1 m-3 m
Foliage	: evergreen
FLOWER	
Colour	: yellow
Size	: 15 cm - 35 cm
Period	: June - July
FRUIT	
Type of fruit	: drupe(fleshy/ juicy)
Fruit size	: 1.2 cm - 3 cm
Toxicity	: inedible, fruit

The Dwarf Fan Palm is native to the Mediterranean area and is one of the few palms to grow naturally in Europe. These small palms are often seen in Arriyadh, where they withstand occasional cold snaps with frost well. In the wild, they usually have a single trunk some 4 metres high, while cultivated ones are mostly multi-stemmed. Unless trimmed, the trunk is covered by remnants of old fronds. The fans are triangular spades 60 cm across and sharp thorns align the margins of the petiole that measures more than 1 metre in length. Yellow inflorescences appear in early summer at the base of the crown. Male and female flowers usually grow on different plants. In autumn, tiny, inedible dates develop to 1 cm in diameter with yellow, orange or brown rind. Dwarf Fan Palms are very tough and tolerate full sun, wind and some salinity. Drought is tolerated by an established specimen, but stagnant water may kill it. Rich, well-drained soil and deep, regular irrigation are preferred. *C. humilis* can be planted very decoratively in Arriyadh. They make striking accent plants in rock gardens and containers, and look good in groups on slopes where they do not have to compete with larger shrubs or trees. In former times, the fibres were used for making mats, ropes and brooms. Nowadays, the leaves may be fabricated as a substitute for linen or as ‘vegetable horsehair’. Propagation by seed is most common, but offshoots can be detached from a clump. Maintenance is low: removal of dead fronds and unwanted shoots is occasionally necessary.

