

## Brilliant Bamboo Facts

### **Bamboozled! 10 Fascinating Facts about the Panda's Favourite Food**

1. Bamboo is a grass, belonging to the taxonomic family Gramineae (grasses), subfamily Bambusoideae (bamboo). In total there are around 1,450 species of the plant that grows on all of the world's continents apart from Antarctica.
2. It is the fastest growing grass on the planet and has been recorded growing at an amazing 47.6 inches in a 24-hour period. Some of the world's largest bamboo can grow more than 30 metres (98ft) tall and be as large as 6-8 inches in diameter.
3. Bamboo is a crucial element in the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. A typical grove of bamboo releases 35% more oxygen than an equivalent stand of trees. Because of this, bamboo is a great way of reducing carbon footprints and helping fight global warming.
4. Bamboo can tolerate extreme conditions with some species being found 4000 metres above sea level in the Andes and Himalayas. It was the first plant to re-green after the atomic blast in Hiroshima, Japan in 1945.
5. While bamboo is an easy plant to grow with little history of disease, it has a volatile life-cycle. Unlike other grasses, once it progresses to full-flowering, a rather unpredictable process, the entire plant dies.
6. While giant pandas will eat up to 25 different type of bamboo, they are also carnivores who have an appetite for rats, mice, pikas (rabbit-like creatures), insects and other vegetation.
7. Other animals that eat bamboo include the red panda of Nepal and bamboo lemurs of Madagascar, as well as mountain gorillas of Central Africa. Chimps and elephants also eat the stalks and have been documented consuming bamboo sap which was fermented and alcoholic.
8. Cornwall has been traditionally home to the UK's bamboo furniture making industry, and many landowners and private gardeners continue to grow bamboo in abundance. Many are members of the thriving Bamboo Society of Great Britain – see link for more information

<http://www.bamboosociety.org/gbindex.html>