

Uses of Bamboo Plants

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Imagine how a plant can change someone's life by providing safety, food, clothes, stability, or just the essentials of life. Bamboo is one of the most reliable resources on the planet, and people today don't realize how valuable bamboo is. Bamboo has been around for longer than people truly know, but it was discovered decades ago. "About 100 years ago. William Edgar Geil, an American missionary and explorer in China, made the following observations about the uses of bamboo, which he summarized in his 'Ode to Bamboo' as part of his book" (Bamboo in Chinese culture, 2015). There are over 1,000 different species of bamboo, yet they all provide the same advantages for countries around the world. Like most new information people first learn about, bamboo has advantages and disadvantages. It has the disadvantage of carbon disulfide that on the inside, which is dangerous. However, bamboo's advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Research shows the importance of bamboo, such as housing for certain cultures and their smaller communities that are poorer than other countries. Every country survives on food, and most countries grow and provide their own food like bamboo. A lot of countries could use clothes, but cannot afford any; with bamboo, they could make their own shoes or clothing. Some cultures even use bamboo as a cure for illnesses or diseases. Bamboo has many important uses and should be cultivated more in the world today.

Bamboo's recorded usage originated in the China Dynasty at least 7,000 years ago. Due to the ability to regenerate after bamboo has been cut, the Chinese Dynasty valued bamboo more than any other resource they needed to survive. "In certain countries there are publicized bamboo as wine and there are over 1,000 different types of bamboo. One of the most interesting fact is in Hiroshima, Japan, it was bamboo that returned the landscaping to greenery after the atomic blast in 1945" ("The History of Bamboo Plants," n.d.). Bamboo is the largest of the grass family, and the stem is the most important to bamboo. The rhizomes' dependent system in bamboo causes them to be the fastest growing plant on the planet. Construction companies can use bamboo because of bamboo's compressive strength, which is stronger than wood and concrete. Some communities that are poorer than others also build

bamboo bikes. These bikes are very interesting because of their strength and craftsmanship of the bike. The material for bamboo bikes is sustainable, lightweight, great for designing a bike, and like steel, bamboo is easy to work with. One of the best qualities for a bamboo bike is how “it absorbs the road vibration better than most materials especially than aluminum” (Reiss-Davis, 2012).

In so many intriguing ways, you can use bamboo as food; bamboo shoots are very healthy and common in certain cultures in today’s society. Bamboo shoots are also known as sprouts and are the main factor when it comes to food. Sprouts spring out beside the bamboo and are edible. Bamboo shoots belong to the Bambusoideae subfamily of grass, and Chinese Moso is reported to grow up to 100 cm per day, which is why that is the fastest growing plant on the planet. The health benefits of bamboo shoots include a variety of different healthier ways to improve life. Bamboo can also be used to possibly fight cancer properties and ant-inflammatory properties, and it’s heart friendly, which is very important to people who have cancer or heart conditions. Bamboo shoots were first recorded in 618 AD for using bamboo shoots as medical use, for kidney stones in particular, to help normalize the balance in urine changes. Kidney stones are so painful; however, bamboo shoots can be used for kidney stone patients. According to *PKD Clinic.com*, “Bamboo shoots are rich in oxalic acid, which can combine with calcium to form oxalate salts, causing a depletion of such necessary minerals in the body” (“Can CKD patient with kidney stones consumes bamboo shoots,” 2015). It is incredible how bamboo shoots can possibly be used for health reasons. In Japan, bamboo shoots are considered as the “King of Forest Vegetables.’ There are many bamboo species which sprout shoots, but only a handful of them are actually cultivated and consumed” (“Health Benefits of Bamboo Shoots,” n.d.). Bamboo shoots could contain cyanide, but it can be contained by boiling them over night; bamboo shoots can also have a bitter taste if exposed to sunlight. Bamboo shoots are available in canned varieties or either fresh, which if properly refrigerated, can last up to two weeks. There is a long list of health benefits of bamboo shoots, such as encouraging heart health, controlling cholesterol, fighting cancer, helping stomach disorders,

strengthening the immune system, and helping lose weight; all of these problems are serious enough to invest in bamboo shoots.

One of the best resources of bamboo is using bamboo for clothing and bed spreading. According to *Eartheasy.com*, "Bamboo fabric is often blended with 30% cotton to add structure to garments, which is why bamboo fabric is mostly ideal for active wear" ("Bamboo Clothing," n.d.). In the winter time, it's best to use bamboo fabric because of its smooth fiber that helps keep you warmer and feels like satin. Bamboo "clothing is naturally soft, allergy reduced, thermal regulating, absorbs moisture, breathable, anti-bacterial, and UV protection" ("Bamboo Clothing," n.d.). Due to the ultra-violet protection and its anti-bacterial properties, it's now being recommended for active wear, and bamboo's ability to absorb moisture can help when you are running or exercising outside. Allergy-reducing bamboo fabric can help people with sensitive skin or people with dermatitis; however, some people still can experience chemical sensitivities, depending on the manufacturing process used to produce the fiber. It's important to not get caught up with false claims of bamboo fabric. It's difficult to monitor the manufacturing process because the fiber productions are done in China. However, because of the independent and reliable certification companies providing the Eco-certification, there can be assurance that the entire process is healthy. Using fabric softener and bleach is highly discouraged, though, because of the fibers being most important in bamboo fabrics. Bamboo fabric must be washed in cold water on a more gentle cycle and is best hung for drying. Bamboo fabric is also naturally wrinkle-free fabric, so using an iron isn't recommended. Bamboo fabric is certainly valuable if it's used with proper care.

Although the research shows different ways that bamboo can be a valuable resource, there are disadvantages as well. It contains carbon disulfide, which is dangerous because breathing in the chemical can cause nerve damage and headache, which have been known to cause disorders in workers at rayon manufacturers. Low-level exposure to sodium hydroxide can cause irritation of the eyes and

the skin. Sometimes fast-growing bamboo can be a problem, which leads to over-harvesting the plant. Bamboo is in higher demand for the construction market, so the cost of bamboo is higher than regular wood. When building with bamboo, sometimes in the “areas with heavy rainfall, there will be a lot of water which can make the bamboo weathered and decay; since bamboo isn’t fireproof you should beware of any fire possibility, moreover when it is in dry season or summer” (“Advantages and Disadvantages of Bamboo Housing Designs,” 2013). Although bamboo is better to use than hardwood floors, sometimes bamboo can’t be floated. However, bamboo is very easy for termites and beetles to attack, unless it’s correctly cut when it has low glucose levels. Bamboo also needs to be treated carefully, and surprisingly, it’s best to keep the bamboo moistened with gasoline. Even bamboo shoots have a disadvantage, and referring back to kidney stones, bamboo could cause kidney stones later on because of oxalate salts can accumulate in the kidney over a period of time.

Overlooked by today’s society, bamboo plants could be used much more. Research shows how useful bamboo was 7,000 of years ago and also the many ways bamboo could be used today. If people don’t research bamboo before planting the grass, then it won’t grow properly, and it will have to be removed due to its growing randomly and untamed. However, there are 1,000 different bamboo options to choose from when resources are needed for building, transportation, food, and clothing. With bamboo being the fastest-growing plant of the planet, it could make a desert have greenery within five years. Construction companies could develop more quickly due to its strength. Research shows healthy eaters or doctors how useful and healthy bamboo shoots are to the immune system. Even certain home goods or clothing companies could value bamboo with their bed spreads or clothes developing certain advantages with bamboo that could possibly even raise their prices. Although it has some disadvantages, the advantages will show that bamboo is reliable. Bamboo is extremely important and a very renewable resource that grows rapidly and has so many potential uses.

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