



# *Phoenix roebelenii* Pygmy Date Palm<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the finest of the dwarf palms, Pygmy Date Palm slowly reaches 6 to 12 feet in height and has an upright or curving, single trunk topped with a dense, full crown of gracefully arching, three-foot-long leaves (Fig. 1). The insignificant flower clusters, hidden by the foliage, are present periodically throughout the year and produce small, jet-black dates which ripen to a deep red. Pygmy Date Palm is quite popular as a specimen planting or in containers, especially attractive at poolside. It is usually used as a single specimen although it is also effective in groups of three or more.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Phoenix roebelenii*

**Pronunciation:** FEE-nicks roe-beh-LEN-nee-eye

**Common name(s):** Pygmy Date Palm

**Family:** *Arecaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 1. Middle-aged Pygmy Date Palm.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 6 to 12 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 10 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

**Crown shape:** palm; upright

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-441, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate; spiral (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** odd pinnately compound

**Leaflet margin:** entire

**Leaflet shape:** linear

**Leaflet venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaflet blade length:** 8 to 12 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** black; red

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

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a 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; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Soil salt tolerance:** poor

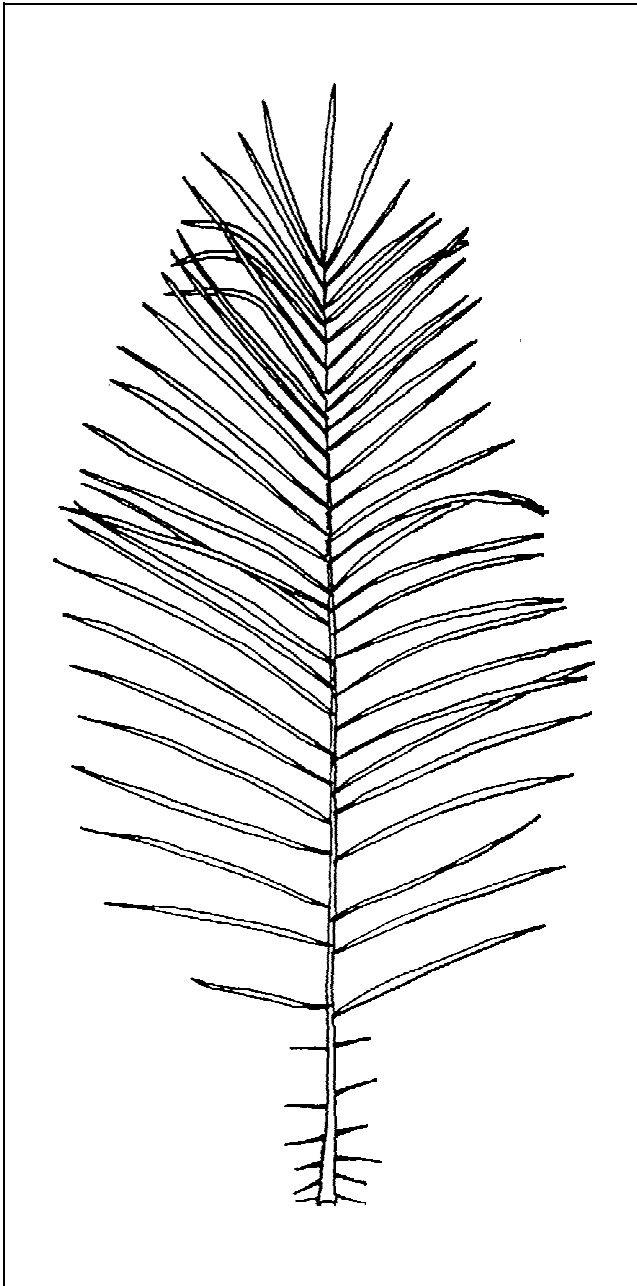


Figure 3. Foliage of Pygmy Date Palm.

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Pygmy Date Palm should only be grown in frost-free areas in sun or shade on well-drained soils. Plants should be regularly watered. Magnesium or potassium deficiency symptoms (chlorotic and spotted older fronds) often develop on the older leaves when grown in soils with a pH above 7. It has some salt tolerance, surviving on the inland side of coastal condominiums.

Propagation is by seed.

## Pests

Palm leaf skeletonizer and a large number of scales can infest this palm.

## Diseases

Leaf spot and bud rot are two diseases which can infect this palm.

## Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

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

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests