

# Bamboo company wants to challenge forestry industry

By Johanna Somers, Seattle Times

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. – Jackie Heinricher, Booshoot's founder and CEO, took a deep breath as she walked into a greenhouse full of hundreds of bamboo plants.

The fast-growing bamboo plants pump out more oxygen than trees do, and this concentrated atmosphere makes people smile, she said, so "when this is full, we bring clients in here."

Buttering up visitors with oxygen has helped Booshoot land clients such as Home Depot, Costco and, most recently Kimberly-Clark, the world's largest tissue manufacturer.

Kimberly-Clark recently announced an agreement to work with Mount Vernon-based Booshoot to develop a mass-market toilet paper using 20 percent bamboo fiber.

Booshoot already produces about 10 million bamboo plants annually and earlier this year signed an exclusive three-year contract to sell ornamental bamboo in Home Depot stores across the nation.

After more than a decade of research, Heinricher and her team of scientists have created an advanced tissue culture system to produce genetically identical bamboo plants at a commercial scale. This new technology has positioned them to infiltrate the forestry market.

"Even if bamboo penetrates just a small fraction of that, it is a multibillion-dollar opportunity," said Pettus Randall, chief operating officer of Booshoot.

However, breaking into the market for paper products will be challenging.

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