Indian Date Palm  
*Phoenix sylvestris*

The Indian Date Palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is a specimen plant that screams out “Welcome to the tropics.” With its slightly curving fronds and bumpy trunk, it is adding interest to many Florida Yards. The Indian Date Palm is becoming more popular in Florida Yards.

The date palms are known for their drought tolerance and fairly slow growth. They are well suited to Florida conditions if they are not overwatered and are provided with regular applications of palm fertilizer. The date palms have the typical diamond-shaped leaf scars on the trunk of the tree, and produce feather-shaped fronds with nasty sharp spines at the base of these leaves. Most are single trunked palms, including the Indian Date Palm.

This Florida Nursery Growers & Landscapers Association 2006 Plant of the Year is different from other Date Palms due to its bluish-green leaf color. As it matures, a skirt of aerial roots will be seen at the swollen base of the trunk. It is reported to be faster growing that the Canary Island Date Palm, so it should be a little bit less expensive to purchase. Date plans hybridize easily, so be sure of what you are buying. Also known as the Toddy palm, the Indian Date is native to India and Pakistan. It grows to 40 feet tall and is hardy in most of Florida. In its native areas, the sap from the flowers stalks is collected and boiled down for sugar or fermented into an alcoholic beverage (toddy).