

## BAMBOO: THE WORLDS **GREENEST** RAW MATERIAL WHICH IS ALSO **STRONGER** THAN STEEL

Bamboo although a common building material in many tropical countries, is still considered by many as “poor mans timber”. However, as the world attempts to become greener, bamboos essential qualities are starting to win converts.

Despite its lowly reputation, bamboo could justifiably hold the title as the strongest stuff on the planet. It has greater tensile strength than steel, and it withstands better compression than concrete. Both qualities are essential to keeping the plant, which grows to nearly 60 meters but is only as wide at the base as the very top, from falling over. It needs the compression strength to hold up its own weight and tensile strength to bend in the wind without breaking.



Western concepts of strength are, it doesn't move, it doesn't break, the Chinese concept is you've got to bend with things, if you don't bend, you break. The miracle of bamboo strength is in its ability to bend.

In both temperate and tropical climates, it grows as quickly and abundantly as a weed. Though most often used as an alternative to timber, bamboo, with its underground rhizome root system that continually regenerates the plant when the stalks are cut, is technically a type of grass. In fact, it grows faster than any other grass, in some conditions over a metre a day. It also produces 35% more oxygen from carbon dioxide than trees and more effectively binds soil to limit erosion.

Bamboo is now being incorporated into housing as a timber alternative in the USA. It has had a place in the US flooring market for a number of years selling as “plyboo”, a laminated bamboo.

Recent markets to adopt bamboo are high-performance bicycle frames, where it offers a superior combination of stiffness ( for power efficiency) and compliance ( for vibration dampening).

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