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**DIVERSITY IN CHARACTERS OF DATE PALM (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.)  
GROWN IN NWFP, PAKISTAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

Date palm *Phoenix dactylifera* L. belongs to the family Palmaceae. Dera Ismail Khan, a Southern district of NWFP, Pakistan is famous for the world's best Date Palm germplasm. More than 30 varieties are grown through out the district of the Province NWFP, Pakistan. Ten most popular cultivars Indigenous as well as exotic were included in the present studies carried out at Agricultural Research Institute, Dera Ismail Khan, NWFP, Pakistan. The varieties included were Dhakki, Azadi, Gulistan, Shakri, Shamran, Basra, Hillawi, Khudrawi, Zaidi-I and Zaidi-II. The fruit of the local cultivar "Dhakki" is the largest among all the cultivars with 4.95 cm in length and 2.84 cm in diameter. The fruit weight of this variety remained 19.29 gm. The percent pulp produced by the fruit of this local cultivar was the maximum i.e. 94.36%. The same variety is highest yielding in the country with more than 120 kg per tree. The total sugars found in the fruit of cultivar Dhakki were 71.08%, which makes it the sweetest among all the germplasm grown.

The other variety known as "Gulistan" locally is popular because of the character of consuming it at mature un-ripe stage. The fruit of this variety is also larger one with yellow attractive color. The fruit does not require any ripening, curing and processing, and has enough sugar percentage to be utilized at the mature stage. The fruit is highly rain-damage resistant. The yield is always above 100 kg per tree. The storability of the variety is incredible and remains fresh even after one year if stored at freezing temperature. Provincial Seed Council has approved "Gulistan" during 2004 for cultivation in the southern districts of NWFP. The exotic varieties like Shamran, Basra, Khudrawi, and Hillawi also performed better and produced the fruit of medium-large size with good percentage sugars and better yield.