

Sustainable development

Biodiversity and respect for the natural environment

Sustainable development is about: taking into account the soil – protecting it from chemical aggression, promoting the regeneration of impoverished or degraded land and the development of humus; taking into account the air – reducing pollution...; taking into account solar power – preparing for the diminishment of energy sources; taking into account the increasing scarcity of water supplies – avoiding waste, excessive consumption and pollution.

To what extent do plants from the grass family and more specifically the bamboo play a part in sustainable development?

Bamboo is not only an exotic plant but it can also be used for different purposes.

Construction: The structure of bamboo, a walled tube, is the most resistant structure known, moreover it is very light. This material is recommended for the construction of ecological houses and natural floors. Big plants from the grass family such as the *Myscanthus* from China are already used in many European countries as construction material: for straw houses, insulating material and soundproofing.

Energy production: There are plans to use bamboo for energy production in the form of compressed bricks for heating and even for the production of biofuel.

Medicine: For a long time bamboo has been used in China for its therapeutic qualities and is starting to be used in Europe too. It contains a high level of organic silica easily assimilated by the body.

Carbon pumps: Bamboo, like other big plants, absorbs carbon dioxide and produces an important mass of vegetation. It functions as a "carbon pump". Bamboo is the plant that produces the most oxygen per m² in the world. Moreover, plants absorb an average of 4 to 6% of nitrogen whereas bamboo can absorb 99% of nitrogen, and thus it has a real decontaminating ability.

Decontamination: Certain types of aquatic plants from the grass family such as reeds - *Phragmites australis* - have a decontaminating quality according to the lagoon technique. These Gramineae can be used to filter the water in swimming pools, avoiding resorting to chemicals. Each year more and more people resort to this type of filtration.

The diverse uses that can be made of bamboo prove that its culture and propagation are of interest. However bamboo also possesses other fascinating qualities that are of benefits to sustainable development.

Bamboo does not consume much water: Once bamboo has reached its maturity level and once it has adapted to the soil (in about 4 to 10 years), it requires little irrigation.

Bamboo grows exceptionally fast: Bamboo, whether it is 20 inches or 100 feet high –the maximum height planned for Eyragues- , will produce a shoot like a telescope in the record time of about 8 weeks. The stalk will become hard with time – 3 to 4 years. A third of a bamboo garden can regenerate itself each year. Once the site reaches maturity it will become a natural carbon pump and it will supply first-choice materials. A bamboo plantation reaches maturity in 10 years as opposed to a tree plantation which reaches maturity in 50 years. The wished-for "carbon pump" effect is therefore more rapidly effective.

Since there is a great diversity of bamboo species, it is able to adapt to numerous types of soils and climates.

Bamboo itself is an agent of sustainable development. Bamboo-garden owners practise **organic agriculture without any pesticides or weedkillers** to avoid polluting ground water.

TO CONTACT US

Bambous en Provence

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OPENING HOURS

The garden will open Friday March 29th 2013

Open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday
and public holidays from 2 pm to 7 pm
until November 1st (holiday period).

ENTRANCE FEES

Adults : 5€

Inhabitants of Eyragues and Graveson : 4€

Children (under 18) accompanied by their
parents : free

GRT gaz employees : free

> Credits cards not accepted

Educational itinerary : free for schools
(according to availability)

Theme for 2013 : Analysis and observation
of an insect hotel

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