

Los Angeles Times

Fabrics at a glance

Some facts about cotton, flax, Tencel, bamboo and hemp.

By Susan Carpenter Los Angeles Times - June 19, 2011



Hemp is prized for its durability. (Geraldine Wilkins / Los Angeles Times / June 19, 2011)

COTTON

Prized for: Soft feel and easy maintenance; wide availability

Percentage of clothes sold in the U.S. that incorporate cotton: Almost 75%

Primary sources: China, India, U.S.

FLAX

Prized for: Color and performance traits similar to cotton; plants require no irrigation and fewer chemical fertilizers and pesticides than cotton

Percentage of clothes sold in the U.S. that incorporate flax: 1.1%

Primary sources: Canada, China, India, U.S., Ethiopia

TENCEL

Prized for: Soft, drape-y feel; wood sourced from Forest Stewardship Council-certified forests; 99% closed-loop manufacturing process

Percentage of clothes sold in the U.S. that incorporate Tencel: 0.4%

Primary sources that grow FSC-certified woods used in Tencel: South Africa (eucalyptus), Europe (beech), Canada and the U.S. (pine)

BAMBOO

Prized for: Soft feel; requires no irrigation, but processing uses heavy chemicals

Percentage of clothes sold in the U.S. that incorporate bamboo: 0.04%

Primary source: China

HEMP

Prized for: Durability, versatility and UV-resistance; plants require no irrigation and fewer chemical fertilizers and pesticides than cotton

Percentage of clothes sold in the U.S. that incorporate hemp: 0.003%

Primary sources: China, Chile, South Korea

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