

Misunderstandings about bamboo

1. Aren't all bamboos alike?

No wood supplier will tell you that all types of trees provide the same quality of wood or even that any one type provides the same quality of wood from one tree to the next. The same can be said for bamboo. There are more than 1,300 species of bamboo worldwide. *Phyllostachys pubescens* or the MOSO species, is found in low mountain areas of eastern China where temperatures can dip below freezing in the winter and reach over 100 F in the summer. Similar to any species of wood, bamboo exhibits subtle differences in hardness, thickness and grain structure as a result of differences such as soil chemistry, hours of sunlight and temperature cycles.

The MOSO bamboo species needs 5 years to grow to adult height and to be hard enough to be processed. The moment of the harvest is important for the quality of the bamboo. In order to manufacture a quality product from bamboo, a lot of attention needs to be paid to the place where the bamboo is grown and how it is harvested. Determining the origin and age of the bamboo is one of the daily tasks of the MOSO-organisation in China.

2. Is bamboo really environmentally friendly?

Determining how environmentally friendly a product is usually is not very easy. The environmental balance for bamboo is certainly positive.

The ways in which it is grown and harvested are important environmental arguments. Every year the parent bamboo plant develops new stems, so the stems can be harvested after 5 years in a mature plantation without decreasing the size of the forest. Regular harvesting actually improves the bamboo's growing power. This way of working results in an even faster growth of new shoots and guarantees perfect quality for the following harvest. A large part of the *Phyllostachys Pubescens* reservoir is managed by farmers on plantations. The farmer marks his "ownership" and notes the year of origin on every new stem.

Moso also opts for an environmentally friendly approach for the processing of bamboo strips to make flooring and panels. A lot of the energy required in the factory comes from the burning of sawdust and bamboo leftovers. Concerning the glue, MOSO exclusively cooperates with European suppliers. As a result, the quality is guaranteed and all glues used by MOSO easily meet the requirements set out in the E1 norm.

3. Is the panda threatened by MOSO?

No, Pandas (the giant panda and the small panda) live in the central mountain ranges of central China. Pandas go to places where the lower species of bamboo are easily accessible. The high Moso bamboo, *Phyllostachys Pubescens*, has no leaf growth on the first 5 metres of the stem and is therefore not a source of food for the panda.

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