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Chamaerops humilis

EUROPEAN FAN PALM is an evergreen palm. Native to western Mediterranean it has tiny, yellowish-green flowers.

It is also known as Algerian fibre, *Crin végétale* (French), *Dvärgpalm* (Swedish), Dwarf fan palm, Dwarf palm, Fan palm, *Gummar safrani* (Maltese), Hair palm, Horsehair, *Kääpiöpalmu* (Finnish), Mediterranean fan palm, Mediterranean palm, *Palmička nízka* (Slovak), *Palmito* (Spanish), Vegetable hair, *Žumara nízká* (Czech), and *Zwergpalme* (German).

Humilis is derived from Latin *humus* (on the ground, low) meaning ‘low-growing or lower growing than most of its kind’.

This is the only palm that is native to Europe and it grows wild there. It can withstand temperatures of 0°C and has often been cultivated as an ornamental plant.

Fibre from the leaves has been used for making rope and brushes. Known as ‘Algerian fibre’ or *crin végétale* it used also to be a major export commodity for the Algerians, when it was in demand as stuffing for mattresses and furniture.

Locally the young leaf buds have been eaten as a vegetable.

Authorities believe it was introduced to Britain in 1731.