

## Auroville Bamboo Centre News Letter

October to December 2015



### Our Service

Established in February 2009, with the aim to incorporate the following four aspects:

- ❖ Vocational training opportunities for the unemployed youth around the villages of Auroville and transforming them into craftsmen who can produce world class Bamboo products
- ❖ A technical and sociological research component to bring together Indian traditional craft with contemporary world culture
- ❖ Production and marketing of Bamboo craft for income generation and building stronger communities for sustainable living
- ❖ Unending research and development of Bamboo for the welfare of local and international communities



Auroville Bamboo Centre as a pioneer in the creative development of sustainable bamboo products, the Auroville Bamboo Centre (ABC) is committed to generate awareness of environmentally sustainable applications of bamboo through research and education. Employing people from local villages around Auroville, from Pondicherry Union Territory and Tamil Nadu State. The organisation strives to support and revitalise the community in which it is located while serving both domestic and global markets that demand high-quality, eco-friendly bamboo merchandise. Through these initiatives the ABC aims to advance the vitality of the planet and it's people.



## Training & Workshops

At the Auroville Bamboo Centre (ABC) we make training accessible to everyone. We invite individuals to participate in a wide variety of workshops, covering bamboo construction and bamboo product development. Architects, designers, students and entrepreneurs attend. They may be interested in new product opportunities, technologies, or designs that use bamboo, or they may simply be curious about bamboo and want to learn about this unique material. All are welcome to take part! We also train local women and have a special program that introduces children to bamboo and its uses. And you may be pleased to know that we can tailor-make courses for groups, even large ones.

### Upcoming Workshop Dates

#### January:

- 18 to 23 – Bamboo Geodesic Dome Workshop
- 27 to 30 – Bamboo Construction Workshop

#### February:

- 15 to 04 – Bamboo Intensive Course

#### March:

- 7 to 11 – Earth & Bamboo Workshop
- 17 to 19 – Bamboo Furniture Workshops
- 28 to 31 – Bamboo Construction Workshops

During October to December 2015 we hosted a number of groups workshop:

On October 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> we offered a four day Bamboo furniture and Jewellery workshop for ten students from **Mahendra United College**. The students developed some furniture and designed innovative Jewellery, and also had an Auroville and Pondicherry experience.



On October 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> we offered a five day **Earth & Bamboo workshop** together with the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI) and Auroville Green Practices (AGP). Twenty-three students from various places in India and abroad participated and learned about bamboo construction and earth building development.





**Group Visit:**

Over the last three months, several schools and groups have visited our centre. They also learned how to make some of the toys and jewellery.



**INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS:**

**A word from one of our interns:**

“From researching about new and techniques to actually exploring the material in a tangible manner, the past five months at the Bamboo Centre have been a, to say the least. The Bamboo Centre provided me with a platform to explore and innovate and grow; both professionally and personally. The proximity of material and workshop prompts an iterative design process; enforcing the pedagogy of learning by doing.”



**Shemal Pandya** Final year student of Interior, Space and Furniture Design from MIT Institute of Design, Pune





## Flooded at Bamboo Land:

The monsoon hit Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry very hard this year. The Bamboo Forest is located along a pond which was not filled up for 30 years the way it is now. The water is standing for over a month also on our land, not draining off till end of next month which means that nearly all of our plants are covered with water for a long time that most of them will not survive. The roots will rot, only few plants are having leafs above water level which means they are not getting any sun or air.

With all this damage a lot of repairs are needed. We need new plants and have to set up a new, bigger nursery to start growing new plants and try to rescue whatever we can.



## Bamboo Fest Exhibition 2015 at Kerala:

From December 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, the twelfth Kerala Bamboo Fest took place in Kochi, Kerala. The fair had doors open all day from Friday till Tuesday. It is organized by the Department of Industries, in association with the Kerala State Bamboo Mission and the Kerala Bureau of Industrial Promotion, with the aim of promoting bamboo products. The Auroville Bamboo Centre participated in this yearly event, continuing our success story from 2014.



Walter, volunteering and living at the Bamboo Centre since three years, and Felix, a one-year German Weltwärts volunteer, left Auroville on a bus bound for Kochi with four suitcases full of products made at the Auroville Bamboo Centre, Lively and Mohanam. Inside the suitcases were bamboo charcoal and bamboo leaf soaps, bamboo lamps, toys, pens, scarves, vases, flutes, rain sticks and much more.

Arriving Friday morning, it was time to build up the stall in the air conditioned tent. About 120 different units and organizations exhibited their products or work. Very soon the first visitors came and so some first sales were had.

Also, some first contacts with other exhibitors and visitors looking for a collaboration or partnership were made.

Saturday and Sunday were very busy, as a lot of visitors came and looked around the stalls. With the special products and some presentation of the flutes and the dragon fly, the ABC stand attracted a lot of people. With non-stop high sales (and even more explanations about the Bamboo Centre and Auroville) a lot of products sold out and the remaining stock was rearranged to concentrate on selling leftovers.

Monday and Tuesday were calmer, with school and college groups exchanging families and day tourists. Also, different newspapers and TV channels passed by, all of them interested in our work and Auroville. Some visitors knew about Auroville or already visited our place and were really happy to see us over there on the west coast. On Tuesday afternoon we packed one suitcase of remaining products and took the bus back home to Auroville.

We got a lot of nice feedback at the Bamboo Fest from visitors and other exhibitors, telling us that our products are having a "modern design" and "very good finish". In comparison to others, we had unique products to sell which attracted people and we started making contacts with retailers and business people. It was a very nice experience and good to see what other units are producing all over India out of bamboo. See you next year at the Bamboo Fest!



## Ayutha Pooja Celebration:

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, we celebrated Ayutha pooja. The principal Shakti goddesses worshiped during the Ayutha puja are Saraswati (the Goddess of wisdom, arts and literature), Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) and Parvati (the divine mother).



Apart from various types of equipment; it is on this occasion that weapons are worshipped by soldiers and tools are revered by artisans. The Pooja is considered a meaningful custom, with its focus of specific attention on one's profession and its related tools and it connotes that a divine force is working behind it to perform well and for getting the proper reward.

