

BANANATEX BIODEGRADABLE TEXTILE MADE FROM ABACA BANANA PLANTS IN PHILIPPINES AND SWITZERLAND

The [QWSTION company](#), based in Zurich, has developed a new material, [Bananatex®](#), a water resistant yet 100% biodegradable textile crafted from regeneratively grown banana plants. They have decided to make the material openly available to any company interested in replacing plastics with plants.

[Bananatex® is the world's first durable, technical fabric](#) made purely from naturally grown Abacá banana plants. Cultivated in the Philippine highlands within a natural ecosystem of sustainable mixed agriculture and forestry, the plant is self-sufficient, requires no pesticides, fertilizer or extra water.



Bananatex® was developed by the Swiss bag brand [QWSTION](#) founded in Zurich in 2008 and material innovators in collaboration with a yarn specialist and a weaving partner, both based in Taiwan. Engaged in the multi-year development and production process behind the new fabric, the three parties united with the ambition to make a positive impact on the planet's future.

Three years of research and development resulted in a new material that answers questions of environmental, economic and social sustainability. As an open-source project Bananatex® offers a truly circular alternative to the synthetic fabrics that dominate the market today.

Bananatex® is a strong and durable fabric, while remaining soft, lightweight and supple. An all-natural bio-based wax coating can be applied to make Bananatex® waterproof, giving it a smooth and distinctive hand feel. The fabric is available in different dyed versions, and also in a white undyed version. Besides [QWSTION's](#) own range of approximately 60 Bananatex® products that include tote bags, backpacks, pouches and computer sleeves, a number of products using Bananatex® are also on [the market from third party brands](#), ranging from furniture, to accessories, to fashion.

[Grown within a natural ecosystem of sustainable mixed agriculture and forestry](#), Abacá is sturdy and self-sufficient, requiring no pesticides or extra water. These qualities have allowed it to contribute to reforestation in areas of former Philippine jungle eroded by soil damage due to monocultural palm plantations, whilst enhancing the economic prosperity of its farmers.

The Abacá plant's inherent properties align with their commitment to environmental, economic and social sustainability. The process includes the following steps:



- Cutting the stalks. Each Abacá plant has several stalks that can be harvested once a year, and regenerate fully within one year. The first step is “topping”: cutting the leaves, then “tumbling” the stalks. The leaves are left to decompose, creating a natural fertilizer.
- Stripping. The stripping is handled at the harvesting site, and the fibers are “combed” to separate them from one another.
- Sorting. The raw fibers are sorted at the warehouse of the farmers’ cooperative.

Abacá fibres are extracted by boiling and then pressed into pulp sheets in the Philippines. Followed by paper making and yarn spinning in Taiwan. The Natural White colourway yarn reflects the actual colour of the fibres and is accordingly not dyed.

Once the Abacá fibres have been transformed into yarn in a Taiwanese paper mill, the yarn natural white colourway is coloured using the yarn dyeing method. This process is more sustainable than the typical roll dyeing alternative, and certified with to the highest standard (Oeko-Tex® Standard 100). The Natural White colourway reflects the actual color of the fibers and is accordingly not dyed.

For Bananatex®, contributing to a better planet begins with the sourcing process, guided by the available expertise in different locations, whilst keeping a low environmental footprint. Design and development are realized at the brand’s studio in Zurich, Switzerland, and the fabric is made across Asia: a label the brand wears with transparency, responsibility and pride.

A [video documentary](#) provides insights into the process and steps alongside the Bananatex® supply chain, showing how the company has structured its business for resilience and sustainability.

[The website also presents the products of Bananatex](#), highlighting that the material is incredibly strong and durable, while remaining soft, lightweight and supple. The Natural White colourway reflects the actual colour of the fibers and is not dyed. An all-natural wax coating can be applied to make Bananatex® waterproof. The resulting fabric has a smooth and distinctive hand feel.

Since its launch in October 2018 Bananatex® has won a variety of international sustainability and design awards, such as the Green Product Award 2019, the Design Prize Switzerland Award 2019/20 as well as the German Sustainability Award Design 2021.

Another major step was taken in December 2021 when the Bananatex® fabric was Cradle to Cradle Certified® Gold, the most advanced standard globally for products that are safe, circular and responsibly made. This acknowledgment affirms Bananatex®’s commitment to protect the natural environment and support the communities the brand engages with.

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To know more

[QWSTION Company website](#)

[Bananatex.info website](#)

[Product innovation Institute](#)

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