

Hyphaene compressa (H. coriacea)

Palmae

Indigenous

- Common names: Eng: doum palm; Nyam: mulala; Swah: mkoche.
- Ecology: Widespread in lowland arid Africa, Madagascar, Arabia to India. Common in dry areas along river courses, and at the coast, 0-1,000 m. It requires a high watertable and hot climate for good growth.
- Uses: Firewood, poles, posts, food (fruit), drink (fruit wine from thin skin), soil conservation (sandy areas), shade, fibre, baskets, mats (leaves), roofing (leaves), fencing (cut leaf stalks), brushes.
- Description: An unusual branched palm tree, to 20 m, each branch crowned with large, fan-shaped leaves, the tree often surrounded by bushy young growth. LEAVES: have a long spiny stalk supporting the fan of leaflets. FLOWERS: male and female on separate trees. FRUIT: orange brown, hanging down in bunches, each fruit to about 10 cm long, 2 sides flattened, edible fibres below the tough shiny skin, one large hard seed.
- Propagation: Direct sowing into carefully prepared pits or any other place where water collects naturally.
- Seed info.:
 treatment: No. of seeds per kg: 10-15.
 storage: nicking at the radicular end.
 stores only for a very short period.
- Management: Slow growing.
- Remarks: Seed for human consumption stores well for long periods. Normally the seeds germinate naturally if they pass through the bowels of elephants. Difficult to raise in nurseries as it starts by sending out a long tap root. Buttons used to be made from "vegetable ivory", the white seed.

