

ABOUT BAMBOO'S GROWTH HABIT & DETERMINING WHICH BAMBOO IS RIGHT FOR YOUR NEEDS

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Clumping vs. Invasive Bamboo

Non-Invasive Clumping Bamboo as a privacy hedge and/or windbreak has grown tremendously in popularity over recent years. At Yellow seed Bamboo Nursery we do **NOT** sell any invasive varieties like the ones you see covering the slopes on the road to Hana or taking over mountainsides. The difference is non-invasive or clumping bamboo's new rhizomes grow only inches away from their mother rhizome thus creating a circular clump. As opposed to invasive or "running" bamboo where the new rhizomes can grow up to 50 feet away from its mother's rhizome.

How Fast will my Bamboo Grow

Bamboo is the fastest growing woody plant in the world. One year from the time of planting could result in your plant growing to be fifteen feet tall with a clump base of three feet in diameter, (depending on the variety). Once you plant your potted bamboo in the ground you may not see much growth during the first few months. This is because the bamboo is sending its energy into its roots in order for them to get established. Then the bamboo will typically send shoots up for the entire first year, slowing down during the winter season. Once your bamboo enters its second winter it will go into its first dormant season which means it will not send up any shoots. This will happen approximately between the months of December - June. Your bamboo will send up its new shoots from June-November, during shooting season. This growth pattern is based on optimal growing conditions: adequate rainfall and healthy soil. Please check out our [planting recommendations](#) page to ensure a healthy start for your bamboos. Please note we carry many different varieties of non-invasive clumping bamboo some that will remain quite small, like the size of a mock orange bush. Please refer to our [catalog](#) for each individual bamboo's growth habits (height & width at maturity), characteristics and photographs.

Microclimate and Bamboo's Growth

Estimating the final size of a bamboo variety can be uncertain. When planting bamboo in Hawaii there are many factors to consider before predicting the final size of a bamboo plant. Soil type, elevation, annual rainfall and the amount of wind the bamboo will be exposed to are all factors. Any combination of these factors will result in bigger or smaller plants. The most ideal microclimate for growing healthy plants is at a low elevation, in a moist climate with very little wind and fertile soil. All species would benefit and thrive in the above described environment.

Species for Lower Elevations

Typically the large leaf species do well at a lower elevation (up to 2000 feet) with less wind and plenty of water. These varieties are absolutely beautiful and exotic looking and are worth considering when you have the right conditions. These genus's include Dendrocalamus, Gigantochloa, Schizostachyum and Nastus. Dendrocalamus' are larger clumpers and an excellent source of timber for construction with edible shoots. Included in this genus is the infamous Hitam, a rare variety with giant black timbers up to 10 inches in diameter. Gigantochloa's have many different sizes, shapes and uses. They are known among bamboo

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builders for their strong timbers and various culm diameters (three to six inches). One that stands out in this genus is *G. Atroviolacea* an extremely beautiful timber grade black bamboo. Also noteworthy are the brilliantly variegated bamboos of different sizes including the purple stripes of *G. Sumatra* and *G. Med Maxima*. *G. Luteostriata* makes a great privacy hedge with its large leafed and variegated foliage, which grows to the ground. *G. Atter* is a magnificent bamboo with six-inch construction grade timbers and an upright figure. *Schizostachyum Brachycladum* (Bali Golden Sacred) is an exotic golden bamboo that is very sensitive to excess water and wind. If well-protected and cared for *Schizostachyum Brachycladum* will grow to be a specimen of stunning beauty. Its large leaves with yellow stripes start about five feet above ground thus showing off its vibrant golden perfectly straight culms. *Schizostachyum Brachycladum* can be planted in a hedge spaced between five-eight feet apart and will get about 30 feet tall if given optimal growing conditions. *Nastus Elatus* is an exotic with the most unique foliage of all the bamboos: long and slender leaves with a feathery appearance. It has three-four inch diameter bright green culms that stand upright and would make an attractive hedge. The best part about *Nastus Elatus* is that the shoots can be eaten raw and are delicious, crispy and sweet.

Upper Elevation, Drought Tolerant & Cold Hardy Bamboos

The *Bambusa* genus is made up of species with smaller leaves making them more drought tolerant and more cold hardy. Although they thrive at a lower elevation, *Bambusas* can also be planted in most of Hawaii's upper elevations. When planted in less than optimal locations *Bambusas* may grow slower and max out at a smaller size, but should still exhibit a similar growth habit. Additionally *Bambusas* make an excellent windbreak thus making them the most widely used privacy hedge bamboos we have to offer. Some of the most popular species for windbreak and privacy barrier are *Bambusa* (B.) Malay Dwarf, *B. Alfonse Karr*, *B. Textilis*, *B. Textilis Gracilis* and *B. Dolichomerithalla*, *B. Herose* and *B. Chungii*. For your exotic bamboo needs try *B. Wamin* (lumpy internodes) *B. Chungii* or *Barbalata* (white bamboo) or *B. Lako* (black bamboo). For a thick windbreak/ privacy barrier go with *B. Malingensis*. *B. Herose* also has a lot to offer, with large diameter poles for construction, big edible shoots and as an excellent choice for a tall privacy barrier or windbreak.

Ensuring Optimal Growth

There are many variables that affect the way your plants will grow. The better the conditions the faster your plants will grow. Protect your investment by taking the time to choose the best variety for your need/situation and plant them with care. Please see our [planting recommendations](#) page for specific instructions and minerals to add when planting. We are soil specialists with years of experience cultivating these bamboo varieties. We can give you a good idea of how big a species will get in your microclimate. On site consultations are available for the most accurate planning advise. Give us a call at 808.870.0591.