TEMPERATE BAMBOO QUARTERLY

A FORUM FOR SHARING INFORMATION & VIEWS AMONG BAMBUSEROS

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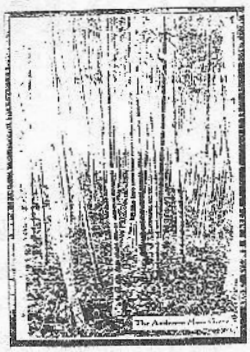
Phyllostachys aurea albovariegata in flower.

THE COVERS



Back

Rufus Fant of Anderson, S.C. was a contemporary of Frederick Law Olmstead (see Biltmore *TBQ* Vol. I, p. 60), David Fairchild, Thomas A. Edison, Barbour Lathrop, Bamboo luminaries all. As nearly as we could track down by cross referencing old records at the national Agriculture Library, Fant acquired his original Moso (*Phyllostachys pubescens*) plants from the Yokahama Gardeners Association of San Francisco in 1893 at a price of ten for $3.50. The now famous "Anderson Moso" shown in the photo on the back cover of this issue is at the old Silverbrook Cemetery and was planted beside the creek there in 1912. It wasn't always this pretty! Since 1991 the Southeast Chapter (ABS) has adopted the grove and annually in March we meet there with garden tools for a "work day". A lot of privet and honeysuckle and blackberries as well as old dead canes have been removed to produce the "look" shown here.

Front

Phyllostachys aurea albovariegata beginning to flower. Note the swollen tips of the branchlets, one of the first symptoms that flowering is imminent. This close up by Sue was taken here at E.A.R.F. I also saw this forma of *P. aurea* flowering in England this spring and Durnford Dart notes that it is flowering in Australia. Other formas of *P. aurea* are not known to be flowering at this time. Whether or not this form will die out, and will there be seed produced are questions that can't be answered yet. If there are seed, however, almost all of them will produce what is called "the type" ie. the green form of *P. aurea*. For those interested, Betty Shor is keeping records of Bamboo flowering dates. A copy may be requested from her at 2655 Ellentown Road, La Jolla, California 92037-1147 -- include a large self-addressed envelope with 55¢ postage.

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BAMBOOS: A NATURAL RESOURCE IN MONTE BLANCO, MEXICO

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Introduction

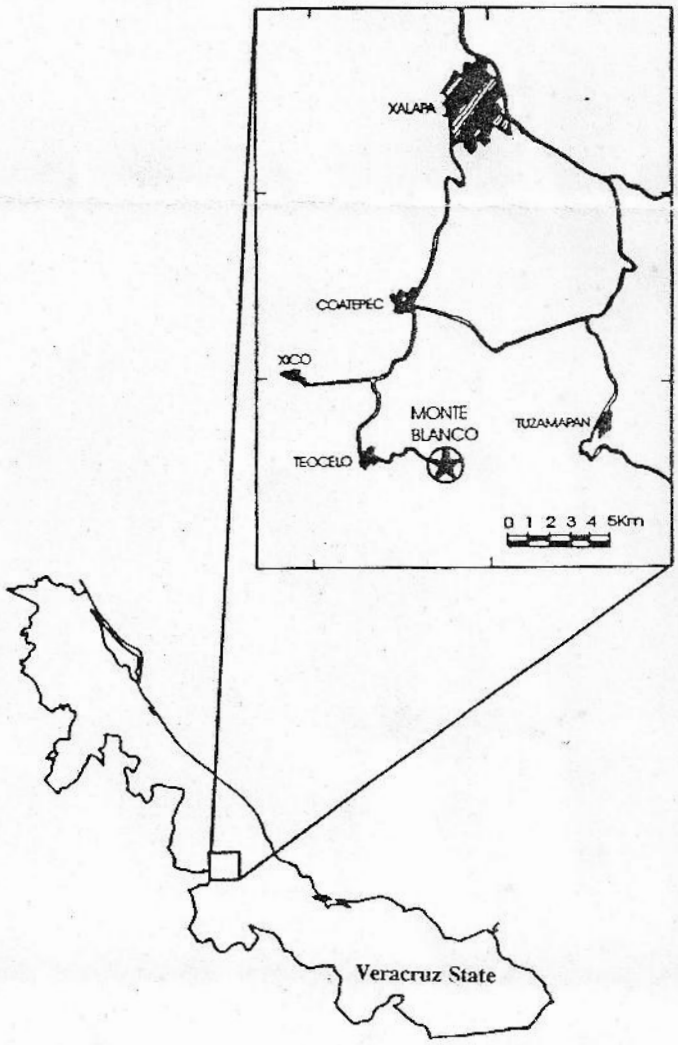
Bamboos provide just one example of the many uses of grasses in Mexico. Grasses are a major component of the total Mexican vascular flora of 25,000 species (1, 127 grass species in 206 genera found in Mexico), and among these 564 grass species have uses for man. These uses fall into nine groups:

532 - forage grasses
40 - medicinal grasses
32 - ornamental grasses
28 - crafts grasses
24 - land-stabilisation grasses
22 - food grasses
15 - housing grasses
15 - industrial grasses
5 - ceremonial grasses

The Bamboos (Subfamily Bambusoideae) have approximately 35 native woody species in Mexico, from 8 genera, and a number of these are used economically. They are distributed in tropical regions throughout Mexico, except in the North.

In Veracruz State there are 6 genera and 13 species of woody bamboos, of which some have been used to build houses, to make furniture, and as household accessories. An example of economic usage occurs in the village of Monte Blanco, Veracruz where the population have been using bamboo to make furniture since 1978.

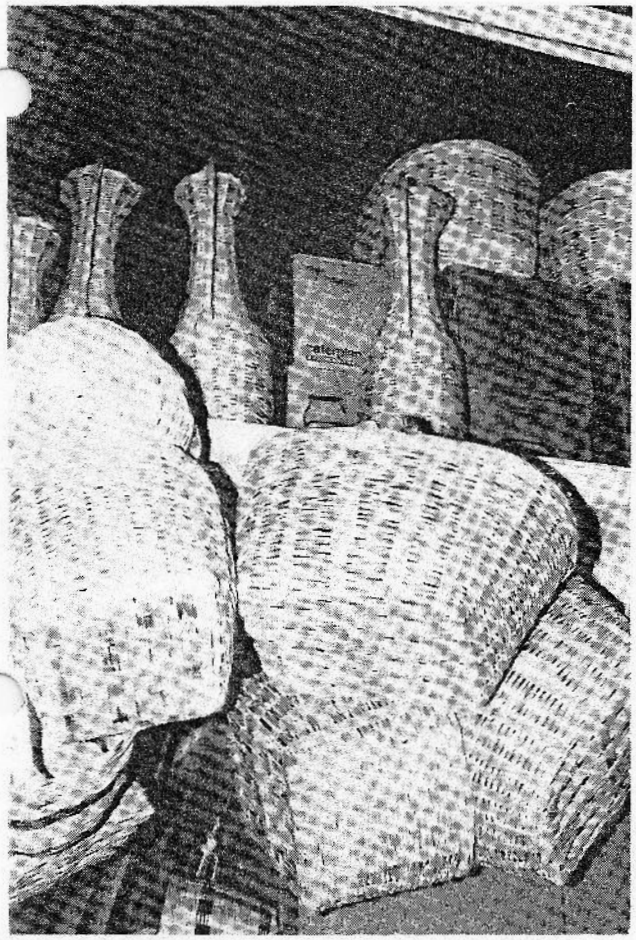
Monte Blanco village is in Veracruz State, south of Xalapa City. This village was originally a coffee growing area, but since the price of coffee decreased drastically in 1978, the population began to make use of natural resources such as bamboos.



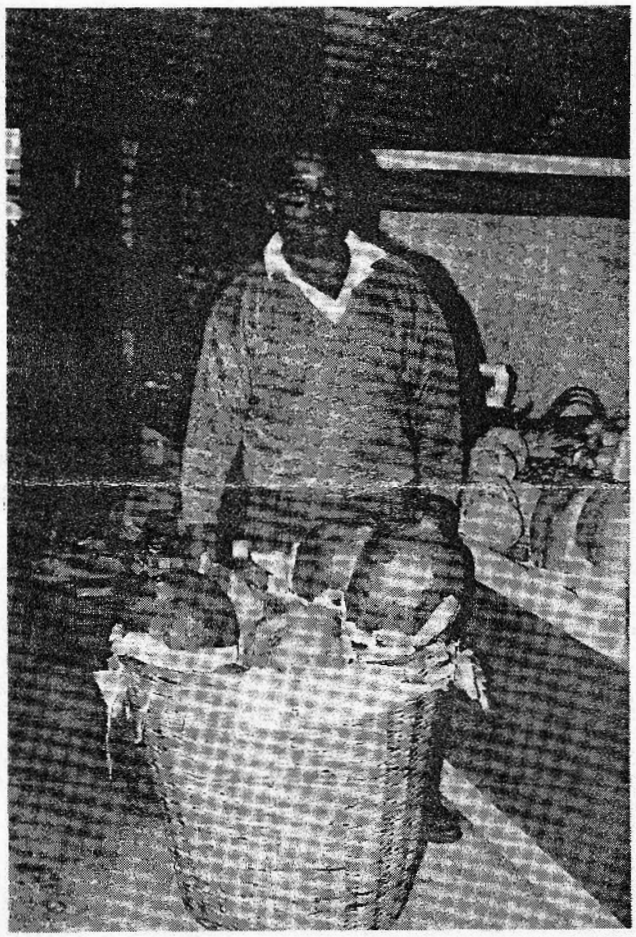
Uses

People from Monte Blanco make usage of the stronger bamboo culms in one form or another often for the supporting structure of their houses, scaffolding, furniture, for flooring made from the split and flattened culms, or for making separating walls and blinds.

The following bamboo species are used in Monte Blanco village:



Ornamental baskets in original shape which were made with split and flattened culms of *Chusquea bilimekii*.



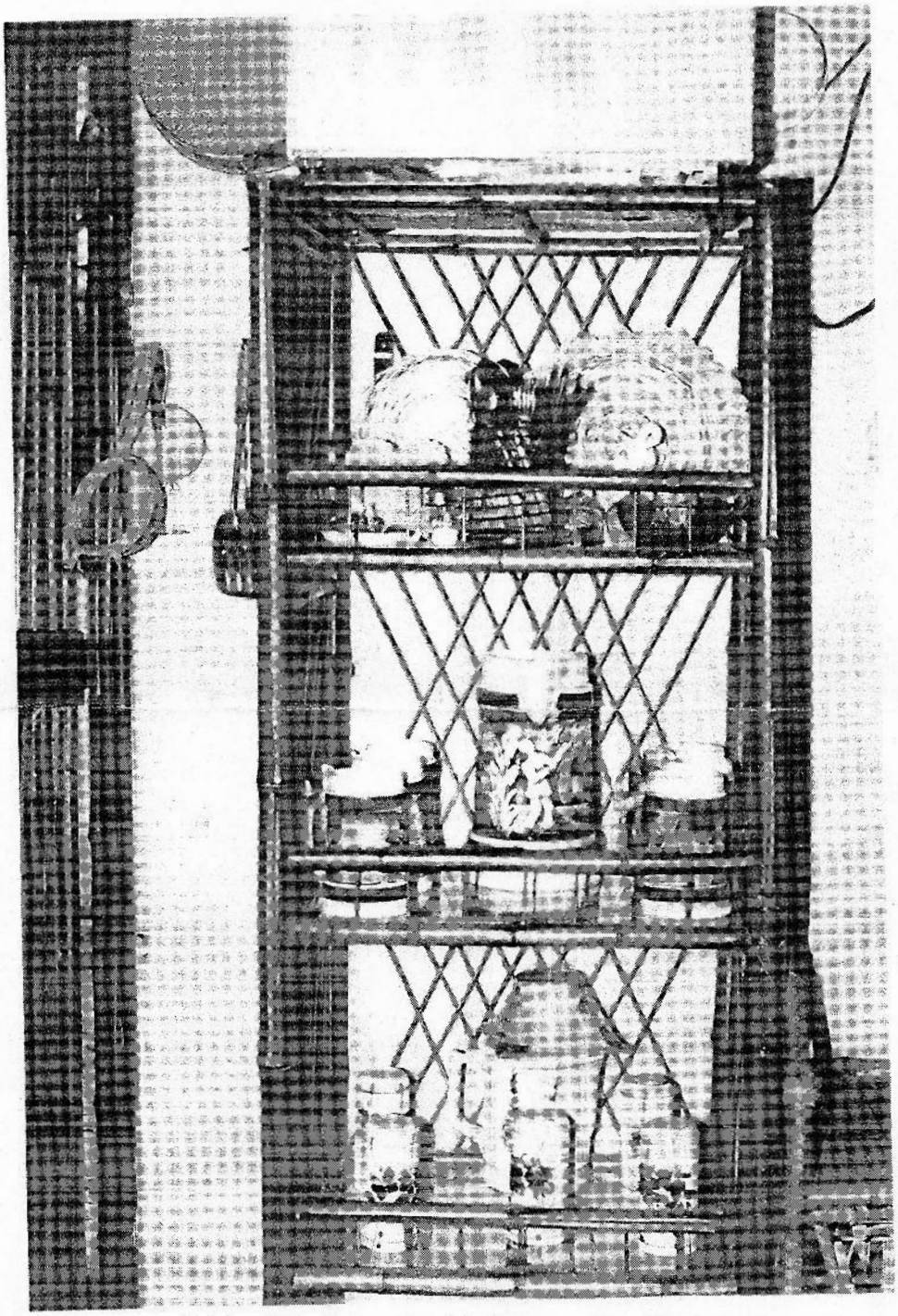
Basket called 'chiquihuite' made with split and flattened culms of *Chusquea bilimekii*. The picture was taken in Xalapa market where this kind of basket is commonly used to transport fruit such as paw-paws.

Chusquea bilimekii Fournier

Vernacular name: carrizo, otate.
Culms: 1.70 metres long.
Uses: **crafts** - manufacture baskets called 'chiquihuites'.

Guadua aculeata (Ruprech)Hitchc.

Vernacular name: tarro, caña brava.
Culms: 15 - 20 metres long.
Uses: **crafts** - such as cordage to weave baskets.
building - rural houses (such as walls, ceiling and rafters), ladder, scaffolding and fences.



Original kitchen rack with frame made of culms of *Guadua aculeata* and *G. longifolia*. Pieces of *Ripidocladum racemiflorum* were used to make the woven back.

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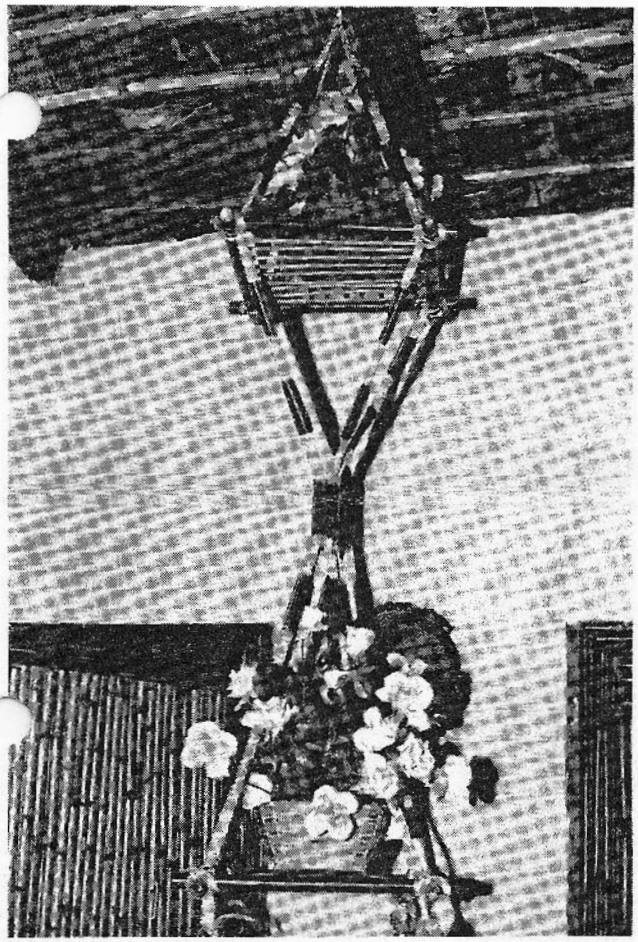
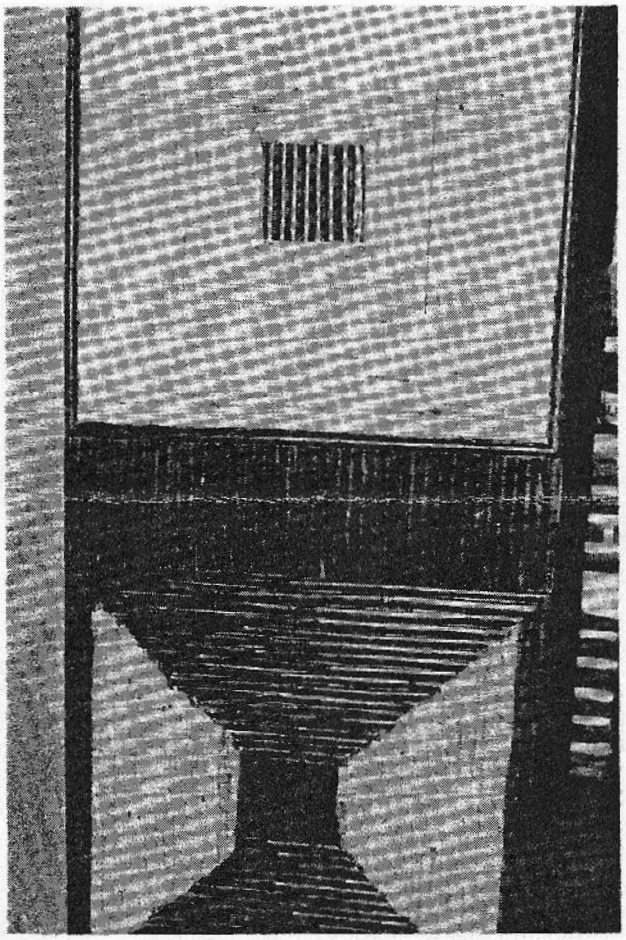
Guadua longifolia (Fournier) Davidse & Pohl

Vernacular name: cañizo, caña brava, jimba, bambú espinudo.
Culms: 8 - 10 metres long.
Uses: **crafts** - fishing rods, handles for tools, animal cages, and cooking utensils.
building - poles, post, rafters for building rural houses, walls and ceiling.



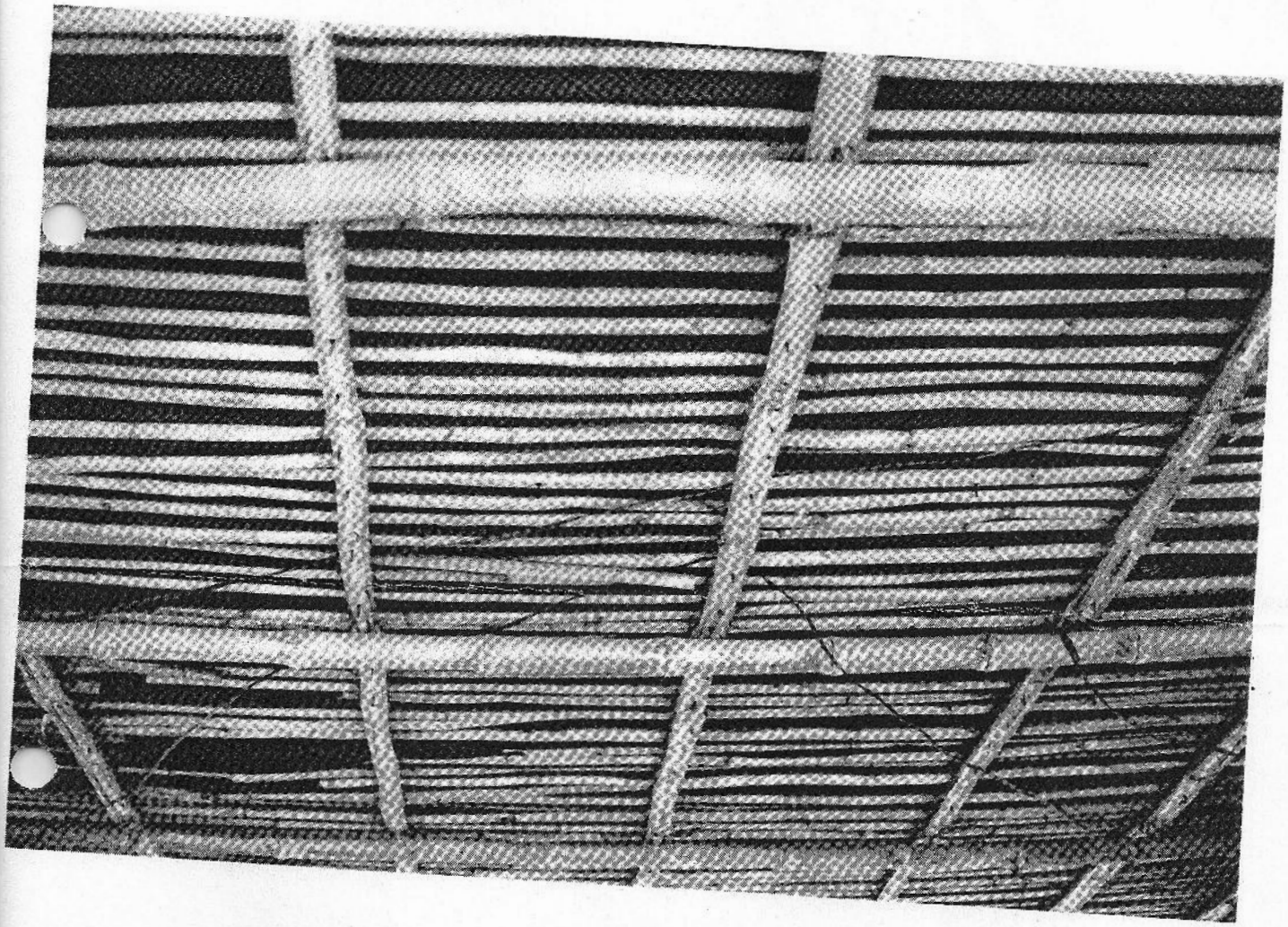
Monte Blanco houses have beautiful and original household accessories such as this plant pot holder. The frame was made with short pieces of *Guadua longifolia* culms and pieces of *Ripidocladum racemiflorum* which were the base. These materials were strung with cotton cord.



Laminated door made with bamboo (*Guadua longifolia*) which has been peeled and then stuck together to make plywood sheets or onto other boards.

Otatea acuminata (Munro)Soderstrom & Calderon

Vernacular name: otate .
Culms: 7 metres long.
Uses: **crafts** - manufacture of baskets, corrals, pole, handles for broom, toys and furniture.
building - ceiling, railing, scaffolding, walls, and doors.



Roof built with two kinds of bamboo: rafters are *Guadua aculeata* that are covered with *Otatea acuminata*. These bamboos have high resistance to both rot fungi and wood-cating insects.

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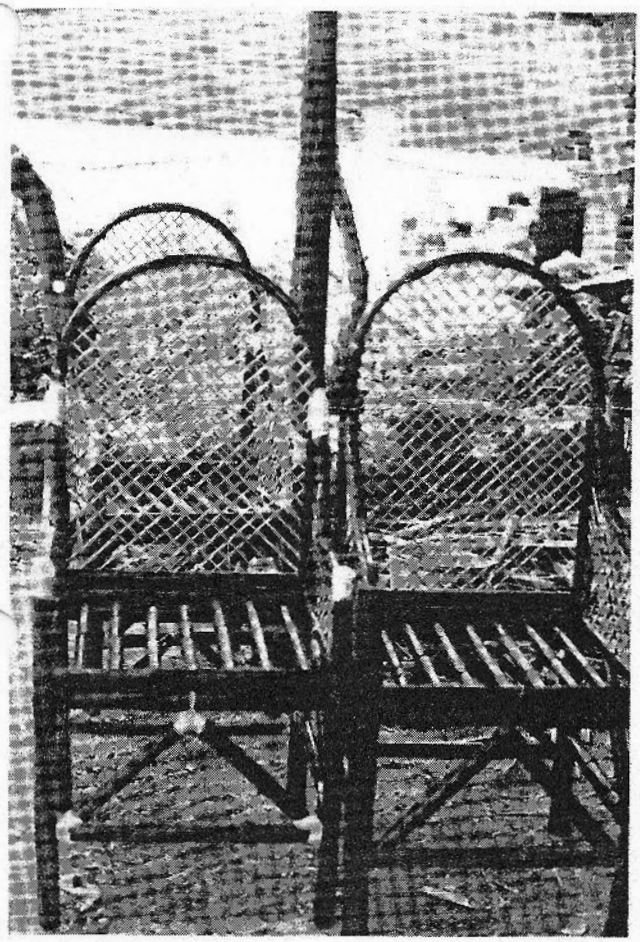
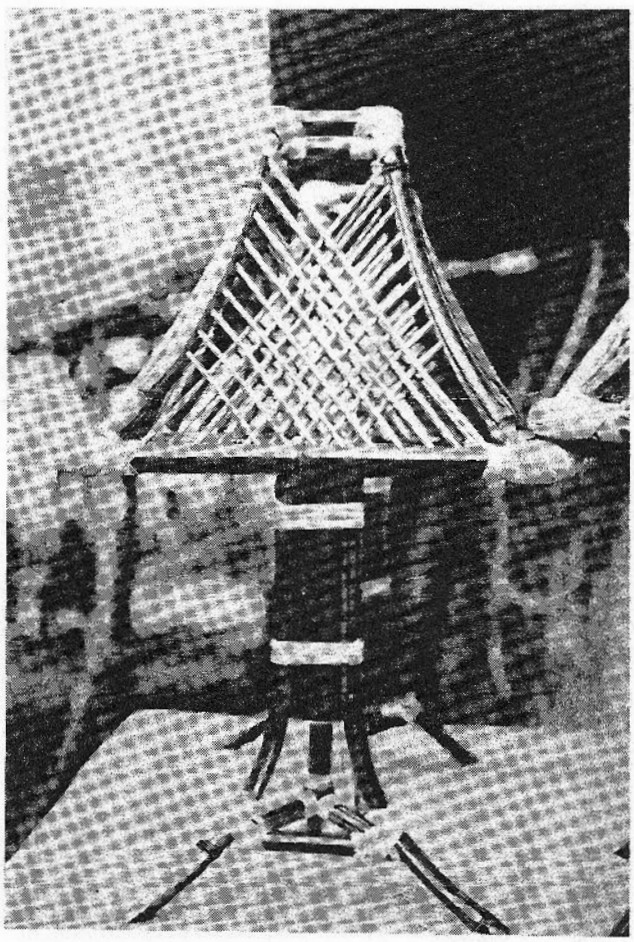
Rhipidocladum racemiflorum (Steudel) McClure

Vernacular name: chiquion, chiquilla.
Culms: 10 - 20 metres long.
Uses: **crafts** - sticks of fireworks 'rockets' and furniture manufacture.



Dining chairs with frames made with *Guadua aculeata* and *G. longifolia*. Chair backs made with *Rhipidocladum racemiflorum* weave. The dark colour of the bamboo has been made with the heat of a blowlamp.

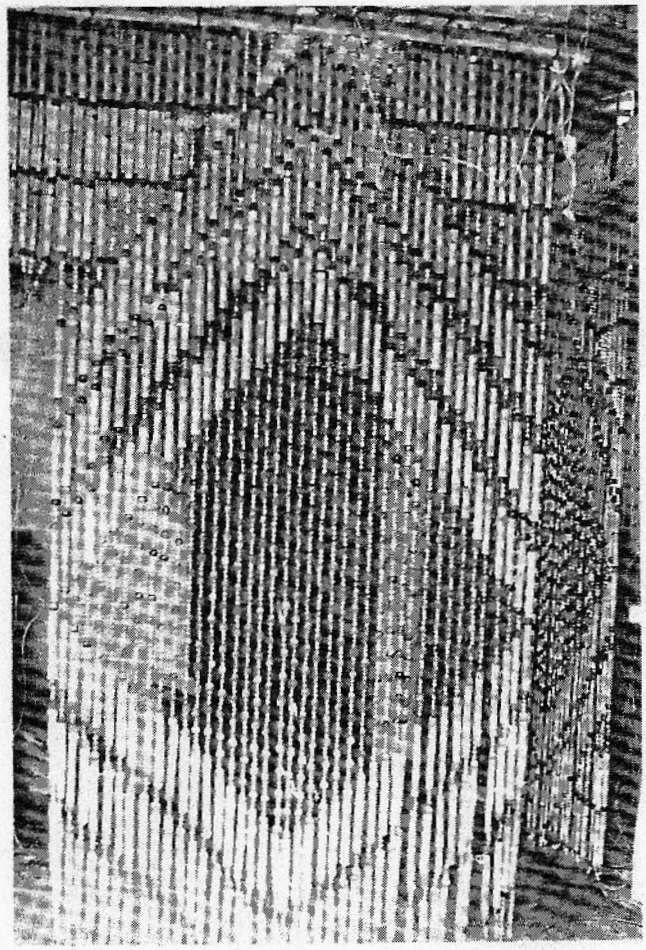


There are many household accessories made with bamboo such as this lamp. Craftsman used *Guadua aculeata* in the main base and *G. longifolia* in the frame. The decoration is a beautiful weave made with culms of *Rhipidocladum racemiflorum*. A craftsman expended one day making this.

Culling bamboo around Monte Blanco

We found that the documented plants came from a forest source. They were found in places near to Monte Blanco or from remote areas in the southern of Veracruz.

People who live in bamboo-growing areas did not employ sophisticated collecting systems; they cut the mature and longest bamboo culms (stems) with machetes. When the culms are cut and the branches are removed, they can be sold in Monte Blanco village. Material used in decoration of household accessories includes acorns (*Quercus* spp.) and Job's Tears (*Coix lacryma-jobi* L.). Acorns are collected from areas close to Monte Blanco. Job's Tears are collected from faraway places such as Veracruz and Alvarado.



Above: Material used in blinds, includes short culms of bamboo (*Otatea acuminata*), acorns (*Quercus spp.*) and fruits of Job's tear (*Coix lacryma-jobi*). They were strung with plastic cord.

At right: 'Otate' (*Otatea acuminata*) cultivated in Monte Blanco village.

Cultivation and propagation

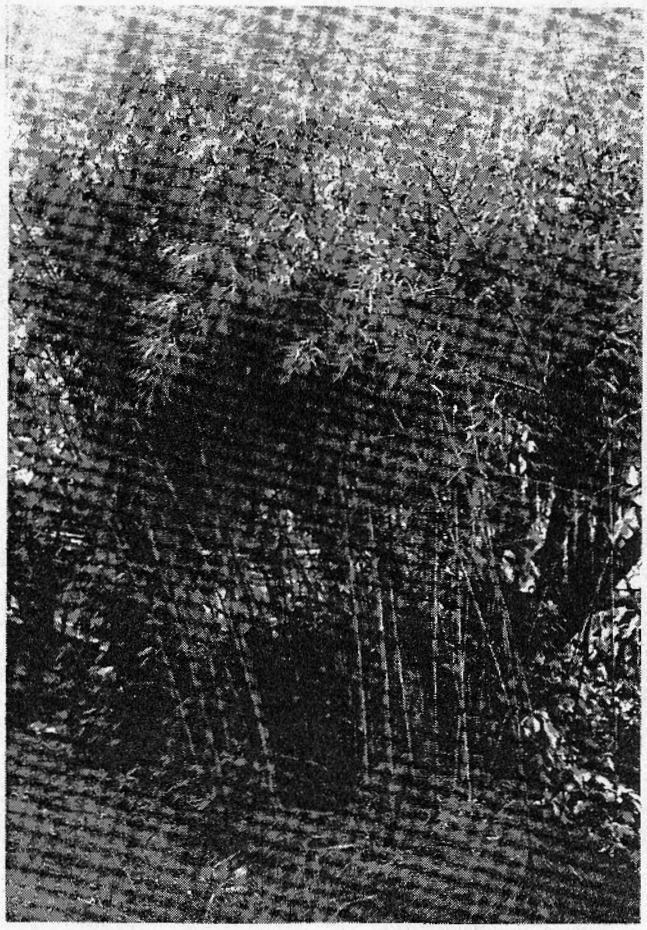
Inhabitants from Monte Blanco cultivate *Guadua longifolia* and *Otatea acuminata* for domestic usage in their own orchards. These bamboos in cultivation are used when the people did not have material from the forest.

Artisans from Monte Blanco do not have much knowledge about techniques used in bamboo propagation. They have tried to propagate bamboos by dividing the rhizome.

We did not have more details of this procedure of propagation, for example age of material used by propagation, season of planting, type of care, propagation by itself etc.

What is interesting about these observations is that some of the uses reported appear to be new usages of indigenous plants, and rising economic importance to this community.

By examining the source of materials used, an idea may be gained in future of the conflicts that might exist between their utilization and conservation needs.



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POSTSCRIPT

At the Linnean Society's Bamboo conference, in addition to the many excellent slide and talk presentations in the auditorium, were several equally excellent "Poster Sessions". Each day (for a week!) in the library as we enjoyed our nicely catered lunches of wine, fruit, and sandwiches, we also had the opportunity to speak with the various presenters both oral and poster. It was super!

Below is a shot of Señora Mejias display. It especially caught my eye because it dealt with **application** rather than theory. On looking more closely and talking with Teresa I was impressed with the quality of both imagination and workmanship. And the reporting was Ethnobotanic or Sociobotanic (my former areas of specialization) rather than so called "hard" science. And as you know, I like a balance.

Anyway I asked and we all benefit by the photos and information. As to whether it will do any good in the sense of inspiring or motivating us Americanos del norté ... it's too soon to say.

Thank you Teresa for allowing us to publish the preceding. Thank you artesanos de Monte Blanco for showing us your work.