Holland Bamboo Grove

Holland Bamboo Grove is located in Lacovia, St. Elizabeth - the bread basket of Jamaica. The avenue is approximately 4 kilometres long and portrays a beautifully arched and shaded arrangement of bamboos on both sides of the roadway. Holland bamboo (also known as Bamboo Avenue) is a heritage site and one of Jamaica’s tourist attractions, which is said to be the most photographed place in the island. It was planted by the owners of Holland Estate and dates back to the mid-1700s.

The purpose of the grove was to provide shade for plantation slaves and owners of the estate en route to the town of Lacovia, which alternated with Black River as the capital of St. Elizabeth during the 18th century. The grove was part of the sugar estate that was owned by John Gladstone (1764 – 1851), merchant, politician and father of William Gladstone (1809 – 1898), a British Prime Minister. Today, the avenue is protected under the Public Gardens Regulation Act and managed by the Public Gardens Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The species of Bamboo grown in Holland Bamboo Avenue is *Bambusa vulgaris*, which originated in India and is the largest species that was introduced in Jamaica. The strands of bamboo growing alongside the road form a green, feathery tunnel that flutters with the slightest breeze. It was once much denser, but at present the sun peeps through at the top of the arch and at the sides in places where hurricane damages have thinned the strands.

The *Bambusa vulgaris* is an open clump type bamboo species with lemon yellow culms, green stripes and dark green leaves. It can grow up to a height of 12 m. Its flowers are spikelets which are panicles or panicled spikes with six stamens. It flowers infrequently, from November to April (monocarpic), flowering once in about 40 years. Its fruit is a grain called caryopsis and its wood is a hollow stem (except at nodes).