

A BAMBUSETUM IS BORN

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Because of its popularity and common use, the bamboo has proven to be a profitable business as in the *sawali* industry of Tarlac and Pampanga both of which provinces have discovered that the humble and commonplace bamboo can be made to pay very rich dividends in business and a boon to those who cannot afford the costlier construction materials for their homes and public buildings. In one of the issues of the *Forestry Leaves*, much was said about the "king bamboo", its current uses and commercial possibilities. However, with the recent establishment of the Forest Products Laboratory it becomes a certainty that further studies on its strength, pulp quality, economic aspect, etc. will be explored. Then, too, when definite favorable results are obtainable, the Central Forest Experiment Station may be harnessed to find means of propagating the same. In anticipation of these forthcoming needs there is a necessity for planning out the means for supplying the materials which may be called for by the laboratory and perhaps by some of the reforestation projects. What may be the answer to these needs is a *bambusetum* or *bambodal* (as called in Spanish) which can supply the materials at any time.

WHAT IS A BAMBUSETUM?

A collection of living bamboos, either native or exotic, raised and cultivated either for scientific, educational, or aesthetic purposes or any combination thereof is called a *bambusetum*. This unfamiliar term which is new to a good many of us, came from the lips of one of the world's specialists on

bamboos who, with Dr. J. V. Santos of the University of the Philippines, visited* the Makiling National Park on December 9, 1953, a week after the closing Plenary Session of the Eighth Pacific Science Congress. Dr. McClure upon noticing a number of our bamboos which are scattered on the Forestry Campus, enthusiastically suggested the establishment of a *bambusetum* similar to the 10-hectare lot he established in China. It is said that a *bambusetum* affords one the opportunity to observe and study closely the growth habit of the plants and their field characters which may be more practicable and preferable clues to their identification than their floral characters because it is said that some bamboos have their seed years ranging from 10-50 years. Besides this, it becomes a handy source of materials for studies which will be conducted by the forest products laboratory or of entities engaged in research or investigation.

ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The *bambusetum* of the Bureau of Forestry and the College of Forestry, U.P. is the "brain child" of Forester Felix Franco, Chief, Division of Forest Investigation and Professor Calixto Mabesa, Forester-in-Charge of the College of Forestry, University of the Philippines. On December 17, 1953 a nursery was established for conducting studies on the propagation and raising of planting materials for this *bambusetum*. To start with, there are about ten different kinds of bamboos being raised in the nursery which will soon be transplanted in their proper places in the proposed site in hec-

* The first visit of Dr. McClure was on November 25, 1953 together with Dr. Walker of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C. and Dr. J. V. Santos of U.P.

tares 6c-d and 7c-d about 400 meters from the College of Forestry building. It is hoped that from time to time more bamboos from all parts of the islands and also from abroad will be added to the present collection in the Makiling National Park and planted systematically in the *bambusetum* which will soon be improved. The idea is to render it accessible not only to scientists, excursionists, and other interested groups but particularly to the students of the College of Forestry, who after their graduation may be interested in the business possibilities of the bamboo.

COLLECTION OF MATERIALS

To date there are about 18 species of bamboos collected for the *bambusetum*. They are: (1) Spiny bamboo (*Bambusa blumeana* (*spinosa* Roxb.)); (2) Indian bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea* Willd.)* (3) Kauayan-kiling (*Bambusa vulgaris* Schrad.); (4) Yellow or golden bamboo (*B. vulgaris* var. *striata* (Lod.) Gamble);* (5) *Bambusa nana*; (6) Chinese bamboo (*B. multiplex glaucescens* (Willd.) Seib.);* (7) Bayog (*Dendrocalamus merrillianus* Elm.); (8) Striate bayog (*Dendrocalamus* sp.); (9) Bekki-bekking (*D. sp.?*); (10) Botong or Male bamboo (*D. strictus* Nees); (11) Bolo (*Gigantochloa levis* (Blco.) Merr.); (12) *Gigantochloa aspera*; (13) Boho *Schizotachyum lumampao* (Blco.) Merr.); (14) Yellow boho (*S. brachycladum* (*cinera*);* (15) Tagkauayan boho (*S. sp.?*); (16) Anos (*S. lima* (Blco.) Merr.); (17) Pole vault bamboo (*Phyllostachys* sp.);* and (18) Fishing rod bamboo (*Phyllostachys* sp.)*.

Of particular interest are the following bamboos: (1) Bekki-bekking whose identification is still unknown was collected by A. Sison from Aguilar, Pangasinan and is used for walking sticks and balusters; (2) Striate bayog also collected by A. Sison from Labrador, Pangasinan is considered by herbolarios as a cure for T.B.; (3) Striate spiny bamboo which is believed to exist in San

Carlos, Pangasinan; (4) *Gigantochloa* sp. noted for the biggest culm so far (a diameter of 1 foot) is believed to exist in Impalutao, Bukidnon; (5) Multi-colored bamboo one time mentioned in "Where in the Philippines" of the *Manila Times* can be found in San Juan, Abra; (6) *Dendrocalamus curranii* of Sampaloc and Polilio, Quezon; (7) *Cephalostachyum mindorense* Gamble of Mindoro; (8) *Gadua philippinensis* Gamble is a rare species believed to be found only in Davao; (9) a species of bamboo in Japan whose rhizomes are prolific producers of young edible shoots; and (10) a species of bamboo in China noted as good fodder for animals is recommended as a prospective control for cogon and other grasses. Dr. McClure promised to send us the last-named bamboo. The entire nation would be very grateful if he could send to us in addition the species of edible Japanese bamboo. This will certainly supplement the Filipino diet and help bolster the food production campaign in the Philippines.

Observations in the Makiling National Park show that most of the bamboos which were planted by Forester H. M. Curran are thriving very well and have been turning in dividends in the form of human benefits. From all indications, they may serve as natural dams along gulleys and levees in cogonal lands, particularly in reforestation projects by minimizing the rate of flow of run-off water; thus reducing to the minimum the ravages of soil erosion. If quite a number of bamboo clumps can be maintained in reforestation projects, it becomes certain that they will be an invaluable source of construction materials, fence posts, potting tubes, seed baskets, viandas, forage, nursery implements, etc.

The *bambusetum* is not conceived to be a "whale of a project"; but it is one which deserves due attention and consideration by all men in the Forest Service especially those in the field upon whom depend its

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* Means introduced species.