

*Chamaerops humilis*

**Scientific classification** 

Kingdom	: <a href="#">Plantae</a>
Clade	: <a href="#">Angiosperms</a>
Class	: <a href="#">Monocots</a>
Order	: <a href="#">Arecales</a>
Family	: <a href="#">Arecaceae</a>
Subfamily	: <a href="#">Coryphoideae</a>
Tribe	: <a href="#">Trachycarpeae</a>
Genus	: <i>Chamaerops</i>
Species	: <i>C. humilis</i>



*Chamaerops humilis*

**Description** *Chamaerops humilis* var. *argentea*, south slopes of the [High Atlas](#), Morocco. Zoom in to see the spines on the petioles.

**Description :**

*Chamaerops humilis* is a shrub-like clumping palm, with several stems growing from a single base. It has an underground rhizome which produces shoots with palmate, sclerophyllous leaves.

The stems grow slowly and often tightly together, eventually reaching 2–5 m (10–20 ft) tall with a trunk diameter of 20–25 cm (8–10 in). It is a fan palm (Arecaceae tribe Corypheae), and as such, has leaves with petioles terminating in rounded fans of 10–20 leaflets. Each leaf is up to 1.5 m (5 ft) long, with leaflets 50–80 cm (20–30 in) long. The petioles are armed with numerous sharp, needle-like spines; these may protect the stem growing point from browsing animals. The flowers are borne in dense, short inflorescences at the tops of the stems. The plants usually, but not invariably, are dioecious with male and female flowers on separate plants

## Uses

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*Chamaerops humilis* has a wide distribution in uncultivated land, and it is adapted to regimes of frequent burning, which it survives largely by re-sprouting from underground rhizomes and from fire-damaged stems. Such factors make the species ecologically important in preventing erosion and desertification and in providing shelter and food to many species of animals.

Apart from its material benefits, this palmetto is of emotional value as a charismatic component of the "garrigues" and "macchias" of the Mediterranean coastline.

The leaves of the adult plants have been used to make brooms and for weaving mats, carrier baskets, and similar articles. For finer work the young, unopened leaves are treated with sulphur to soften them softer and provide supple fibre.