

# *Knotty Lady* YARN S

## GET TO KNOW BAMBOO!

### History

Bamboo not only has a rich history but also a plethora of uses. From a tinsel strength that can rival steel to the soft yarn in your hand. China, or the "Kingdom of Bamboo", has over 400 species of bamboo and is home to a third of the world's bamboo. To the Chinese people, it is considered a symbol of traditional Chinese values and virtue. It is also a cultural symbol of oriental beauty, and represents moral integrity, resistance, modesty and loyalty. Using bamboo can be traced back 7,000 years in the form of food, cloths, paper, housing, transportation, musical instruments and even weapons.



### Bamboo's Qualities!

Since bamboo is actually considered a grass it is quick to grow and mature! With as little time as 2 - 4 years to fully mature, bamboo has an average growth rate of 1 inch every 40 minutes and it uses 1/3 the amount of water than cotton. It is naturally resistant to insects and diseases and products made from bamboo are naturally antimicrobial. At the time of harvest, the cleaner the cut the faster the bamboo will regrow. This helps prevent erosion and replanting. Compared to the 40-60 years for a single hardwood maple tree to fully mature, bamboo is self-sustaining, eco-friendly and helpful in slowing deforestation.

If cared for properly bamboo fabric and products can last up to 3 times longer than most cotton products, if not longer! Checking labels for bamboo viscose versus bamboo rayon makes a slight difference. Bamboo rayon is a lower quality of bamboo that is sometimes made with harsh chemicals.

### How do you make yarn?

After harvesting, the bamboo is then chopped into smaller chunks, think your standard landscaping wood chips. When the bamboo chips are received by the manufacturer, they are soaked in a eco-friendly solution that has been approved by the Global Organic Textile Standard. GOTS is a world wide organization that's vision is to have textiles grown, harvested and produced not only to enhance people's lives, but the environment as well. As the bamboo chips and solution are converted into a pulp, sometimes dyes are added at this point to prevent fading and discoloration. This also helps some bamboo yarn's to be more rich and vibrant in color.

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Once drained and pressed the bamboo pulp is turned into sheets and the solution is recycled and used for future batches. These sheets resemble stacks of paper which makes for easier handling, faster drying, and storage. Once the sheets are completely dried they are then ground up to make bamboo fiber. This super soft and fluffy fabric is now twice as soft as the finest cotton and is now spun into thread and yarn.

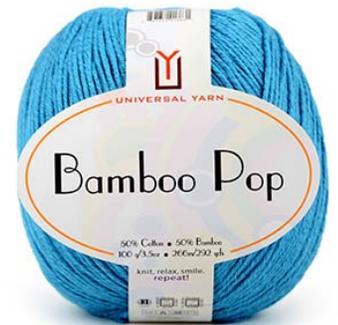


The photo above from left to right shows bamboo from harvest, sheets, fiber, yarn and fabric.

## Working with Bamboo Yarn!

Knitting or crocheting with bamboo yarn also has the benefits of being breathable, great drape, shine that is comparable to mercerized cotton, can be softer than silk, and has natural ultraviolet protective properties. Just as everything else, it also comes with some qualities that are not as preferable as we would hope. Bamboo yarn can lose strength, swell and stretch easily when wet. This makes it not the best choice for a hand made item that may need frequent washing. Another thing to keep in mind while working with bamboo, depending on the manufacturer, it has a tendency to split easily. Even with these downfalls they can easily be remedied by working with two strands instead of one and using blunt ended needles and hooks. Below are some of the bamboo yarn options that Knotty Lady Yarns currently carries:

**Universal Yarns Bamboo Pop** is 50% Bamboo & 50% Cotton in a DK Weight with 292 Yards per Skein and comes in 55 different colors!



### Universal Yarns Bamboo Bloom

**Handpaints** is 48% Bamboo Rayon, 44% Wool & 8% Acrylic. A Chunky Weight with 154 Yards per Hank and 16 color options.

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**BellaTrista Milk Bamboo** comes in a DK and Bulky Weight  
Both are 50% Milk Protein Fiber & 50% Bamboo Viscose  
DK Weight has 197 Yards per Hank  
Bulky Weight has 128 Yards per Hank



Ella Rae Cozy Bamboo is 80% Bamboo Viscose & 20% Merino Wool A DK Weight with 104 yards per Skein and 29 color options. This line is currently on clearance!

## Blocking Bamboo Yarn!

Because of bamboo's "love" of water, this can make blocking a bit intimidating. Don't worry. There are two easy and stress free ways to block your timeless bamboo project without fear of damaging it. With little information out there on how to properly block bamboo yarn, I thought it best to go to the expert, Knotty Lady boss Kelley! Below are the two safest way we recommend, if you have a method that works best for you we would love to hear about it!

### Method 1: Steam Blocking

This is a perfect method for any lace-like patterns, or if you want to stretch out your piece a little bit. It also works great if you only have a small amount of blocking to do. The only small hiccup with this method is if your bamboo yarn is on the shinier side you could lose some of that in this process. However, if you want some of that sheen to go away then this method would be perfect for you! CAUTION THIS METHOD USES A HOT IRON/STEAMER! DO NOT TOUCH STEAMER OR IRON TO PROJECT! LET YOUR PROJECT COOL BEFORE TOUCHING

1. Pin project to blocking mats. Use pins that are rust proof and designed to withstand heat (normal colored plastic headed sewing pins will melt)
2. Warm Iron or handheld Steamer
3. Hold iron/steamer about 1 inch away from project or at the tops of your pins
4. Move iron/steamer over project until damp
5. Leave alone to dry completely before removing pins

### Method 2: Dry Blocking / Spray Blocking

This method works for projects that need little to no blocking, but enough to help fix a projects shape or a curled edge. This is the forever safe blocking method and my personal go to. This is also perfect for these temperamental yarns made from unique fibers!

1. Pin project down on blocking mats to desired shape
2. Using a spray bottle gently mist your project until lightly damp
3. Let dry completely before removing pins