

# *Phoenix reclinata*

Arecaceae

## Indigenous

**Am:** *Selen, Zembaba*

**Br:** *Meti*

**Eng:** *Wild date palm*

## Ecology

A palm usually growing in dense clumps beside swamps and rivers. Found throughout tropical Africa, it grows in the humid lowland woodlands, highland forests and on open rocky hillsides in Dry and Moist Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones in nearly all regions, 700–2,600 m.

## Uses

Timber (local doors, roofing, windows), food (fruit), ornamental, soil conservation, fibres (leaves, leaf bases), roofing (leaves), basketry, mats (leaves), dye.

## Description

The mature palm trunk may reach 10 m, slender and often bent over (“reclinata”), about 25 cm in diameter, covered in very rough leaf scars. LEAVES: To 2.7 m long, growing out from a fibrous leaf sheath, the crown of about 25 leaves arching over, leaflets narrow, folded, bright shiny green, to 30 cm, stiff and pointed. FLOWERS: Male and female on different trees. FRUIT: Yellow-brown, about 2 cm, edible.

## Propagation

Seedlings, suckers.

## Seed

900–5,000 seed per kg. Soak in cold water for three days changing water every 12 hours for the pulp to separate from the seed. Clean seed and dry in shade and store or sow without storage. Germination starts in 10 days but could last as long as 90 days.

**Treatment:** Not necessary.

**Storage:** Seed can be stored but germination is best from fresh seed.

## Management

Removal of all leaves at once from a palm tree should be avoided since it may die.

## Remarks

Strong fibres from the leaves are used all over Africa for making baskets, mats, etc.



