

Ag Column  
Chris Ramsey  
September 23, 2019

## Bamboo Can Take Over Your Landscape

Bamboo often looks like an attractive option for a home landscape. It's a showy plant that is offering a new look for the homeowner. Beware of the invasive nature of bamboo once it becomes established. It can be nearly impossible to remove from the home landscape.

According to the UT Extension Plant Science Factsheet W220 titled, Bamboo, bamboo exists on every continent around the world except for Antarctica and Europe. More than 1000 species of bamboo exist around the world. Collectively, these bamboo species have been noted as being the fastest growing woody, evergreen, perennial plant. While it can be an attractive option, it can have devastating results for the homeowner.

So what makes bamboo so aggressive you may ask? It primarily spreads by rhizomes underground. Rhizomes are underground stems. An extensive of rhizomes requires subsequent spray applications or repeated control measures to overcome the potential of the underground rhizomes. One spray application will leave viable rhizomes underground allowing the plant to re-establish. According to the UT Extension Bamboo Factsheet W220, a bamboo rhizome can run as much as 30 feet underground before sprouting.

There are three species of bamboo native to North America. These species are rivercane, hill cane, and switch cane. Like invasive species of bamboo, these native species can grow on a variety of sites. They do prefer moist conditions and are often found in or near wetlands.

Bamboo control can be difficult, but it is possible if you are persistent. Mechanical methods include digging and mowing. These methods do require repeated efforts to be successful. The most effective chemical control is to apply glyphosate or imazapyr to a cut stem. If you are trying to remove bamboo from an area that will allow a total kill of all vegetation, you can apply these herbicides to the foliage as a broadcast application. According to the UT Extension Bamboo Factsheet W220, foliar applications may only suppress bamboo.

To avoid the invasive nature of bamboo, UT Extension recommends clumping types of bamboo. Three types of clumping types are Green Panda, Green Screen, and New Umbrella. Select one of these bamboo varieties and you'll avoid much frustration with control in the future.