

Briefing Introduction to Bamboo

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Bamboo is, botanically, a tree-like grass belonging to the subfamily of Bambusoideae. It is thought to have made its appearance about 200 million years ago. Bamboo is special in that it is a fast growing plant (gaining approximately 75 to 400 mm per day) whose rate of biomass production (giving up to 40 tons per hectare per year in managed stands.) is excellent.

It is a very important non-wood timber resource and one of the most important agricultural plants in the world. Unlike timbers, bamboo is a self-regenerating natural resource; new shoots that appear annually ensure production after individual culms are harvested. Bamboo undoubtedly deserves the nickname "green gold mine" because of its strength, toughness, flexibility, versatility, durability, considerable environmental and economic benefits. About 1250 species in 75 genera are distributed in every continent except Antarctica. This diversity makes bamboo adaptable to many environments. It may grow in different climates, from tropical, subtropical to temperate zones and it will grow in most soils ranging from sandy to clay, it is not a desert plant or a water plant therefore watering and feeding is needed. Soil PH is recommended at between 5.5 and 6.5 or slightly acid for most species. Generally, species that tolerate drier conditions may do better in higher PH soils. It can be harvested in 3-5 years. Bamboo varies in height from dwarf, one foot (30 cm) plants to giant timber bamboos that can reach 100 feet plus (30 m).