

Project Update: May 2011

The propagation process of 68 seeds of *Hypheane thebaica* and 36 seeds of *Medemia argun* was conducted in wooden nursery in Allaqi by the project team. *Hyphaene* was selected by the Bedouins (according to evaluation results) to be cultivated in their farms because of its various economic uses particularly its fruits, also *Hyphaene* is a native to very dry areas, deserts with almost no appreciable rainfall, so it is one of appropriate species for cultivation in Allaqi. To ensure the successful germination of *Hyphaene*, seeds were soaked in water previously for 1 month (water was changed every day to prevent the fungus infections) after removing their outer cover. Seeds were sown directly in plastic pots (one seed per pot) at 15 cm depth in soil. The same procedures were followed in propagation of *Medemia argun* but the seeds of *Medemia* were soaked in water for longer period, 2 months instead of 1 as in *Hyphaene* case. *Medemia* is internationally very rare species, found in small scattered individuals in mid and up stream of Allaqi. Cultivation of *Medemia* was encouraged only by old Bedouins who describe the *Medemia* as a palm of attractive fruits with shiny purplish black colour. They said it is edible fruit (but should be dried) with pleasant smell. The selection of *Medemia argun* to be among the cultivation species returned to project team since *Medemia* is classified as Critically Endangered species according to IUCN, Wadi Allaqi supports only six individuals of this plant and little is known about this species among the new generations of Bedouins.

