



Bamboo belongs to the grass family, and can grow to full height in 3 months, however it takes 3 - 5 years to become strong enough to be used for construction. It is used extensively in tropical and subtropical regions for scaffolding, bridges and housing framing. Newer technology is promoting its use in the western world for concrete reinforcement, panel products, flooring and laminated beams.

Bamboo can be grown almost anywhere and it can be harvested without killing the plant, on a short enough rotation to suit most people. The poles last about a year in the ground and above ground they can be treated with the low toxicity preservative, boron (borax) to deter insects and fungi.

When bamboo is processed into flooring or engineered beams, the eco rating of bamboo takes a dive through the use of strong chemicals. Most flooring is pre-coated. However, there are some people working on healthier, more environmentally friendly processes, so do your research first.



The video *Elora Hardy: building a sustainable (bamboo) future* shows how the use of bamboo in architecture is only limited by your imagination, if only we could have buildings like these everywhere! Go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOSQksSlr9c>