

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

ABS Sourcelist (INFORMATION ABOUT SIZES AND TEMPERATURE/SHADE TOLERANCE): www.americanbamboo.org/speciessourcelist.html

Bamboo Sourcing's Website (with photos):
www.bamboosourcing.com

More photos: refer to the "Images" tab at www.google.com

Books:

Bamboos by Recht & Wetterwald
Bamboo For Gardens by Ted Jordan Meredith
Bamboo In Japan by Nancy Moore Bess
Bamboo Style by Gale Beth Goldberg
Catalogue of the Bambouseraie, Prafrance
Japanese Gardening in Small Spaces by I. Yoshikawa
The Bamboos by F.A. McClure
The Book of Bamboo by David Farrelly
The Gardener's Guide to Growing Temperate Bamboos by Michael Bell

AMERICAN BAMBOO SOCIETY

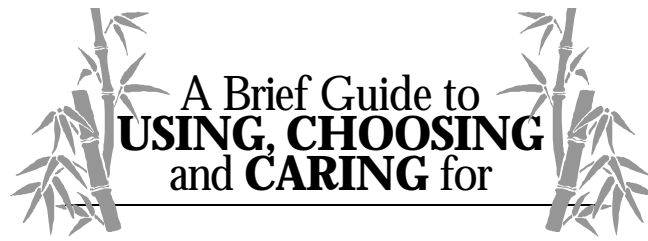
Objectives and purposes of ABS To provide a source of information on the identification, propagation, utilization, culture and appreciation of bamboos; to disseminate and store this information via our journal, a magazine, and a reference library; to preserve and increase the number of bamboo species in the United States; and to support bamboo research.



This publication produced by:

No. California Chapter, American Bamboo Society
<http://www.americanbamboo.org>
&
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A Brief Guide to USING, CHOOSING and CARING for

BAMBOOS IN THE BAY AREA

Bamboo, from the Grass Family (Poaceae), is an extremely versatile and diverse form of woody grass. There are thousands of species, which have evolved in many climates all over the world. In the Bay Area there are numerous species available that will thrive in every microclimate found here. Bamboos can add a beautiful and dramatic dimension to almost every garden.

The invasive nature of a few bamboos has given bamboo an unfair reputation. However, modern methods of containment and availability of clumping bamboos opens a whole world of possibilities.

Read on and learn the basics about running and clumping types of bamboo and how to select the best species for your purpose. There is a vast and fascinating world of bamboo for any Bay Area gardener to explore, without fear of alienating their neighbor!

ADVANTAGES OF BAMBOO IN THE LANDSCAPE

- Beautiful, strong **SCULPTURAL QUALITY**
- Exotic **TROPICAL OR ASIAN APPEAL**
- Fast, tall **VISUAL SCREENING**
- Multitude of species and pruning choices allows for great **VARIETY OF EFFECTS**, from bushy, dense screens to wide-open columns, unique individual specimens to ground covers
- Vertical growth **MINIMIZES THE FOOTPRINT**, especially useful for smaller, urban locations
- Movement of the culms creates an alive energy and **MUSICAL** rustling sounds
- Adds the greatest amount of **OXYGEN TO THE AIR** of any plant

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BAMBOO

Evaluate the site

In order to choose the right bamboo, you need to have an understanding of the environment. What are the hottest and coldest temperatures? What is the soil like? Can you provide irrigation to your site? There are shade-loving and sun-loving bamboos, and it's important to choose the right type for your conditions. Will your site receive sun all day, or just morning or afternoon? Or perhaps there is filtered sun? Check the American Bamboo Society Sourcelist or www.bamboosourcing.com for preferred sun exposure.

Determine design priorities

Are you interested in the bamboo for decoration and interest in your garden or to create privacy? A wind break? Groundcover? Prevent soil erosion? Or will it be in pots on your deck? How tall do you want it to grow? Do you want to be able to walk under and through the airy, feathery foliage, or do you want an impenetrable screen? The answers to these questions are crucial to choosing the right bamboo for your application.

Site & Space Considerations

Do you have a large piece of land, allowing for an open grove or a suburban lot with close neighbors? If other structures around the planting site create a space too narrow for clumpers, you may wish to use runners with a root barrier installed 22-28" deep. Plants can be stunted in height when in too small a space.

Soils

Most bamboos are happiest in a moderately acidic loamy soil. They need soil that drains well, and they can rot if in wet, soggy soils. If your soil is very heavy clay, consider adding sand and organic amendments to create better drainage.

Watering

Bamboo likes plenty of deep watering, soaking widely and down to at least 12" each time, along with good drainage. Allow the soil to dry out in the top 2-3" before watering again. For the first 2-3 months, stay in close touch with the soil conditions around the bamboo, digging down 4" to check the moisture levels. If leaves are closing or curling up, the plant may not be getting adequate water.

Maintenance

If you have chosen well, taking care of your bamboo will be easy. Give your bamboo some high nitrogen fertilizer, 16-6-8, once a month during the growing season. Horse manure is considered the best organic fertilizer for bamboo. Steer and chicken manures are too hot. For potted plants use slow release fertilizer, 14-14-14.

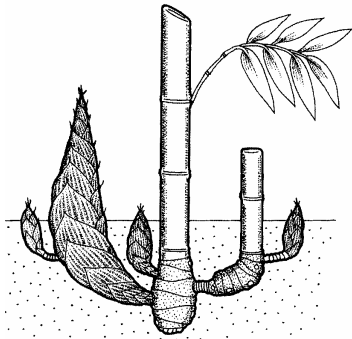
Fallen bamboo leaves allowed to remain on the soil will help keep the soil soft and moist and will recycle silica and other natural nutrients back into the bamboo, as well as helping with weed control. Occasional thinning and pruning of dead branches and canes will help your bamboo to always look its best.

ABOUT RUNNERS AND CLUMPERS

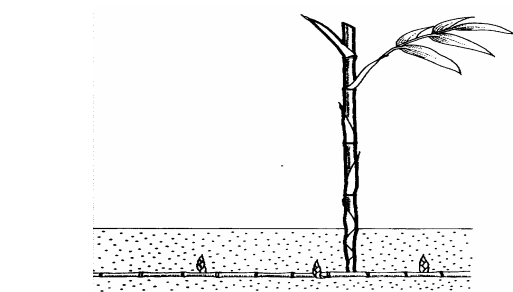
Bamboos are divided into two main types -- About a third of the bamboo species are noninvasive clumping types. Root barrier is neither necessary nor effective with clumpers. The other two thirds are runners, which may be controlled with root barrier or left to create an open grove in larger spaces. Both clumpers and runners range from giant timber species to dwarf bamboos. There are also a few "open clumpers," with a root length of 12-18," for example, which may be contained with root barrier, if needed.

Clumping (sympodial) bamboos have a very short root structure, are genetically incapable of expanding more than few inches a year and will always form discrete clumps.

The clumps slowly enlarge by a few inches each year as canes are added to the clump. They may require anywhere from 2-10+ feet of space in order to reach their mature height, depending on species. Clumpers make excellent specimen plants and will form very dense screens, but more slowly than runners. Many clumpers are from tropical environments and are more prone to frost damage, so check the American Bamboo Society Sourcelist or www.bamboosourcery.com for recommended temperatures.



Running (monopodial) bamboos spread by sending out underground runners, or rhizomes, which sometimes emerge far from the parent plant. Runners fill in the spaces between plantings faster, making them ideal for screens, hedges, and open groves. Many of them are also very cold-hardy. Runners may be easily contained, since the rhizomes grow sideways at a depth of only 2-18



inches.

The safest ways to contain runners – 1. Plant in a container.

2. Install a vertical polypropylene rhizome barrier 22-28" deep around the perimeter of the area. This 30-40 mil thick material works better than concrete (can develop cracks), or metal (can rust), and lasts 20-30 years. It can be cut to any length, to surround even a large stand of bamboo, and installed in any shape desired.

3. Another, less defined way to contain a runner is to water only the area in which the plants are wanted and nowhere else within 10 to 20 feet. Dry soils are a barrier to expansion. Standing water also stops rhizomes.

4. Complementing the above method, since new shoots usually only grow during one spring or summer month each year, loose control is possible by mowing or breaking off new shoots at the soil level.

BAMBOOS FOR THE BAY AREA

The bamboo family has evolved an incredible diversity of species in all sizes, colors and shapes, ranging from 100' tall giant timbers with 12" diameter canes to 1' high ground covers. There are variegated leaves and striped canes, enlarged nodes and bulging internodes, wide, long, tropical-looking leaves and tiny delicate leaves. Canes may be yellow, green, black, light blue, dark red, etc. Bamboo species have also adapted to a wide range of climates, from the tropics to mountain heights where they tolerate temperatures of -20F. Of the over 1200 species that are described and named so far, over 400 are available in the U.S. and at least 300 are available to grow in the S.F. Bay Area.

Below is a short list of the species that you can obtain and easily grow in the S.F. Bay Area:

Clumpers:

Bambusa multiplex 'Alphonse Karr'
Bambusa multiplex 'Midori Green Alphonse'
Bambusa multiplex "Golden Goddess"
Bambusa oldhamii "Giant Timber"
Bambusa textilis
Bambusa ventricosa "Buddha's Belly"
Borinda boliana
Chusquea culeou "Chilean Straight"
Chusquea culeou "Scandens"
Chusquea sulcata
Drepanostachyum sengteeaanum
Fargesia dracocephala "Gold Stem"
Fargesia fungosa
Fargesia murielae
Himalayacalamus asper
Himalayacalamus falconeri 'Damarapa' "Red"
Himalayacalamus hookerianus "Blue"
Oatea acuminata aztecorum "Mexican Weeping"

Runners:

Chimonobambusa quadrangularis "Square"
Phyllostachys aureosulcata "Yellow Groove"
Phyllostachys bissetii
Phyllostachys bambusoides 'Castillon'
Phyllostachys bambusoides "Madake"

Phyllostachys nigra "Black Bamboo"
Phyllostachys nigra 'Henon'
Phyllostachys nigra 'Bory' "Leopard"
Phyllostachys nuda
Phyllostachys viridis 'Robert Young'
Phyllostachys vivax
Pleioblastus shibuyanus 'Tsuboi'
Pleioblastus viridistriatus
Pseudosasa japonica
Pseudosasa japonica 'tsutsumiana'
Sasa palmata nebulosa
Sasaella masamuneana albostrata
Semiarundinaria fastuosa
Semiarundinaria yashadake 'Kimmei'
Thamnocalamus aristatus
Yushania anceps 'Pitt White'
(See the ABS Sourcelist or www.bamboosourcery.com for descriptions and photos).

TERMINOLOGY

Culm: the main stem, also referred to as a cane.

Culm Sheaths: the casings (like thick leaves) that protect the young tender bamboo shoot and developing branches and leaves during the growth phase. Most plants drop them, others retain them, forming a decorative pattern on the culm.

Internode: segment of culm, branch, or rhizome between nodes

Lucky Bamboo: not a real bamboo, but *Dracaena deremensis*. Sold as a houseplant in water.

Node: the solid joint between hollow segments of culm, branch, or rhizome, which gives rise to branches, leaves, or rootlets.

Rhizome: a creeping rootstock, usually growing horizontally underground, segmented in the case of bamboo, which gives rise to new shoots from the top and rootlets from the bottom.

Shoot: the new cane bud shooting up from underground rhizomes. It is from the rapid upward growth of shoots that bamboo gets its reputation for fast growth. Usually edible when just breaking ground.