Chamaerops humilis European Fan Palm
Edward F. Gilman

Introduction
This small, multi-stemmed, hardy palm is the only one native to Europe, and is harder than most palms (Fig. 1). The curved, clumping, short trunks and gray-green, fan-shaped leaves, borne thickly in a bushy head, make a stunning sculptural element in a garden or patio containers. The fine-textured fronds make the palm stand out from other plants in the landscape. Leaf color on individual plants ranges from light green through silver. Although growth rate is slow, it is well worth the wait since even small plants will stand out nicely in almost any landscape.

General Information
Scientific name: Chamaerops humilis
Pronunciation: ku-MEE-rops HEW-mil-liss
Common name(s): European fan palm
Family: Palmae

Plant type: tree; shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: specimen; container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; foundation; border; mass planting; accent; suitable for growing indoors
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description
Height: 8 to 15 feet
Spread: 6 to 10 feet
Plant habit: upright; irregular outline or silhouette
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed
Leaf shape: star-shaped
Leaf venation: palmate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches
Leaf color: silver/gray; blue or blue-green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Figure 1. European fan palm.
Flower
Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture
Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other
Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management
By removing suckers from the base of the main trunk, this slightly salt-tolerant palm may also be trained as a single-trunked palm. Since the leaf stalks are spiny, fan palm may also be used as a barrier, planted three to five feet apart. It makes a nice accent plant in a shrub border or in a low-growing groundcover. It can also be planted several feet apart in a mass on a large-scale landscape forming a fine-textured accent area. Growing best in moist rich soil, it is drought- and wind-resistant, and established plants will survive temperatures to 10°F or below, in full sun, or light shade. Plants grow very slowly in the shade.

Propagation is by seed or division.

Pests and Diseases
Scale may be a problem.

No diseases are of major concern.