

Borassus aethiopicum

From Palmpedia - Palm Grower's Guide

Habitat and Distribution

Borassus aethiopicum is found in Benin, Burkina, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Northern Provinces, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Found across sub-Saharan Africa as far south as northern South Africa. Absent from parts of southwest and central Africa, and the Horn of Africa. Present on a number of offshore islands including São Tomé and Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea, three of the Cape Verde Islands, and Pemba, Zanzibar and Mayotte in the Mozambique Channel. Present in the Sambirano region of northwest Madagascar, including the islands of Nosy Bé and Nosy Mitsiou, though it may be introduced there. (R.P. Bayton. 2007/Palmweb.



Rusitu Valley Habitat: At edge of cultivated field. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten

cleanly at maturity (Barot & Gignoux 1999). At this point, the meristem is protected from fire and herbivory by virtue of its height above the ground. (R.P. Bayton. 2007/Palmweb.

Description

They grow swelling, solitary trunks to 25 metres (82 ft.) high, and 1 metre (3 ft. 3 in.) in diameter at the base. The green leaves — 3 to 4 metres (10-12 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.

Detailed Scientific Description [Expand]

Culture

Comments and Curiosities

Borassus aethiopicum is a dioecious palm species native to Africa where it grows in savannas and woods. The name is Latinized for 'Ethiopian' where the species is known; it is commonly called **palmyra palm**, as are all the plants in the genus.

Etymology: 'Aethiopia' was a general term used by the ancient Greeks and Romans for Africa south of Libya and Egypt. (R.P. Bayton. 2007).

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 also has names in African languages. The tree has many uses: the fruit are edible, as are the tender roots produced by the young plant;[1] fibres can be obtained from the leaves; and the wood (which is reputed to be termite-proof) can be used in construction. There are at least two varieties of this species: var. bagamojensis and var. senegalensis.

Conservation: Least concern. *Borassus aethiopicum* is widespread and common in a number of African countries. While several populations are in decline (Sambou et al. 1992; 2002), the palm remains common. *Borassus sambiranensis* is listed by the IUCN as endangered (EN A1c) due to habitat loss/degradation and suppression of regeneration by fire. It is perhaps unfortunate that by placing this taxon in synonymy with the widespread *B. aethiopicum*, the conservation status of the Madagascar populations will be masked. (R.P. Bayton. 2007/Palmweb.

Uses: In some parts of Africa, *Borassus* populations are 'managed' by local people, while in other areas the palm is of minimal significance. In many areas, *Borassus aethiopicum* is restricted to game reserves and national parks where it is outside the reach of local people. The leaves are used for thatch and weaving, though species of *Hyphaene* are generally preferred. The palm is tapped for wine, though the process is different from that used in Asia as the apical bud is tapped rather than the inflorescences. The fruits, undeveloped endosperm and cotyledonary stalks are consumed. Burkill (1997) has reviewed the uses of *Borassus aethiopicum* in West Africa. (R.P. Bayton. 2007/Palmweb.

Borassus (BOR-rah-suh-s) aethiopicum
(eh-tee-OH-puhm)

Scientific Classification

Genus: *Borassus (BOR-rah-suh-s)*
Species: *aethiopicum (eh-tee-OH-puhm)*

Synonyms
None set.

Native Continent
Africa

Morphology

Habit: Solitary
Leaf type: Palmately compound

Culture

Sun exposure: Full Sun

Survivability index

Common names

Dimaka (Sakalava, Madagascar),
Kuhe (Ashanti, Ghana), Muhama
(Kibuyu, Congo-Kinshasa), Mvumo
(Kiswahili, Kenya & Tanzania). A list
of West African vernacular names for
B. aethiopicum is provided by Burkill
(1997). European names include
African fan-palm, borassus-palm,
rhun-palm, rônier (French) and palma-
do-vinha (Portuguese). (R.P. Bayton.
2007). African fan palm, African
palmyra palm, deleb palm, ron palm,
toddy palm, black rhun palm, ronier
palm (from the French).

IMAGE GALLERY



Antsiranana, Madagascar. Photo by Dr. G.E. Schatz/Palmweb.



Ambanja, Madagascar. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton/Palmweb.



Pama, Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton/Palmweb.



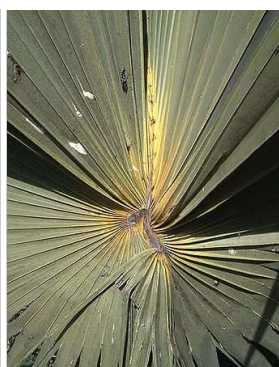
Forte Vicente, Boanista, Cape Verde. Photo by Dr. William J. Baker, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew/Palmweb.



Pama, Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton, edric.



Fairchild Tropical Garden, Florida. Photo by Dr. S. Minter, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew/Palmweb.



Pama, Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton/Palmweb.



pistillate inflorescence. Pama, Komienga, Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton/Palmweb.



Vertical Section of Staminate Rachilla Showing Flower Buds in Pits. Montgomery Botanical Centre, Florida. Photo by Dr. William J. Baker, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew/Palmweb.



Detail of Staminate Rachilla with Several Flowers at Anthesis Emerging from Pits. Montgomery Botanical Centre, Florida. Photo by Dr. William J. Baker, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew/Palmweb.



Pama, Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Ross P. Bayton/Palmweb.



"You can see the whole palm and the giant fruit in my hand!" Photo by Kyle Wicomb, edric.



Miami, FL. "Me With a gigantic fruit! They are as big as my head!" Photo by Kyle Wicomb, edric.



Fairchild Botanical Gardens, FL.



Fairchild Botanical Gardens, FL.



Amazing Petiole Armor.



In habitat. Photo-Rare Palm Seeds.com



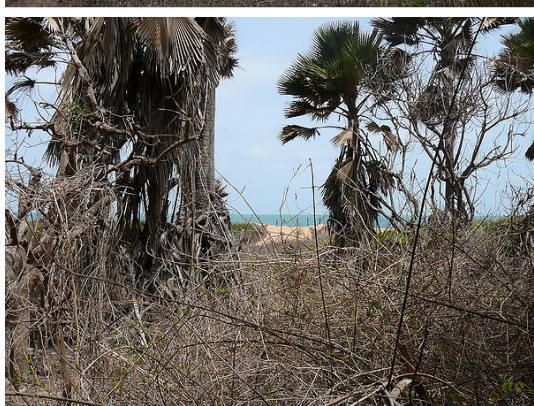
In habitat. Photo-Rare Palm Seeds.com



Rwebisengo, Bundibugyo, Uganda. Photo by Dave Proffer











Cameroon. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Flamingo Gardens, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, photo by Paul Craft



Miami FL. Photo by Ryan D. Gallivan, edric.



Photo by Kyle Wicomb, edric.



In habitat, Mvuu, Malawi. Photo by Kyle Wicomb



In habitat, Mvuu, Malawi. Photo by Kyle Wicomb



In habitat, Mvuu, Malawi. Photo by Kyle Wicomb



With Phoenix reclinata. Photo by Kyle Wicomb



Fairchild Gardens, Florida.



Photo-Kew.



"From seed in 1994. This thing is huge! Notice the tiny 6 foot fence behind it." Satellite Beach, FL. Photo by Charlene and Greg



Along road from entrance gate to Chitengo, Gorongosa National Park
Habitat: Margin of seasonally flooded riverine forest. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



Along road from entrance gate to Chitengo, Gorongosa National Park
Habitat: Margin of seasonally flooded riverine forest. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



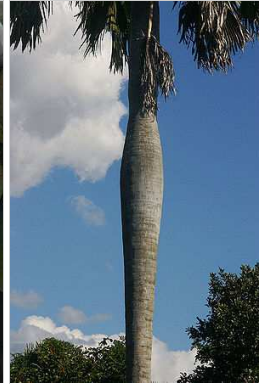
Rusitu Valley Habitat: At edge of cultivated field. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



Rusitu Valley Habitat: At edge of cultivated field. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



In Chitengo Camp, Gorongosa National Park. Habitat: Remnant of original vegetation in camp. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



Along road from entrance gate to Chitengo, Gorongosa National Park Habitat: Margin of seasonally flooded riverine forest. Photo by Dr. Bart Wursten



Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Burkina Faso. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Burkina Faso, Pama / Reserve partielle de Pama. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Burkina Faso, between Tenkodogo and Po. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Burkina Faso, Soum, Djibo. Photo by Dr. Marco Schmidt



Gulu, Uganda. Photo by Dr. Bernard DUPONT



Gulu, Uganda. Photo by Dr. Bernard DUPONT



Gulu, Uganda. Photo by Dr. Bernard DUPONT



Gulu, Uganda. Photo by Dr. Bernard DUPONT

External Links

- Glossary of Palm Terms (<http://eunops.org/content/glossary-palm-terms>)
- MODERN BOTANICAL LATIN (<http://www.calflora.net/botanicalnames/pronunciation.html>)
- "Just To Be Clear" (<http://www.jlhudsonseeds.net/Pronunciation.htm>)
- <http://www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com/palms/documents/BorassusAethiopium.pdf>
- http://www.westafricanplants.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page_id=14&id=214

References

Phonetic spelling of Latin names by edric.

Special thanks to Geoff Stein, (Palmbob) for his hundreds of photos.

Special thanks to Palmweb.org (<http://palmweb.org/?q=node/2>), Dr. John Dransfield, Dr. Bill Baker & team, for their volumes of information and photos.

Glossary of Palm Terms; Based on the glossary in Dransfield, J., N.W. Uhl, C.B. Asmussen-Lange, W.J. Baker, M.M. Harley & C.E. Lewis. 2008. Genera Palmarum - Evolution and Classification of the Palms. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. All images copyright of the artists and photographers (see images for credits).

Bayton, R.P.2007. A revision of Borassus L. (Arecaceae). Kew Bulletin 62: 561-586.

Many Special Thanks to Ed Vaile for his long hours of tireless editing and numerous contributions.



Encyclopedia

Retrieved from "http://www.palmpedia.net/wiki/index.php5?title=Borassus_aethiopum&oldid=114126"

Categories: Palms in Africa | BORASSUS

- This page has been accessed 8,281 times.
- This page was last modified 08:54, 25 March 2015 by Ed Vaile. Based on work by Konakid, MattyB, palmnerd, Brod and Michael McKnight.