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## How to Grow Bamboo

By Hans Dekker

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Bamboo is a mysterious and elusive plant that baffles taxonomists who try to contain it within a botanical class and gardeners who try to contain it within a limited garden space as they learn how to grow bamboo. For many years, bamboo was thought to be a primitive grass but recent DNA testing has shown it to be one of the most highly evolved forest grasses. There are over 1200 forms of bamboo that grow in a broad spectrum of color including the familiar green and gold as well as burgundy, blue and even black grasses. Some varieties of bamboo can grow up to a foot a day and ultimately reach 130 feet tall while the smallest bamboo cultivar attains only six inches of growth.

The first step in learning how to grow bamboo is picking a cultivar and beginning to unravel its many mysteries. While most of us picture tall stands of green and golden canes growing in tropical bamboo forests, bamboo cultivars range from the temperate to the tropical. As well as diversity in cultivar, bamboo has over 1500 documented uses that range from use in construction to the making of acupuncture needles and from agricultural fodder to the making of musical instruments. Until they are cut, bamboos stems are properly called culms and not canes. In India bamboo plants are commonly called the "Wood of the poor" and in China the "friend of the people". To add to the confusion, a cultivar commonly sold as "lucky bamboo" isn't bamboo at all but a type of lily from the Dracaena family!

Unluckily for bamboo, it has the reputation for being an invasive plant, growing from running rhizomes. Although this is true for some cultivars, the most cold-hardy plants don't run at all, but grow from well-behaved clumps with well-established root systems. One thing that bamboo cultivars do have in common is that they are perennial plants. As noted above, some bamboos varieties are temperate and some are tropical. Because its diversity, it's easy to find a suitable cultivar when you want to learn how to grow bamboo. Bamboo cultivars range from those that grow indoors to outdoors, in a garden or in a

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container, in bright light or shade.

Two considerations in knowing how to grow bamboo successfully are water and air. All true bamboos are grasses and won't grow in saturated soils. They also need air circulation to thrive. In fact, some bamboo growers raise the pots of their small cultivars on chopsticks to provide air circulation under the plant as well as around it. Large pots are often elevated with heavy dowels.

The bamboo is a symbol of long life, strength and versatility for many cultures of the world. Unraveling its mysteries is a continuing source of enjoyment. When you know how to grow bamboo, you'll find that your love for the plant grows as fast as your bamboo does!

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### **Bamboo Flooring—A New Trend**

**By Dave Michaels**

Bamboo flooring is a type of wood flooring that has gained popularity in the recent years. Bamboo is a type of grass that grows all over Southeast Asia, and China and it has become a high quality alternative to the traditional hard wood floors seen in the past. Bamboo flooring has become especially popular in the southeast and west coast areas due to its solidness and appearance. Professionals in the flooring business are always looking for good flooring materials to promote to their clients. They are looking for high quality floors that look good and withstand everyday lifestyles as well. Bamboo flooring does both these things and that is why it is a good flooring material choice.

Bamboo stalks mature in just five years and reach heights well over 50 ft. Since bamboo renews itself naturally it is an environmentally friendly alternative to using wood from trees which can take anywhere from 50 to 100 years to mature. Bamboo, a type of grass, grows into a material that is very hard and durable. Bamboo can grow in areas with fair to poor soil, making it one of the fastest growing plants in the world. Even after harvesting bamboo continues to grow vigorously, which makes it an extremely good alternative to other flooring options.

Bamboo floors are a great way of adding value to your home since they are just as hard, durable, and attractive as traditional hardwood floors. When people are looking for floors for their home, they look for durability, fair pricing, and good looks. Bamboo flooring not only looks fashionable and attractive it is also very durable, almost as hard as steel! It is also environmentally friendly which is beginning to make it more popular. More and more suppliers are starting to carry bamboo floors.

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Bamboo flooring comes in colors like lightwood, honey, dark wood, and amber which have all been known to be popular. Carbonization and pressure steaming are techniques used to create the dark colors seen on a lot of bamboo floors. Bamboo flooring panels can also be arranged in many different pattern types. Patterns that are usually seen are vertical or flat grain and bamboo floors are usually nailed down or floated. Unfinished as well as pre-finished bamboo panels are available and can be found online sold by bamboo suppliers or in flooring centers.

Bamboo floors are always a good option when you are looking to buy a new floor. Bamboo floors are cost effective, durable, stable, fashionable, and environmentally friendly. Any homeowner looking to buy a new floor should really give bamboo a chance since they really are a cheaper alternative to traditional hardwood floors and are very easy to maintain. Bamboo floors have become more popular in the more recent years and can add value to your home.

Dave Michaels writes on home, health and computer subjects. For more bamboo tips visit

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