

# Borassus aethiopum

*Borassus aethiopum* is a species of *Borassus* palm from Africa. In English it is variously referred to as **African fan palm**, **African palmyra palm**, **deleb palm**, **ron palm**, **toddy palm**, **black rhun palm**, **ronier palm** (from the French) and other names. It is widespread across much of tropical and southern Africa from Senegal to Ethiopia to Zimbabwe, and also grows in Madagascar and the Comoros.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## 1 Description

*Borassus aethiopum* grows swelling, solitary trunks to 25 metres (82 ft) in height and 1 metre (3 ft 3 in) in diameter at the base. The green leaves — 3 metres (9.8 ft) wide — are carried on petioles — 2 metres (6 ft 7 in) long — which are armed with spines. The crownshaft is spherical to 7 metres (23 ft) wide, the leaves are round with stiff leaflets, segmented a third or half-way to the petiole. In male plants the flower is small and inconspicuous; females grow larger, 2 centimetres (0.79 in) flowers which produce yellow to brown fruit resembling the coconut containing up to 3 seeds.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 2 Uses

The tree has many uses: the fruit are edible, as are the tender roots produced by the young plant;<sup>[4]</sup> fibres can be obtained from the leaves; and the wood (which is reputed to be termite-proof) can be used in construction.<sup>[5]</sup>

## 3 See also

- Great Mosque of Djenné (example of use of wood in construction)

## 4 References

- [1] Kew World Checklist of Selected Plant Families, *Borassus aethiopum*
- [2] AFPD. 2008. African Flowering Plants Database - Base de Donnees des Plantes a Fleurs D'Afrique.
- [3] Martius, Carl Friedrich Philipp von. 1838. *Historia Naturalis Palmarum* 3(7): 220–221, *Borassus aethiopum*

[4] "Deleb palm". *Collier's New Encyclopedia*. 1921.

[5] Bailey, L.H. & E.Z. Bailey. 1976. *Hortus Third* i–xiv, 1–1290. MacMillan, New York.

## 5 External links

- Horticipia page on *B. aethiopium*
- PACSOF page on *B. aethiopium*
- La Plant Encyclo page on *B. aethiopium* (in French)
- Multilingual Multiscript Plant Name Database page on *Borassus*
- *Borassus aethiopum* in West African plants – A Photo Guide.
- "*Borassus aethiopum*". *Ecocrop FAO*. Retrieved 2010-02-08.

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