1.2 MATLAB: General usage

Working with MATLAB mainly involves using four windows: the desktop (for interactively entering program code or to type commands), the figure window¹ (for graphical output), an editor window² (for handling user-written programs), and the help window³ (very useful).

Besides containing the command subwindow with the input prompt, in separate parts the *desktop* also lists the variables (subwindow "workspace") and the contents of the directory (containing the user-written programs) presently in use, and it displays the command history (which will be saved at the end of a MATLAB session).

In the *command subwindow*, each line of input is taken as an expression to be computed (or a command to be executed) one after the other. By default, any numerical result is printed on the screen; this can be suppressed by terminating the input line with a ; (semicolon).

¹The *figure window* opens automatically as soon as a command is executed that generates a 2D or 3D plot. By default, the next plot-generating command replaces the content of this window. For more information about this window and its usage, see Chapter 2 below.

 $^{^{2}}$ The *editor window* allows tabbed handling of several user-written programs at a time. It provides syntax highlighting for key words, a simple tree-like overview of the structure of a program, and it allows to set breakpoints (which is very useful for debugging).

³The *help window* can be used both as a manual as well as a full command reference; it contains many examples for the use and detailed descriptions of all built-in commands and functions.