

Bamboo Office Furniture

There is an increasing demand in Japan for office furniture materials that have the warmth of wood. However, logging in natural forests places a high burden on the environment. To help resolve this, Jointex has released the "Bamboo" series of office furniture, which uses that very material. Bamboo grows faster than other trees—it is ready to use for furniture within three to five years, so that harvesting bamboo has a

low impact on the environment. Until now the hardness of bamboo made it difficult to process, ruling it out for use in office furniture. However, innovations in processing make it possible to work bamboo in a form that retains its natural beauty and is not easily scratched. The surface of this bamboo furniture does not slip, so there is no need to hold paper when writing to stop it moving. This makes it ideal for the office.



New Flavor Sorbets

Ginger, green perilla and cayenne pepper are traditional Japanese flavorings commonly used in noodle and other dishes. These three flavors would not normally be associated with sorbets, but they have been made into "Sorbet Japonais," which is being sold at the Shiseido Parlour. The Sorbet

Japonais comes as a gift set containing each of the three flavors, and is a popular present during the hot summer months. The Sorbet Japonais was created by the restaurant chef of Shiseido Parlour. The three flavors have uncomplicated tastes that are not overly sweet, and as well as being

good for desserts they can also be enjoyed between courses in a meal to refresh the palette.

Shiseido Parlour was established in 1902, and during its 101 years of business it has become well known for introducing soda water and other treats to Japan.

Wristwatch PHS

A Personal Handyphone System (PHS) mobile phone/Internet terminal that sits comfortably on the user's wrist has appeared on the market. The "Wristomo," marketed by NTT DoCoMo Inc., is the world's first wristwatch PHS, weighing

about the same as a regular mobile phone at 113 grams. In addition to all the regular functions of a mobile phone, it enables the user to send and receive e-mail and surf the Internet. It is also water resistant, to withstand rain or

splashes of water from the washbasin.

When sending and receiving messages, the upper and lower parts that make up the band of the watch are extended, making it similar in shape to a telephone.



Environmentally-friendly Housing

A new type of housing complex is scheduled for construction in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. As the first stage of a model housing development plan aimed at achieving a recycling-based society, Nagoya Municipal Government and Nagoya Municipal Housing Corporation will construct the seven-building com-

plex in Moriyama Ward as part of the Expo 2005 Aichi. Nagoya is looking at ways to make the complex as environmentally-friendly as possible by using sustainable energy, conserving energy and resources, and reducing the quantity of household rubbish generated.

Nagoya-born artist Shusaku Arakawa, who is based in

New York, is working on the project. His idea is to provide residents with a sense of empathy towards the environment while aiming for a community that works together. The developers will solicit ideas and opinions from the people of Nagoya before moving ahead with the plans for construction.