

Palm Trees Festival

First Round



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Materials by

Manar Hassan

Nancy Ammr

Scientific Additions

Jacklyn Gorge

Editing

Nagwa Bakr

Map by

Mohamed Nasr

Translation

Manal Salem

"Oh, thy High palm Reeds Lean Down and Say Hello"



The palm Tree

The word for palm trees in Arabic is (*Nakhla*) which is derived from (Nakhl) plural and it means choosing, picking, selecting and extracting.

History of palm trees are ancient probably as ancient as human society since the beginning of human eras. Date palm trees were found since the prehistoric eras in dry warm climate areas that extend from Senegal to the Andean Basin North of the Equator, then after that was found by plating date seeds in the Far East, India and China. Historians mentioned that "Babylon" in Iraq was known for abundance of its palm trees where many inscriptions dated back to the Sumerian age prove the ancient existence of palm trees in South Iraq and extending to appear in Babylon and Assyrian chapels. They decorated the temples halls and the cities entrances with palm trees and the palms goddess was depicted as a woman whose shoulders ornamented with palm leaves as wings.

Ancient Egyptian also knew palm trees, worshipping it and dedicating it to Osiris. Planting palm trees was like an offering where ever since prehistoric eras it was found in Egypt. A burial was discovered in Armant (nearby Luxor) wrapped in a mat of palm fronds and the palm trees was known in Hieroglyphs as " pnr" or " Pn rnt" which means "sweet".

Palm trees also appeared in tombs scenes and pharaonic god's temples, where their trunks were used in houses construction. Genius architect Imhotep imitated and copied trees trunks in his stone architecture in Zoser's Saqqara complex. Palm fronds and reeds were also used in making baskets of different types and shapes used in daily life uses.

It was also used in making garlands carried in funeral rituals or buried with deceased in his tomb and thus the palm tree was associated with life and death for the Egyptians. As for its fruit (dates) they ate it whether soft or dry, they also ground its seeds and used its powder in medical prescriptions. Egyptians also made some types of wine from palm juice extracts. They used palm in decorating gardens, orchards and cultivated land in geometrical patterns whether vertical, horizontal, and circular or square around the garden area. This can be seen in " Harris papyrus" where Ramses III talking to one of his wives says: " I created an orchard for you and planted it with Acacia and Palms"



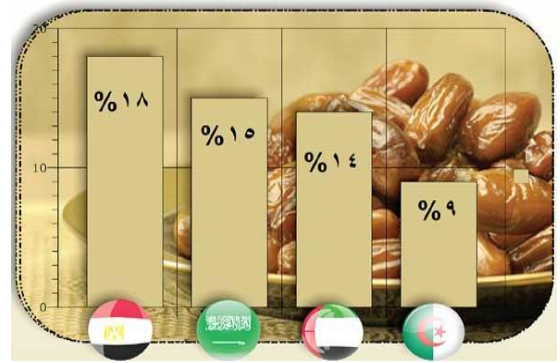
Stamp with palm trees, Iraq.



Palm trees in ancient Egyptian



The number of palm trees in Egypt in present is estimated to be 15 million palm trees producing annually what exceeds a millions, 650 thousand tons of different types of dates. Palm trees are planted by different methods among which is proliferating (reproduction) or pollination.



Palms in Holly Heavenly Religions

Pre-religions Arabs thought that dessert trees particularly palm trees have spiritual powers, so they worshiped particular palm tree which is (Negran Tall palm" to which on annual feast was assigned and dedicated. The palm tree was engraved on some rocks and mentioned in referral texts and was made the symbol of the sun.

Ancient Phoenicians worshiped" Ishtarot" in the form of palm tree named in the Old Testament "Ashmira". In the Old Testament "The Torah" the word "Tamara" was applied to beautiful girls and the Palestinian tribes worshiped figures in the form of palm tree that they called "Tamara's hubby".

In the Babylonian Talmud derived from the old testament, it was mentioned that the palm trees were planted in the houses courtyard and were grown in the rooms thus its trunks penetrating the ceiling shading the roofs and it brought it a lot of fortune thus the Talmud advised its investment for it's a health benefits.

In Jewish feasts, like 'feast of Tabernacles", the Jews take the soft fronds from inside the tree and braid it in an artistic way carrying it in their hands during feast religious prayers and recitals as a symbol of joy and happiness.

In the Bible, it was mentioned that Jesus supporters spread palm fronds all through his way on his route to Jerusalem for the first time. In the early beginnings of the Christian era Jericho was the city of the dated. Jesus himself also carried it in his hands as entered Jerusalem as a peace symbol. That is why Egyptian Copt Christians celebrate Palm Sunday in commemoration of what the Bibles narrated about Jesus entry to Jerusalem, where the supporters gathered taking the palm fronds and went out to meet and welcome him. Until today Christians go to church on the morning of Palm Sunday carrying palm fronds and flowers shaping and braiding it in festive celebration. This palm fronds represent victory over evil. There is also a prayer "Blessing palm fronds" that is to be held by the catholic Copts in the church of Alexandria on that day.



In the Quran "The saplings with their stems have surfaced"

It is said that the people of Yatherib went out to meet prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) on his immigration to them welcoming him singing and raising palm fronds. Also, Muslims still use green fronds and reeds in funerals placing it with the deceased or on his tomb. Privileges, virtues and status of the palm tree were mentioned in the Qura in 16 verses, 20 sub verses as well as 300 Hadith (prophetic sayings) prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) said: "Home with no dates in it, hungry goes it people" .

Palm Trees in Social Life

The palm trees was associated with some customs and local traditions as an example the heart of palm tree (*Algomar*) was associated with generosity whoever present it to his guest it is as if he sacrificed slaughtering the tree itself where taking (*Algomar*) the will die. Male palm tree pollen is also taken by men as sex strengthening mixing it with honey, whereas some other places women take it dissolved in water to increase fertility.

Growing palm trees and industries depending on it also reflect social ties and bonds among families sharing together its plantation and harvesting specially in west Aswan where a family brings "the palm shoot" another family plants it in their land and a third family takes the responsibility of its irrigation and that's by the women. When the tree fruits giving its crops the three families harvest it splitting it among them. On this occasion the villager's youth gather and this is a chance for marriage proposals.



In the village in Upper Egypt, until very recent, during weddings, the bride and the groom's families and the guests used to walk out on the village's streets and roads carrying the "Hennah" tray and the palm reeds and fronds singing weddings songs and waving with the palm fronds. On the wedding night, the bride and groom's seat was to be ornamented with the palm reeds, frond and leaves. Also, among the social habits, after associated with palm fronds after the birth of a baby, a piece of these fronds is to be attached hanging down from the baby's clothes on his chest to protect him against the evil eye. Palm fronds were also used in pilgrims' parades seeing them off or welcoming them back.

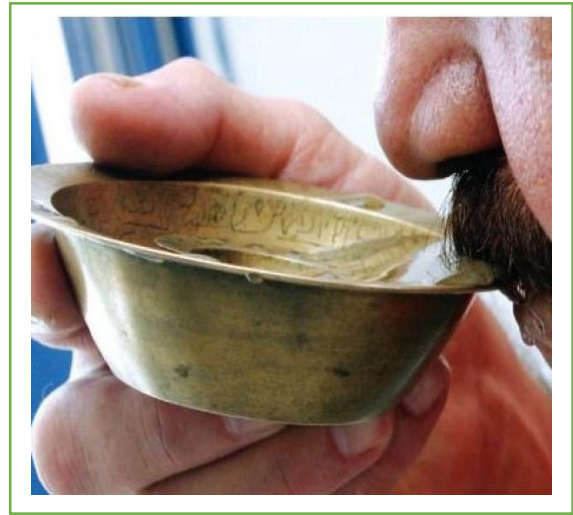


Farmers also made scarecrow from palm fronds and reeds where two reeds are being used, one standing and should be tall, and the other shorter and fixed by threads on the upper part of the standing one like a cross, then dress it up from their old clothes and make a head like for it using straw and a piece of cloth.



Palm Trees in Traditional Medicine

Among the most important traditional and religious beliefs regarding treatment by palm, was associating the palm tree with facilitating baby's birth where Virgin Mary ate dates while going through labor, thus there are medical uses for some parts of the palm trees. Dates paste (Ajwa) is known to treat poisons, dates are liver strengthening, and dates seeds ground are also used in se strengthening and is known to increase fertility. Dates are also used in treating shocks and that is by soaking odd number of dates in milk or water and placing the container in open place under the sky for 7 days and thus would be exposed to morning dew droplets the patient would eat the dates and drink the liquid.



Palm Climber

An inherited career, still retaining its primitive form for thousands of years. It depends on climbing the tree twice a year. The first time is to chop and clean the fronds, whereas the second time climb is for harvesting the dates. This career is very highly respected among dates producers where the totally depend on it in harvesting the crops and caring of the palm trees. It requires men with specific qualifications, knowledge and inherited expertise one generation after the other, so that the person would be qualified enough to do it. The reason for that is to ensure the ability of the climber to deal with the heart of the tree and how to deal with serpents and sakes that would be living in the upper parts of the tree.



Faience vessel showing a boy climbing a palm tree to collect



Palm Trees in Egyptian Songs

- The movie (Almaz & Abdo ElHamuli) in 1962 songs by Warda.

Oh, 2 high palm trees, with their dates as a remedy

The movie Dananeer 1939 song by Om Kalthoum

The song(*Tab El Naseem El a'leel*)= (Cured the sick breeze)

"Cured the sick breeze at the sunset and water cure the sick like gems streaming between the palms".

The song (*Shams El Aseel*) = sunset

Lyrics by Birm El Tunki and sang by Om Kalthoum.

(Oh, palm fronds reeds the Nile. Breathtaking and victorious)

From folkloric songs

(Oh, the high palm leaves, lean down and say hello)

(The palm become rip, and pampered are their reeds)

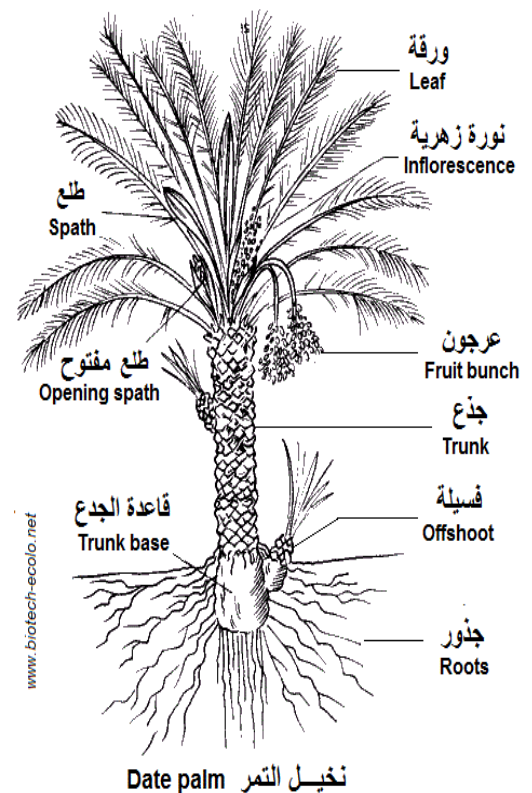
The Most Famous Egyptian Cinema Movies.

Palm climber produced 1988.

Dates Brew produced 1998.

Palm Parts

- 1- **The Root:** a strong deep base in the ground extending 4 a meter and a half depth with plenty of extended fibers groups.
- 2- **The Trunk:** the cylindrical wooden shape that carries the stem branchless. The trunk also shows the age of the tree, where each 3 steps above each other on the trunk means 3 rows of fronds which in turn means a year of the tree's age.
- 3- **The Crown:** the top most part of the tree and that consists of fronds, fibers, and a single terminal tip which is the growth spot of the tree and the reason for its high, and under the fronds are the pollen.
- 4- **Frond:** this is the palm leaf which is fatherly like and its length could extend between 3 to 5 meters consisting of the carnival, reed, thorns, and wickers.
- 5- **Alghmarh, Al Jumarah (Heart of the palm):** the most important part of the tree that has the single terminal tip responsible for the palm tree growth and its existence and formed inside it is a white fragile mass of sweet tasty juice if brewed becomes sugar and if the Jumarah broke the tree dies.
- 6- **The pollen:** this is the first stage of fruit produced by the tree, after this stage it converts in to dates. Pollen doesn't develop in to this second stage except after pollination, then going through two more stages finally fruiting at the end of them all.
- 7- **Eurjun (The Bunch of the Palm Tree):** that is the element responsible for carrying the dates hanging down from the tree and without it the tree doesn't fruit.
- 8- **The Fruit:** develops from small green forms to dates which is full grown fruit then starting showing its color whether red, yellow or other.



@amuralowaisi

Food Products from Palm Trees

1- Dates: known as vitamins mine due to its enrichment with mineral, liver strengthening, cardio diseases remedy due to irons as well as treating and curing anemia, thyroid gland tonic, and softening blood vessels.

Home – Made Products from Dates

(Dates pudding, peanuts and dates balls, molasses cup cakes with dates, dates and bund peanuts bars, dates and peanuts cakes, dates pancakes, black dates pancakes, coconut dates fingers, dates and nuts casks, sugar sweet dates, dates molasses in making ketchup, homemade drinks from dates' molasses, milk and fruits, date's molasses cakes, using date's molasses in manufacturing vinegar, dates jam, and tamrina for kids nutrition).

Industries Based on Dates

(Dates pickles, dates packing, dates with almonds, dates paste, chocolate with dates, pastries, dates sweets, dates molasses used in medical remedy, gelatinous sweets, toffee, candy, jams and dates marmalade, dried powdered dates, and fructose products).

Date Seeds: from which is extracted oils for some medical remedies, lighting lamps, also coffee is made from seeds roasting them then grinding it where its powder is used as coffee simi, as well as using it as eye kohl.



Date jam



Coffee from Date Seeds

2- **Algmarh, Al Jumarah (Heart of the palm):** the growing top of the tree at the peak of the trunk, extracted after cutting the tree and it is a white cellulose substance cut into thin chops to be eaten and from it is also made:

Hamis: small cut pieces of the Jumarah and then mixed with meat, onions, and spices and salt then cooked.

Halawet Al Jumarah: the Jumarah is first minced then sugar or honey is added to it and mixed well.

Jumarah Pickles: the Jumarah is cut in to pieces then put in a sweet syrup for few weeks then the pieces would be extracted out of the syrup, dried a bit then adding a bit of spices to it, preserved after that in 4% vinegar.



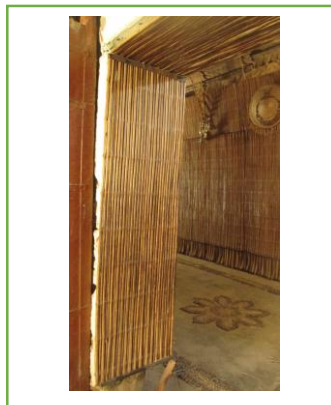
3- **Pollen:** the upper part of the tree, some farmers cut the early grains and eat it.



Handcrafts Based on Palm Trees

1- **Reeds:** throughout the history several industries developed from reeds according to different uses among which are :

- Birds and fruits cages.
- Home furniture (ex: beds, doors, and chairs).
- House ware (ex: bread, baskets or platters).



2- **Fronds:** baskets



Mat, praying mats



Fans



Handbags and hats



Various products for daily life



3- Fibers: (*Bath scrubs, dishes scrubs, leaves ropes and from it is made baskets handles,*

Feet mats, brooms, mattresses and cushions).



Modern Development of Palm Products

With the extinction of some of the traditional products based on palms, modern developed products started to appear to match with modern requirements, like Ramada lanterns, reed curtains, accessories made from dates seeds of which Dahshour village is well known, Arabesque specially Dakhla oasis, tents and canopies of reeds.



Palms in Architecture

Palm was used in traditional local architecture since ancient time. Ancient Egyptians used it in construction work specially in building houses ceilings. Until now in Egyptian villages and countries palm parts are used in mud bricks houses construction like reeds, and trunks used in shading the roofs of the houses. Also, palms trunks are used as staircases in these mud brick houses. Shelters in agricultural lands are also made of some palms elements. Palms were not only limited to using it in architectural supporter but were also used in aesthetic form as could be seen in Mohamed Eid hose in Daraw –Aswan where he used all palm elements in decorating and ornamenting the house in beautifully characteristic and distinguished new method that makes it an Ethnographic museum for palms.



PLACES	CRAFTS	أماكن تركز الحرفة	الحرفة
Beheira Governorate- Sharqia	Date Industry	البحيرة - الشرقية	صناعة البلح
Oasis	Date Paste (<i>Agwa</i>)	الواحات	العجوة
Swia- Rosatta	Heart of palm	سيوة - رشيد	الجمار
Oasis	Canning	الواحات	التعليب
Oasis	Arabesque	الواحات	ار ابيسك
Oasis- Asyut- Giza- Rosetta- Sohag	Beds	الواحات - أسيوط - الجيزة - رشيد - سوهاج	السراير
Oasis- Asyut- Giza- Rosetta- Sohag	Chairs	الواحات - أسيوط - الجيزة - رشيد - سوهاج	الكراسي
Oasis- Asyut- Giza- Rosetta- Sohag	Couches	الواحات - أسيوط - الجيزة - رشيد - سوهاج	الكنب
Oasis- Asyut- Giza- Rosetta- Sohag	Tables	الواحات - أسيوط - الجيزة - رشيد - سوهاج	الترابيزات
Aswan- Oasis- Faiyum	Palm Fronds Dishes & Wicker	أسوان - الواحات - الفيوم	الأطباق الخوص

اماكن تركز الحرف القائمة على النخيل في مصر - The Center of Palm crafts in Egypt

