



Phoenix reclinata Senegal Date Palm¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This striking palm creates an interesting silhouette with its multiple, gracefully curved, often reclining, slender brown trunks, and dense crowns of stiff but feathery leaf fronds (Fig. 1). Old frond bases are medium brown and remain on the trunk forming a showy trunk which is attractive all year long. A mature specimen of Senegal Date Palm can reach 35 feet in height with a 12 to 20-foot-spread and creates a striking tree which casts a light shade. The palm is elegant when lit from below at night. It is best used as an accent for large landscapes and parks. The somewhat showy flower stalks, often lost within the thick foliage, are followed by one-inch-long, bright orange dates which are incredibly showy. These can be very attractive, particularly when viewed from a balcony above the tree.

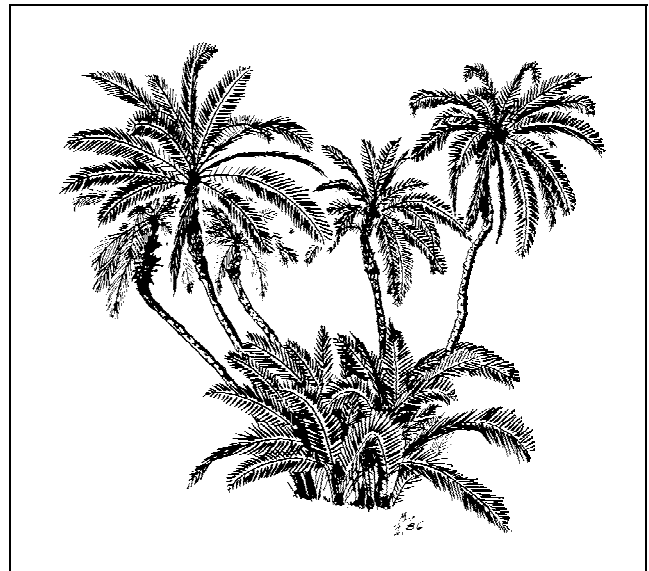


Figure 1. Middle-aged Senegal Date Palm.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Phoenix reclinata*
Pronunciation: FEE-nicks reck-lih-NAY-tuh
Common name(s): Senegal Date Palm
Family: *Areaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 35 feet
Spread: 12 to 20 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: palm; upright
Crown density: open
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate; spiral
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: linear

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaflet venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaflet blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: orange

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Crown shaft: no

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: poor

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The multiple trunks lose older fronds as the palm grows, clearing lower trunks of all foliage. This characteristic makes Senegal Date Palm a wonderful tree for accenting in a bed of groundcover or a grouping of low shrubs. Trunks which bend to the horizontal as the palm ages may need to be supported with a brace or cable to hold them up.

Growing easily in full sun or partial shade, Senegal Date Palm will thrive on any well-drained soil. Plants should receive adequate moisture during periods of drought. This palm is too large for all but the largest residential landscapes. They are very costly to purchase due to the slow growth rate. Large specimens command a high price.

Propagation is by seed or division of the many suckers which appear at the base of old clumps.

Pests

A variety of scales infest this palm.

Diseases

Some diseases of this tree are lethal yellowing disease, leaf spot.

Stressed and damaged trees often are infected with the Ganoderma fungus. A conk is formed at the base of the tree which appears as a varnished shelf or mushroom. Remove the conk and the tree to help control the spread of the disease to other plants. Prevent injury to the trunk and roots, and plant in well-drained soil. Be sure sprinklers do not irrigate the trunk so it remains wet. A wet trunk and wet soil encourage this disease. There is no control for butt rot, only prevention.