

About Dwarf Fan Palm - *Chamaerops humilis*

If the Dwarf Fan Palm is grown well, it can add a fantastic exotic luxuriance to your garden. The key is to feed and water them enough, to get them to grow reasonably fast (left to their own devices, they grow slowly) and, more importantly, remove all leaves that are less than perfect. Anything brown, yellow or spotty must be eliminated.

Beware of the thorns on the leaf stalks - they are vicious. Either keep your sleeves rolled down or buy some of our heavy-duty gauntlets. 'Humilis' means low growing in botanical Latin so they don't - normally - get much taller than about 6ft but their geographical distribution around their native Mediterranean basin has allowed them to form many different forms over the eons of time. One thing they all have in common is the fact that - unlike any other palm - they sucker, so a single plant appears to be lots of plants. A great pile of palmy leaves. The variables are as follows : the height to which they grow (trunk-less to trunks 20ft tall), the colour of the leaves (very green to quite grey-green) and the fine-ness of the leaf (soft, delicate and flexible to quite stiff and course)

Having spent the last few million years evolving in arid climates around the Mediterranean, they like our damp and mild climate very much in many ways - but they do get fungal spots on the old leaves because they've never had to evolve a mechanism of their own to deal with such a damp environment.

Some notes about spotty leaves

Some plants (this is one) are susceptible to getting black spots on their leaves. This is the growth of fungal organisms that land on the leaf and grow. They do no harm to the plant, but they look unsightly. This spottiness only seems to afflict a small number of plants that have spent the last few million years evolving in a dry climate - where airborne fungal spores are rare and therefore the plants have never had a reason to develop a way to combat the situation.

First cut off as many spotty leaves and (preferably) burn them. If the spots are really bad, use a fungicide on the leaves (any will do - particularly anything recommended for roses) to stop the fungus spreading.

Leaf removal removes the source of infection, fungicide kills the spores (but doesn't make the spots go away).

For further help and advice

Please come into the nursery (with pictures if you have them) and we will be happy to advise you further, or ask your question on Facebook.

