

Bamboo Selection

Bamboo is a group of woody perennial evergreen (except for certain temperate species) plants in the true grass family **Poaceae**, subfamily **Bambusoideae**, tribe **Bambuseae**. Some of its members are **giant bamboo**, forming by far the largest members of the grass family. Bamboo is the fastest growing woody plant in the world. Their growth rate (up to 1.2 meters/day (1.5-2.0 inches/hr)) is due to a unique rhizome-dependent system, but is highly dependent on local soil and climate conditions. There are approximately 100 genera divided into about 1,000 species of bamboo. They are found in diverse climates, from cold mountains to hot tropical regions. They occur across East Asia, from 50°N latitude in Sakhalin through to Northern Australia, and west to India and the Himalayas. They also occur in sub-Saharan Africa, and in the Americas from the Southeastern United States south to Argentina and Chile, there reaching their furthest south anywhere, at 47°S latitude. Major areas with no native bamboos include Europe, North Africa, Western Asia, Canada, and Antarctica. There are two types of bamboo - **monopodial**, or **running bamboo**, and **sympodial**, or **clumping bamboo**. Monopodial bamboo is what your neighbor might plant across the other side of the yard, and before long you've got it too. It's a menace and it has given bamboo a bad name.

Bamboos might look the same, but there is a way to differentiate the types by looking at the branches. A sympodial bamboo has a main branch, with two secondary branches on either side - look for these three main branches, for a bamboo recommended for the garden.

The following is a list of the bamboos we typically carry:

Clumping (Sympodial)

Genus *Bambusa* includes tropical and subtropical clumping bamboos, usually giant, with numerous branches at a node, one or three much larger than the rest; new shoots appear in late summer or fall in their native areas. We carry the following *Bambusa* varieties:

Bambusa multiplex – common name is **Hedge Bamboo**; max height 25 feet; cold hardy to 10° F; full to part sun; each node bears a large number of branches down to the culm base, making a dense hedge; hardiest of the *Bambusa*

Bambusa multiplex ‘**Alphonse Karr**’ – common name is **Alphonse Karr Bamboo**; max height 25 feet; cold hardy to 15° F; full to part sun; similar to the species, but the culms and branches are bright yellow with irregular longitudinal narrow dark green stripes; new shoots and culms are often reddish

Bambusa multiplex ‘**Fernleaf**’ – common name is **Fernleaf Bamboo**; max height is 20 feet; cold hardy to 15° F; full to part sun; usually small in size with 10 to 20 closely spaced, two ranked leaves; culms often come up that have reverted to the larger leaves

Bambusa multiplex ‘**Golden Goddess**’ – common name is **Golden Goddess Bamboo**; max height is 10 feet; cold hardy to 15° F; full to part sun; a dwarf form similar to ‘**Fernleaf**’ but with larger leaves; culms tend to be yellowish

Bambusa multiplex ‘**Riviereorum**’ – common name is **Chinese Goddess Bamboo**; max height is 6 feet; cold hardy to 15° F; full to part sun; has solid culms and tiny leaves; similar to ‘**Fernleaf**’ but smaller, more delicate looking

Bambusa oldhamii ‘**Giant Timber**’ – common name is **Giant Timber Bamboo**; max height is 55 feet; cold hardy to 20° F; full to part sun; most common giant tropical bamboo grown in the U.S.; culms straight and erect with relatively short branches; leaves are rather wide

Bambusa tuldoidea ‘Punting Pole’ – common name is **Punting Pole Bamboo**; max height is 45 feet; cold hardy to 15° F; full to part sun; has thick-walled culms used as actual punting poles; medium sized leaves

Bambusa ventricosa ‘Buddha’s Belly’ – common name is **Buddha’s Belly Bamboo**; max height is around 40 feet; cold hardy to 10° F; full to part sun; when containerized the culms bulge (like a Buddha belly) between nodes because of root bound stress; medium sized leaves

Chusquea coronalis – common name is **Climbing Bamboo**; max height is 15 feet; cold hardy to 25° F; part sun to filtered light; gracefully arching culms and whorls of linear, long leaves at nodes create fluffy appearance and allow culms to catch in tree

Fargesia robusta ‘Green Screen’ – common name is **Green Screen Bamboo**; max height 12-15ft; cold hardy to -4° F; morning sun to full shade; taller, more upright, more robust form of *Fargesia*; great for narrow screens; alternating white culm sheaths and green culms create checkerboard pattern in spring/early summer; rusty red new culms

Fargesia murielae ‘Umbrella’ – common name is **Umbrella Bamboo**; max height 12-15ft; cold hardy to -20° F; morning sun to full shade; great for narrow screens; great fall color as some leaves turn yellow before falling off; pastel blue new culms

Oatea acuminata ssp. aztecorum – common name is **Mexican Weeping Bamboo**; max height is 20 ft; cold hardy to 25° F; full to part sun; graceful arching habit with linear, long leaves create fluffy appearance that hide the stems when in full growth

Running (Monopodial)

Genus *Phyllostachys* includes medium to giant runners which have a distinct groove above pairs of unequal branches at mid-culm nodes; new shoots appear in spring in their native areas. We carry the following *Phyllostachys* varieties:

Phyllostachys aurea - common name is **Golden or Fishpole Bamboo** max height is 27 feet; cold hardy to 0° F; full to part sun; most commonly cultivated bamboo in the U.S.; easily identified by one to several short internodes at the base of some of its culms; most invasive in areas with warm summers; culm may grow to 3 inches diameter in favorable conditions. ****Very invasive****
Consider environmental impact before planting.

Phyllostachys nigra – common name is **Black Bamboo**; max height is 30 feet; cold hardy to 0° F; full to part sun; culms turn jet black after the first 6 months to one year; popular because of its graceful habit and the sharp accent of its culm color; can grow larger in northern climates. An improved selection emerges black. Ask a sales person for current availability.

Phyllostachys bambusoides – common name is **Giant Japanese Timber or Madake Bamboo**; max height is 72 feet; cold hardy to 5° F; most utilized bamboo in Japan where it is valued for its large straight thick-walled culms; flowered extensively in the 1970’s and many plants died; most plants have regained their vegetative vigor

Pseudosasa japonica – common name is **Arrow Bamboo**; max height is 18 ft; cold hardy to 0° F; sun or shade; prefers moist, well drained soil; perfect for privacy screen; canes grow close together forming an impenetrable screen (only needs to be 2 ft thick to block view completely); long, lush, very green leaves and erect culms make it more tropical looking; withstands cold better than dry conditions; tolerates salt spray conditions; less invasive than most runners, can be easily controlled; good container bamboo; culms used to make arrows in ancient Japan