

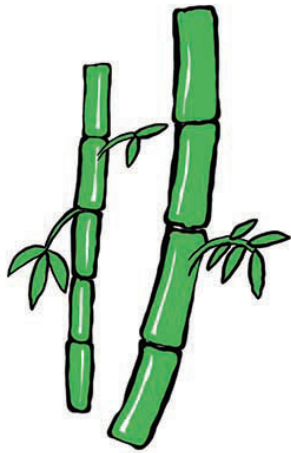
ALPACA

Alpacas are native to South America and started being domesticated by tribes in the Andean highlands more than 5,000 years ago. Alpaca fiber comes in 22 natural colors, but white is predominant.



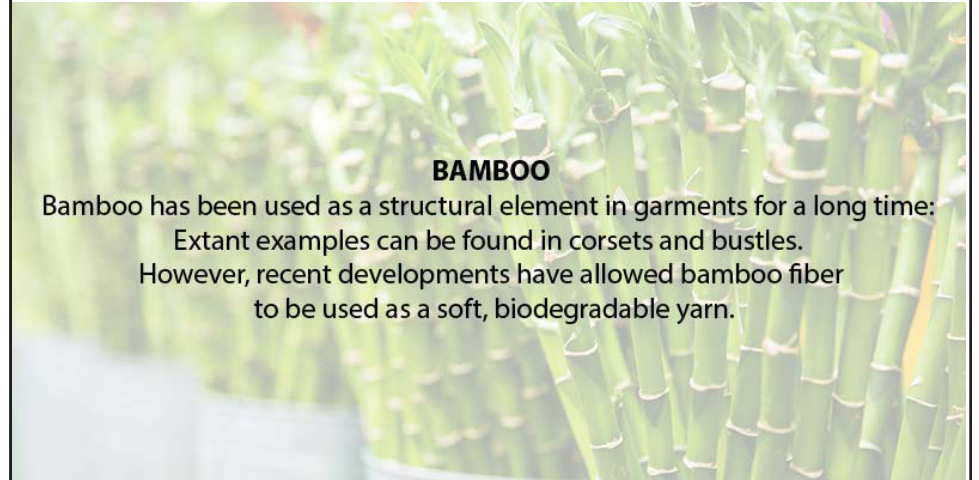
ANGORA RABBIT

Angora rabbits are one of the oldest breeds of domestic rabbits. They are thought to have originated in present-day Turkey, and they were brought to France in 1723. Their long, silky wool can be harvested every three to four months.



BAMBOO

Bamboo has been used as a structural element in garments for a long time: Extant examples can be found in corsets and bustles. However, recent developments have allowed bamboo fiber to be used as a soft, biodegradable yarn.



BISON

After a population bottleneck occurred due to overhunting in the nineteenth century, the American bison has made a comeback. Bison wool is soft and extremely warm, and with lightweight durability, it's ideal for heirloom pieces.





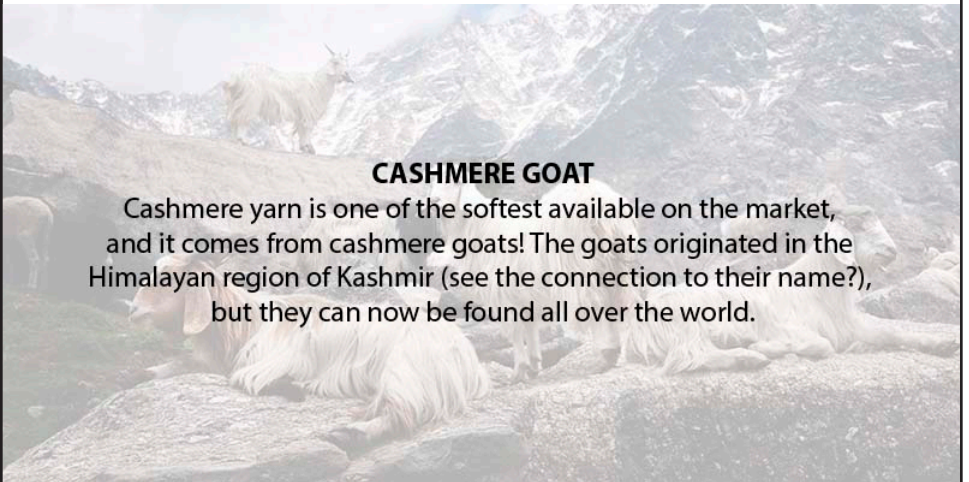
BRUSHTAIL POSSUM

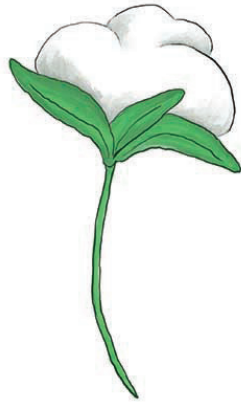
Often called Paihamu, the Australian Brushtail possum is an invasive species that thrives in New Zealand. To help prevent further ecological problems, a number of New Zealand yarn manufacturers now use their fur to create soft, luxurious Paihamu yarn.



CASHMERE GOAT

Cashmere yarn is one of the softest available on the market, and it comes from cashmere goats! The goats originated in the Himalayan region of Kashmir (see the connection to their name?), but they can now be found all over the world.

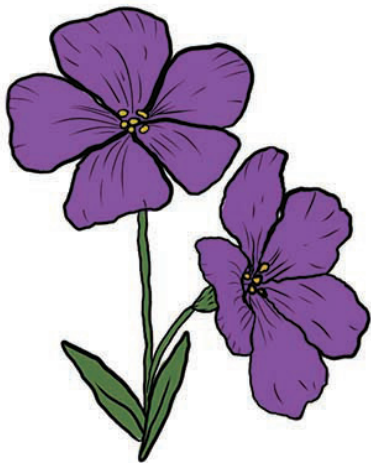




COTTON

Cotton yarns are ideal for warm-weather garments and accessories, or they can be blended with wools for heavier fall or spring garments.

It's a very water-absorbent fiber, making it perfect for dish towels and children's garments.



FLAX

Although their flowers are quite lovely, flax fiber is derived from the stem of the plant. Flax is two to three times stronger than cotton, and its fiber has been used for tens of thousands of years. You probably know it as linen!



HEMP

Hemp fiber—or “bast,” as it is commonly called—refers to the fiber growing on the exterior of the plant’s stalk. Hemp yarn often retains color better than cotton and has less stretch, making it perfect for pieces that need to hold their shape.



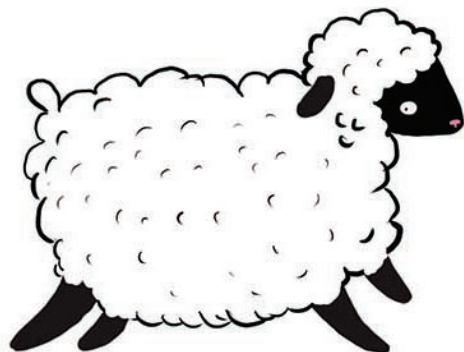
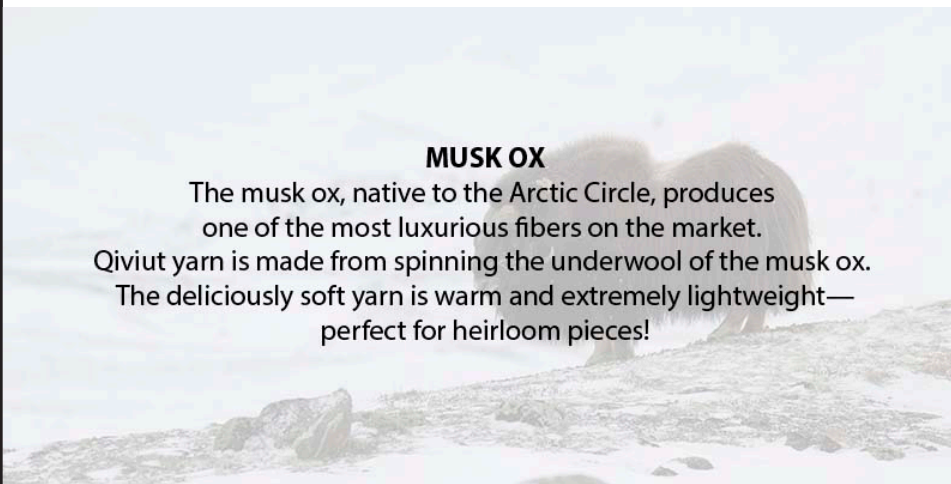
LLAMA

This fluffy llama is a Camelidae, the same family as the alpaca! Llamas are often roughly divided into those with coarse fleece and those with soft, fine fleece, although each category can be further subdivided. Llama yarn is warm and hypoallergenic due to a lack of lanolin.



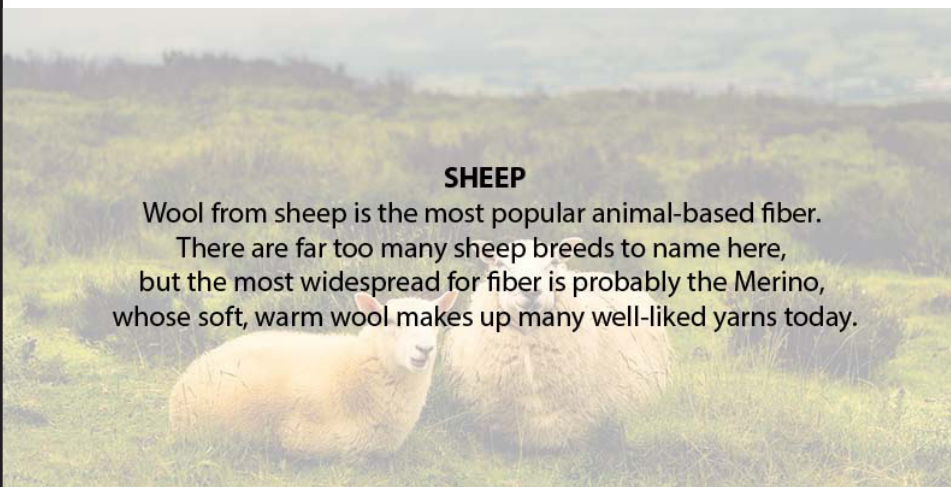
MUSK OX

The musk ox, native to the Arctic Circle, produces one of the most luxurious fibers on the market. Qiviut yarn is made from spinning the underwool of the musk ox. The deliciously soft yarn is warm and extremely lightweight—perfect for heirloom pieces!



SHEEP

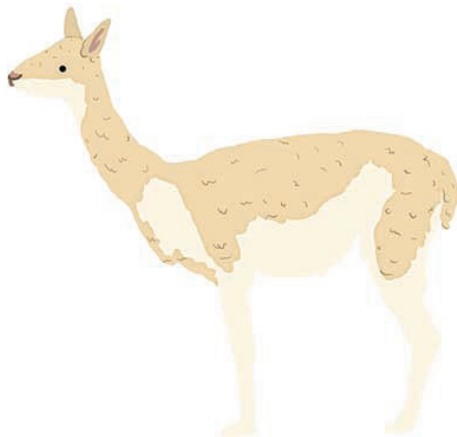
Wool from sheep is the most popular animal-based fiber. There are far too many sheep breeds to name here, but the most widespread for fiber is probably the Merino, whose soft, warm wool makes up many well-liked yarns today.





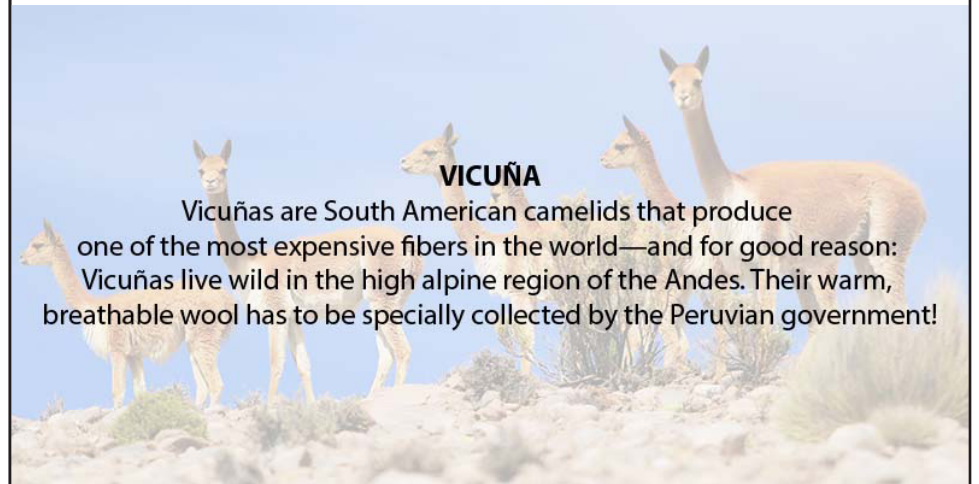
SILKWORM

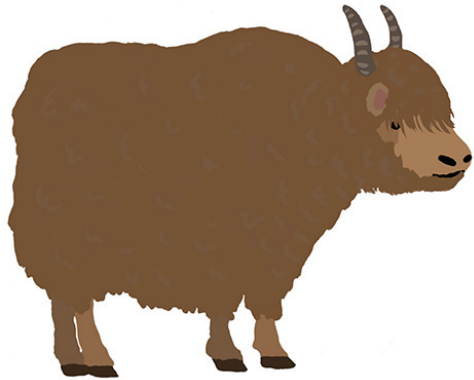
Silk yarns are derived from the cocoons of silkworms. It is one of the strongest natural fibers and has very little elasticity. Silk fiber is often blended with other materials for a smooth, shiny addition to your yarn.



VICUÑA

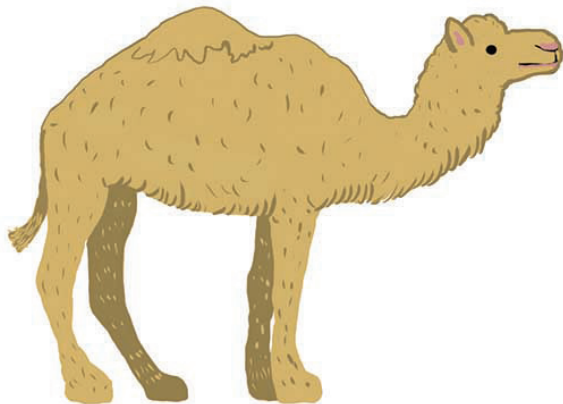
Vicuñas are South American camelids that produce one of the most expensive fibers in the world—and for good reason: Vicuñas live wild in the high alpine region of the Andes. Their warm, breathable wool has to be specially collected by the Peruvian government!





YAK

The domestic yak can be most often found in the Himalayas. Yak fiber comes either from a yak's undercoat or its coarse outer hairs. The undercoat is extremely fine and silky, rivaling cashmere for smoothness.



CAMEL

Camel wool consists of two parts: the coarse, exterior guard hair and the finer, insulating undercoat.

Both types of wool are collected at the same time as the camel sheds its coat, and then separated later.