

Indigenous

<i>Af:</i> Garaito	<i>Ar:</i> Dom	<i>Bl:</i> Arkobkobai
<i>Eng:</i> Doum palm, Egyptian doum palm		<i>Hd:</i> Weika
<i>Km:</i> Oma	<i>Nr:</i> Ghamba	<i>Sh:</i> Unga
<i>Tg:</i> Arkobkobai	<i>Tr:</i> Arkobkobai	

- Ecology:** One of 10 African Hyphaene, this is the common doum palm of Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan, and growing also in West Africa. It is usually found on lowland plains, 0-1,300 m, often near rivers. The tree resists bush fires. In Eritrea, it is common in the Barka and Gash river basins in the western lowlands. A variety formerly called *Hyphaene dankaliensis* grows south from Massawa and Hirghigo to Assab, as far south as Belul and Harsile.
- Uses:** Timber (construction; trunk, leaves), food (nuts), drink (palm wine, *duma*, from cut top of stems), ropes (fibre, leaves), brooms, fodder (leaves), buttons (seed), river-bank stabilization.
- Description:** A tree 8-15 m, easily recognized by the **regular branching** which may form up to 16 leafy heads. LEAVES: **Fan-shaped, nearly 2 m long and 1 m across on long spiny stalks** (smaller in the variety). FLOWERS: Male and female trees. **Male spikes to 80 cm with 7-8 branches** enclosed in a leafy sheath, female shorter and thicker, producing the fruit. FRUIT: Irregularly shaped, **like a rounded cube with 2 flat faces**, 6-8 cm, smooth, **shiny orange-brown** when ripe, 6-8 cm. Edible pulp 4-6 mm thick surrounds 1 hard white seed.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, root suckers, rhizomes. Plant seed directly, not in pots, because of the long taproot which grows down to 50-100 cm before leaves appear.
- Seed:** Seeds take 5-6 months to germinate.
- treatment:**
- storage:**
- Management:** Coppicing, lopping.
- Remarks:** This palm is widely used in Eritrea and elsewhere and often indicates an area of good soil with a high groundwater table. A tree is mature in 6-8 years and can produce 50 kg of fruit per year. Leaf fibres are used as raw material for the manufacture of sacks. The seeds are used to make buttons and the wood from the male stem for railway sleepers since it is very durable. The stem is cut for tapping of sugary sap which ferments into palm wine. These cut stems die back but the palm coppices from the root. Palms used for *duma* must be protected from browsing camels.

