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Dendrocalamus giganteus

[Synonyms : *Bambusa gigantea*, *Sinocalamus giganteus*]

GIANT BAMBOO is an evergreen bamboo. Native to China (especially Szechuan), Myanmar (more familiar in the West as Burma) and Thailand, it has stout, strong stems.

It is also known as *Bambus obrovský* (Czech, Slovak), and *Buloh semilang* (Malay).

Giganteus means ‘gigantic, very or unusually large (or tall)’.

This is the largest known grass. It can grow at the rate of 15-20 in. in one day and centuries ago convicted Chinese criminals could be sentenced to an excruciatingly painful death that depended upon this rapid growth rate. They would be left in the forest, firmly lashed to growing bamboo stems that would inexorably stretch the body.

Apart from fairly large ships, giant bamboo is used for making rafts, particularly in the Szechuan province of China where they provide transport in the local, shallow and turbulent waters, and also in Formosa for sea-going rafts which are noteworthy for their sharply up-curved prows.

In addition the stems of giant bamboo are used in the construction of such diverse projects as homes, bridges and piping for aqueducts. They are also used in the manufacture of containers eg. buckets – and split young shoots provide chopsticks.