PLANT FACT SHEET

Hyphaene compressa H. A. Wendl.

GENUS *Hyphaene* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES African Doum Palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Sap, Seedlings, Nuts, Leaves

The pulp of the ripe fruit is eaten raw. The juice of young fruit is drunk. It is also used for making beer.
The outer coat of the fruit is removed from the seed and dried, ground, mixed with blood and eaten.
The kernel from inside the nut is eaten.
The young germinating seedling is dug up and the embryo eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A tall branched palm. It can have 2-4 main stems and these can branch 4 or 5 times. It grows 20 m high. The leaf colour is mostly deep green. It can be silvery or bluish-green. The fruit are oblong or pear shaped. They are orange or light brown. The smell like gingerbread when broken open.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on the coast and extends inland along streams and rivers. It grows to 1500 m altitude in East Africa. They need full sun. They can grow on poor soils and survive in drier climates. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall of 200-900 mm. It is salt tolerant. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seeds. The pulp is removed. Seeds are slow to germinate and can be improved by breaking the hard seed coat. They should be planted in deep moist sand.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing. In Tanzania fruit are collect during the dry season.

NOTES

There are about 9 or 10 Hyphaene species. (Some authorities estimate 40). They are tropical.

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