

Bambusa bambos

Giant Thorny Bamboo

Indian Thorny Bamboo



Bambusa bambos also known as Giant Thorny Bamboo or Indian Thorny Bamboo, is a species of tropical dense clumping bamboo native to Southeast Asia. This bamboo species was previously named *Bambusa arundinacea* and is often used for construction purposes.

The fast growing, strong woody culms of *Bambusa bambos* have an average diameter between 10-18 cm, and are between 20-30 m tall (although the tallest recorded culm measured 40 m). The internodes are dark green colored with very thick walls. Nodes are slightly swollen and some lower nodes produce short aerial roots.

This bamboo species may flower every 30-50 years. Gregarious flowering was last reported in the early 90's (1991-1995) where single clumps gave about 50-100 kg of seeds (70,000 to 85,000 seeds per kilogram). *Bambusa bambos* seeds are generally viable for a period of 6-8 months.

Culms are used for house construction, scaffolding, rafters, thatching and roofing, handicrafts and art objects, basket making, bows and arrows, furniture, floating timber and rafting, cooking utensils and fencing. The raw material of this bamboo is also an important source for paper pulp and panel products. Shoots and seeds are edible and leaves are used as fodder and medicine.

Bamboo shoots, also known as bamboo sprouts, are edible shoots of the bamboo species. They are crisp and similar to asparagus. These shoots are famous as a seasonal delicacy in vast regions of Taiwan, China, and South-East Asian countries.

The health benefits of the bamboo shoots may include aiding weight loss, balancing cholesterol levels, and boosting the immune system. They also have potentially anti-inflammatory properties.



What are Bamboo Shoots?

Bamboo shoots are the sprouts that spring out beside the bamboo plant. These sprouts (or shoots) are edible and they belong to the Bambusoideae [1]subfamily of grass, according to research from Northern Illinois University. They are accessible in fresh and fermented forms and are highly nutritious.

The bamboo species whose sprouts are harvested include *Phyllostachys edulis*, winter shoots, 'hairy' shoots, *Phyllostachys bambusoides*, *Dendrocalamus lactiferous*, *Bambusa vulgaris*, *Bambusa oldhamii*, and *Bambusa odashimae*.

One can find evidence in old Chinese literature dating back to the Tang dynasty (618 AD-907 AD), about the benefits of eating bamboo shoots. This was perhaps the first written record about these shoots in human history. Another important scripture dating back to the Ming dynasty (1368 AD to 1644 AD) also mentioned the medicinal and other benefits of bamboo shoots.

In Japan, they are considered to be the “King of Forest Vegetables”. There are many bamboo species that sprout shoots, but only a handful of them are actually cultivated and consumed.

Health Benefits of Bamboo Shoots

Bamboo shoots are an exotic food consumed in many Asian countries and are also gaining demand in other countries. They are known for their various health benefits, including those explained in greater detail below.

May Aid in Weight Loss

The prevalence of obesity and being overweight has substantially risen in the past three decades around the globe. This huge burden of treating obesity with effective methods is

the need for the hour and requires multiple clinical trials. According to a study in the Scientific Reports, bamboo shoots can be most effective in reducing high-fat diet obesity.

Moreover, the study indicates that bamboo shoot fiber may have the potential in preventing obesity and metabolic syndrome.

May Protect Heart Health

According to some research, phytosterols and phytonutrients found in bamboo shoots can be ideal for dissolving harmful LDL cholesterol in the body. This can ease cholesterol out of the arteries for a smooth supply and movement of blood throughout the body.



May Strengthen Immune System

The vitamins and minerals in bamboo shoots can be ideal for improving the body's immune system. Also, the antioxidants present in them can be essential for strengthening the body from the inside out, even when it comes to potentially delaying the neurodegenerative disease.

Other Benefits

May Help in Healthy bowel movements: Including bamboo shoots in your meals may be a decent idea for relieving constipation.

Potentially Anti-inflammatory properties: According to research in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology, bamboo shoots may possess anti-inflammatory and analgesic (pain-killing) properties.

Potential Remedy for Respiratory disorders: Bamboo shoots may have been known to be effective against some respiratory disorders. A decoction can be taken along with honey for the best results.

Potential Uterotonic properties: Traditional Chinese medicine believes that bamboo shoots can cause uterine contractions. They are used as a medicinal supplement during the last month of pregnancy.

May Aid in Relieving Stomach disorder: They are useful in relieving stomach disorders.

May Aid in Wound cleaning: The shoots can be used for cleaning wounds and sores.

Might Help Lower blood pressure: Bamboo shoots contain a possibly high amount of potassium that is beneficial for lowering and maintaining blood pressure.

How to Cook & Store Bamboo Shoots?

Bamboo shoots can be boiled and then used for making various dishes. Boiled shoots can be served with butter and soya sauce as a vegetable accompaniment.

The shoots can be added to soups, stews, salads, and gravies.

Pickles made from bamboo shoots are available and can be consumed as a delicious snack.

Fresh shoots can last up to two weeks when they are properly refrigerated and kept away from sunlight; if exposed to sunlight, shoots will develop a bitter taste.

Before cooking fresh shoots, it is highly recommended to boil them partially or soak them in water overnight, as some species may contain cyanide, which can be eliminated by either of these processes. However, the study focused on rodents, so more scientific research focusing on a human population is required to further these claims.

Word of caution: Bamboo shoots can be harmful to your body if eaten raw as it produces cyanide in the gut. It is best advised to consult your doctor before including them in your diet.

