

Bamboo, more than a wood alternative

The largest problem facing humanity at this moment is the planet wide decay of the environment. The large scale exploitation of our natural resources is a serious threat for life. One of these endangered resources is the wood which is stored in millions of trees, in the most precious regions of the world. However, there is one tree which has the potential to overcome this problem. It actually is not a 'real tree': it is a grass with wood characteristics. This woody grass is called BAMBOO. This particular kind of grass is the fastest growing plant on earth (up to 1 meter per day in tropical regions!). It can grow in almost any climate, but the 'big bamboo' is only found in (sub) tropical climates, where certain species can reach heights of 15 to 20 meters (with diameters of 35 cms)!

The world's largest bamboo reservoir is located in China. Here the 'Phyllostachys pubescens' is a bamboo species which has been used as a wood-alternative for centuries. It is grown in managed bamboo forests, where each year \pm 30% of the forest is harvested without reducing the forest in size. This is possible because the growth of new bamboo is also around 30% each year. The technique of splitting the bamboo stems into strips and then pressing these strips into panels has opened up a new range of possibilities for this wonderful material: they are the input for flooring, table tops, stairs, door panels, etc. With this technique, bamboo has stepped into a new era.

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