

Friday, March 1, 2024

Bambusa vulgaris

Scientific name: *Bambusa vulgaris* Schrad. ex J.C.Wendl.

Family: *Poaceae*

Common name: Common Bamboo, Golden Bamboo

Bamboo is a well-known plant, but let's take a closer look to learn some interesting facts about it. The name of the genus, *Bambusa*, is the Latin version of its local Malay name. This species is native to Southeast Asia.

Bamboo is a herbaceous plant, from the same family as grasses. It has a very powerful rhizome which, if it has water available, spreads very easily. This rhizome is an underground stem in which nutrients accumulate. It grows horizontally, sending roots downwards and shoots upwards. The biology of bamboo is notable for its rapid growth, as it is the fastest-growing plant, and its sparse flowering, after which it dies.

Common bamboo grows to between 10 and 20 m in height and around 10 cm in diameter; it grows upright and curves at the top. The canes are green or yellowish in color; they have nodes, from which branches emerge in varying numbers (the number of branches is an important detail for initial identification of the genera—for example, in *Phyllostachys* there are three); the basal nodes have aerial roots and rings of silky whitish hairs. The internodes are hollow, up to 45 cm long. There are two types of leaves: those on the stem, which protect it while it grows and are then lost, measuring around 35 cm long and almost the same in width, with irritating brown hairs; and those on the branches, which measure around 30 cm, are narrow, lanceolate in shape, and hairless.

Considered in China to be a “friend of the people,” bamboo is the livelihood of millions of people. Its shoots are edible; due to their hardness and flexibility, the canes are used in construction, the paper industry, and to make furniture, fishing rods, canoes, and musical instruments. It has an active ingredient, bambosil, which has a regenerative effect on the joints. The group of common bamboo in La Concepción has been there since the garden was first established 150 years ago. It can be seen from the road bridge, next to the old greenhouses.

