

DATES

Phoenix dactylifera

SCRIPTURES: Exodus 15:27 – Elim, 12 springs and 70 palm trees
Leviticus 23:40 – Palm fronds part of feast celebration
I Kings 6:29 – Palm trees carved on temple walls
2 Chronicles 28:15 – Jericho called “City of Palms”
Psalm 92:12 – The righteous will flourish like palm trees
John 12:13 – Palm branches are waved at triumphal entry
Revelation 7:9 – Palm branches are held in Heaven

PLANT DESCRIPTION:

Location: Date palms grow wild from India to North Africa

Description: A tree with a single trunk; crown may be 100 feet above ground. It has no branches, but is crowned with its fan-shaped leaves. Trees can live for 200 years.

Fruit: The fruit hangs in clusters below the leaves. A single cluster may have as many as 10,000 flowers. The date is the chief food of desert people and is eaten fresh or dried. Dates are a good source of iron, sugar and protein.

Uses: Besides the fruit as food, the date palm is a valuable source of many other things. The leaves are woven into mats and baskets; the fibers provide paper, thread and rope for boat rigging. The sap, after fermentation, becomes a liquor or vinegar. The tall trunk is a good source of timber. The seeds are made into a food for camels. The pits are roasted and brewed like coffee.

Symbolism: For Jews, the palm had not only practical usefulness, but symbolic significance as well. The Hebrew word for palm was “tamar” which symbolized grace and elegance. Girls were named Tamar after it. Palms were often used in feasts and celebrations signifying victory.