PLANT FACT SHEET

Phoenix sylvestris (L.) Roxb.

GENUS *Phoenix* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES India Date, Silver date palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Sap, Cabbage, Inner stem, Shoots, Palm heart

The sap from the stalk is used for a drink. It is also fermented.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They can be used for jams or jellies. The seeds are edible.
The flower stalk is tapped for sap which is boiled down to date sugar. It is used for jaggery and sugar.
The growing tip or cabbage is eaten.
A kind of sago can be extracted from the stem.

DESCRIPTION

A tall palm. It is unbranched up to 15 m high. The trunk is rough with persistent leaf bases. The trunk is 60-75 cm across. The crown is thick and half rounded to rounded. The leaves are grey-green or covered with a waxy layer. They are 2-3 m long. They have a spiky appearance. They are divided into leaflets along the stalk. The leaflets are 20-25 cm long and with a sharp point. The flowering spikes are enclosed by boat shaped bracts. They are 60-75 cm long. They occur between the leaves. The male flowers are yellowish-white. They have a scent. The female flowers are greenish with a brown tinge. The fruit are yellow when ripe. They are edible. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. Both are needed for fruit.

HABITAT

It grows in tropical and temperate regions. It can grow in inland and coastal districts. It needs a sunny position and a well drained soil. It grows on barren hills in India. It is often on sandy soils. It grows naturally in the Indus basin in Pakistan. It can grow up to 1500 m altitude in SE Asia. Melbourne Botanical gardens. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate easily. Germination takes about 3 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is quite fast growing. Sap can be taken from the side of the crown. This can be started when the palm is 7-10 years old and continue for 20-25 years. The annual yield per palm is 100 l of juice. This can be converted to 3 kg of sugar.

NOTES

There are 17 Phoenix species. It is indigenous to many parts of India.

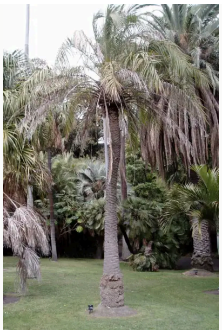
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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