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Phyllostachys edulis

[Synonyms : *Bambusa edulis*, *Phyllostachys heterocycla*, *Phyllostachys mitis*, *Phyllostachys pubescens*]

BAMBOO SHOOTS is a bamboo. Native to China it has orange-green stems.

It is also known as Bamboo, Edible bamboo, *Mo chu* (Chinese), *Moso* (Japanese), Moso bamboo, *Moso Bambus* (German), and Tortoise shell bamboo.

This species has edible, fibrous, cream coloured young shoots.

Edulis is Latin (eatable).

The Chinese are thought to have been the first to realize that the roots could be consumed as a food, and records show that bamboo shoots were being enjoyed by a Chinese Emperor in the 6th Century. Many Asians have eaten the young shoots.

Fibre from bamboo provided the first writing paper. The plant had many other diverse local uses ranging from fortune telling, cooking vessels and kitchen utensils to furniture and scaffolding. Today the stems are used in construction, cabling, drilling equipment, mah-jongg tiles and children's toys.

Some authorities note that it is abnormal forms of this species, whether living or dead and often called 'tortoise-shell bamboo', that are prized and sometimes revered in Eastern countries.

It is awe-inspiring to note in Californian records that the plant can grow as much as thirty inches in twenty-four hours. It is hardly surprising to learn therefore that this species can be extremely invasive when introduced outside its native habitat.

This species was first grown in Britain in 1880.