Bamboo

Bamboo is a common woody plant. It grows tall and thin. It looks almost like a tree! It grows about twenty five metres tall. It is about fifteen centimetres wide. Bamboo looks like it is made of many small pieces. Thick lines divide it into small segments. And the inside of bamboo is empty. But it is hard and very strong.

Many people think bamboo is a tree. But it is not - it is a kind of grass. It grows mainly in East and South East Asia. It also grows in Latin America, India and parts of Africa and Australia. Bamboo grows extremely fast and spreads very quickly. There are 1500 different kinds of bamboo. People all over the world use it. And people are planting more of it. Some people call bamboo 'the crop of the future.' They have many good reasons to plant bamboo.

There are over 1,000 uses for bamboo! People in the past used bamboo for many things. They made musical instruments and weapons with bamboo. Artists used it for paintbrushes and paper. Fishermen used it to make equipment for catching fish. Some people even made boats from bamboo!

In China and India, doctors use bamboo in traditional medicine. Bamboo is also very useful for cooking. People put food inside the empty bamboo plant. This is a good container for cooking soup, rice or tea. But people also eat bamboo as a healthy food. People eat the soft part, or shoot, of the bamboo in many ways. Most Asian countries have special foods made from bamboo shoots.

Bamboo has been used in traditional buildings. But builders also use it today! The village of Noh Bo is just one example.

There are many modern uses for bamboo. In 1879 Thomas Edison created the first light bulb. He made it with treated bamboo!

People also use bamboo to make cloth. Beauty products sometimes contain bamboo. It is even in some water filters, to clean water! People have even designed vehicles and airplanes out of bamboo. In Ghana, people even make two wheeled bicycles from bamboo. In the Philippines, people make electricity from bamboo! Buildings, bicycles, light bulbs and even electricity: bamboo is an amazing plant.

These are just a few of the many ways people use bamboo. But bamboo is useful for a much more important reason. It is useful while it grows! Growing bamboo helps the environment in many ways. Bamboo provides oxygen, which improves air quality. It also reduces harmful carbon dioxide in the air. It does this more quickly than trees. Bamboo also provides shade and shelter from the sun.

In many places, hardwood trees are cut down for fuel or for building. This causes problems for the earth, animals, plants and air. To keep a good environment, people must replace the trees. But it takes a very long time for most trees to reach their full size. Many hardwood trees take 50 years to grow!

Bamboo is ready to use in only three years. Bamboo is the fastest growing woody plant in the world. It can grow about 60 centimeters in only one day. The bamboo plant grows to its full size in just three or four months. Some kinds of bamboo then become dry and hard. In

three years, it is strong enough to harvest and use. And bamboo grows again when it is cut down. People can harvest it year after year.

Some people are sure that bamboo is 'the crop of the future'. For example, Nicaragua has many hardwood forests. But people are cutting down three percent of the forests every year. One organization, Eco-planet Bamboo, is trying to replace these trees with bamboo.

Eco-Planet Bamboo planted a large bamboo farm. Through this farm, Eco-Planet Bamboo hopes to improve the environment. They also hope to improve life for local people. Bamboo is helping to reduce poverty in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, bamboo is providing jobs. Around the world, it is improving the environment and the economy. It is easy to see why people call bamboo the 'crop of the future.'

Questions 1-7

*Read the reading passage and fill in the blank below using **ONLY ONE WORD OR A NUMBER**.*

1. Bamboo is a common 1..................... plant.

2. There are 2..................... different kinds of bamboo.

3. Some people call bamboo 'the 3..................... of the future.' .

4. In China and India, doctors use bamboo in traditional 4.....................

5. In Ghana, people even make 5..................... from bamboo.

6. In the Philippines, people make 6..................... from bamboo!.

7. In Nicaragua, bamboo is providing 7..................... plant.

Solution:

1. woody

5. bicycles

2. 1500

6. electricity

3. crop

7. jobs

4. medicine

1. woody

5. bicycles