



Hyphaene thebaica

Family name: **Areaceae**Common name: **Areaceae**Local name: **(دوم), Doum****Wild, Native**

Role in Biodiversity

Hyphaene thebaica is a pioneer stabilizer of mobile dunes. It improves soil quality in its habitats.



Environment and Growing

Hyphaene thebaica tends to grow close to groundwater, in oases and wadis, near rivers and streams, and on rocky hilly slopes. It grows well in sandy soils.

Growth requirements:

- Elevations from sea level to 1,400 meters.
- Annual temperature range 24–36°C.
- PH in the range 6.5–7.5.
- Annual rainfall range 100–600 mm.



Reproduction and Communication

- Unisexual plant (dioecious).
- Male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Flowers are pollinated by air and insects, particularly bees.
- Fruiting when about 6-8 years old.

Life span

25-50 years.

Size

10-17 m high.

Parts

Y-shaped branches, dark brown to black.

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Shallow root-system

Leaves are fan shaped, leaf stalk armed with curved thorns.

flowers are green on spike inflorescences.

Fruits are woody, persist on the tree for a long time, smooth, and shiny brown, and one-seeded.

Seeds are woody, oval-rounded.

INTRODUCTION

Tree

Hyphaene thebaica, the Doum palm, is a widespread deciduous palm tree in the Sahel zone of Africa. It is characterized by Y-shaped trunk, fan shaped leaves, dichotomously branched stem, and dark grey bark showing the scars of the fallen leaves. It is an important local food source and is also utilised for medicine and various other commodities by the local people in Africa.

In Sudan, this tree is widespread, especially in northern, central and western regions. Fruits of the Doum palm are of high nutritional value. They are consumed in large quantities in all areas of its distribution. Palm fronds are considered an important raw material in many handicrafts. The plant also has medical importance.

LIVELIHOODS / CULTURE

Cultivation

Doum palms grow naturally in Sudan and are planted near homes for decoration and to benefit from their fruits. This is usually done by planting seeds and watering them for a short period. The tree quickly becomes dependent on groundwater.

Cultural Value

The Doum palm has many traditional uses.

Fruits are food source.

Leaves provide palm frond which is the raw material used in basketry, making mats, brooms, hut walls, ropes, thatching and string.

Many of the palm frond products are used in Sudanese folklore. The **brish** mat made of red-dyed fronds used in wedding ceremonies such as bridal **jirtq** ceremonies and the bride's dance. The **brish** long mat is used in prayer in mosques, in breaking the fast in Ramadan on the streets, and in knowledge circles in the Qur'an memorization rooms. The **brish** white mat is made from strong white fronds used to place a dead person while carried to the graves.

Ropes are used to weave the traditional **angareb** bed and **bambar** stool and to connect parts of traditional building structures and other uses.

The leaves are cut into rectangles called **qarqariba** used to make Sudanese **kisra**.

Dried bark is used to produce a black dye for leatherwear.

Stems are often used for construction, providing supports and rafters for houses.

Trees are browsed to a limited extent by livestock, especially in dry periods.

Occasionally used for firewood and charcoal.

Medicinal and health uses

- Fruit maceration is used to treat hypertension and typhoid by Flata tribe in the Blue Nile state.
- Fruit and stem maceration is orally used to treat hypertension while fibre poultice is used to treat eye infection by people in northern Sudan.
- Fruit maceration is used to treat hypertension in Melit area, North Darfur.

Cultural Expressions

Villages named after it Um Doum and Al Doum.

THREATS

- Global threat: Climate change.
- Regional threats: Harvesting for timber, leaves-based utilizations, and agricultural especially in Kordofan

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