

DO YOU KNOW

By Anna Vivienne

Bamboo



BAMBOO is a common name for about 45 genera and about 480 species of perennial, woody, usually shrubby or tree-like plants of the grass family. Bamboos occur mostly in tropical and subtropical areas, from sea level to snow-capped mountain peaks, with a few species reaching into temperate areas. Bamboos are easily recognised by their woody, jointed stems, called culms.

The culms consist of hollow sections called internodes, which are interrupted by regularly spaced solid partitions called nodes. Bamboo stems develop from horizontal, underground rhizomes. Initially, new shoots grow slowly, but the growth rate increases rapidly and may reach nearly 24 inches per day in some gigantic tropical species. Branches grow from the bud present at each node, and branches may themselves produce secondary or even tertiary branches. It is on these ultimate branches that bamboos produce their usually linear, flat, and many-veined leaves.

The culms of bamboos are green because they contain abundant chlorophyll in the tissue immediately below the surface. The floral structure of bamboos is basically that of the grass family. Because of details in the flowers, however, bamboos are considered primitive among the grasses.

In Sabah, bamboos have been used as building materials since time immemorial. They are used to make buildings for human dwellings, coops for livestock and all types of shelters. Bamboos are also used to weave household utensils, such as baskets, drinking vessels and water containers. Besides that they are used to make traps for fish and games.

Certain types of bamboo are used to cook the local delicacy made from rice called lemang. Bamboo has also been utilized to cook tender chicken meat with rice. The young bamboo shoots are covered as food. The saps of young bamboo roots are used as eye drops for eye related ailments.

Bamboos are found all over the State but they abound in the Tambunan district; so much so that a bamboo festival was incepted several years ago to celebrate the uses of this plant in that district.

Get to know the Hawksbill Turtle

THE Hawksbill Turtle can be found in tropical reef areas in the Pacific, and Indian Oceans. In Sabah, it is found in the Turtle Island Park and the Sipadan Island. It has also been known to nest there.

Hawksbill turtles are known for their exterior shell, which varies from one geographical location to another. It is however predominantly dappled brown with dark and light spots and streaks. The hawksbill sea turtle's underside is lighter yellow or white. This shades helps camouflage the turtle from potential predators.

This sea turtle is medium-sized and weigh up to around 200 pounds. As a hatching, it is small enough to fit in the palm of a human hand. At sexual maturity a female turtle typically weighs around 130 pounds.

Hawksbill turtles are listed as an endangered species and are protected in Sabah and Malaysia as a whole. It is illegal to kill or capture.

Hawksbill turtles are omnivorous scavengers and feed primarily on sponges found on the solid substrate of coral reefs.

Unfortunately Styrofoam and plastics have also been mistaken for food. The hawksbill's narrow, sharp beak is an excellent tool for foraging among coral crevices. The ledges and caves of reefs can also provide resting areas for the turtles throughout the day and night. Unlike the green sea turtles that often migrate several hundred miles between feeding and nesting grounds, hawksbills are often seen year-round on reefs near nesting sites. Little is known about the migration patterns of this rare species.

Males can be distinguished from females by their longer, thicker tail that extends well beyond the posterior part of the carapace. Mating often occurs at the surface in shallow waters near nesting beaches.

Hatchlings emerge from their nest during the night and head to the sea. Not all of them will live due to predators and other factors such as human presence. If they reach safely in the open ocean, they will reappear years later when they are mature.

Marine debris is a threat to sea turtles. Sea turtles can become tangled in discarded netting. Dead Sea turtles that have washed ashore have been found with plastics and other debris in their stomach.



TODAY and tomorrow is a good time to visit the Lagud Seberang Agricultural Park in Tenom. This is because there is an event there called 'Jom piigi Taman' translated loosely 'let's go to the park' being held in conjunction with the 'Cuti-Cuti Malaysia' Promotions.

Activities held during this time include fishing competitions where family and friends can pit their 'luck' against one another in fun.

There will also be a mountain bike challenge and many more. To find out more, go to Tenom today and have fun.

If you are driving you should reach Tenom in three to four hours drive. Drive carefully though the road to this town is a bit winding. There are buses and taxis going to this area. Bus fare is about RM35 per person, depending on which bus company you go onto. You may have to talk to taxi operators' to find out the fares as I personally encountered different rates from different people.

I have been to the park and it is a beautiful place to be. It makes you feel like building a house there and staying there forever.

The Park is located on 500 acres of land and is managed by the Sabah Agriculture Department. The Lagud Sebrang Agriculture Research Station covers an area of 1,500 acre.

The research station actually contains several parks and research

centers. There are several beautiful lakes and farms.

There are also several gardens including 21 mini gardens, such as the Bougainvillea Court, Hibiscus Garden and Lily Glade. In these gardens you can pretend that you are in a world of flashy colours where nothing ugly can touch you.

Children will love the Evolution Garden which showcases the different stages of plant evolution from as ancient as 4.5 billion years ago but then so did I during my previous visit.

One of the most interesting and intriguing items is the Giant Water Lily or Victoria amazonica. This huge plant can hold up a small child. It is that large!

And then there are the orchid centers.

There are some 400 of 1,500 orchid species found in the island of Borneo here. And this includes the Elephant Ear orchid.

Actually if you want to explore the numerous gardens you won't be able to complete it in a day. You have to cycle around the park, take a boat and hike around before you can safely say you have been to Lagud Seberang Agricultural Park.

Since it is the school holidays, why not? Have fun in Lagud Seberang and learn something about nature while you are at it.



Let's go to the Park!

By ANNA VIVIENNE

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