



Running Bamboo

Information Sheet

Fast-spreading bamboo, known as "running" bamboo, has the ability, once established, to aggressively take over backyards and travel across property lines, **causing headaches for neighbours.**

Removal of thick infestations can require heavy digging equipment and years of keeping an eye out for any errant shoots trying to take hold. Running bamboo can get behind home sidings, into pipelines and push up driveways. **Sometimes it is planted by homeowners who don't know much about it or how aggressively it spreads.**

There are two basic types of bamboo: running and clumping. Clumping bamboo grows more slowly than running bamboo and does not spread aggressively.

In recent times there has been an increase in concerns voiced by those affected by invading bamboo, mostly planted by neighbours, and has caught the attention of our local plant experts. Property owners who allow their infestations to travel unchecked into neighbouring backyards need to understand the negative impact that their species selection has on their neighbours.

Once well established, these aggressive bamboos can travel 15 feet or more a year. The rhizomes spread out like tentacles underground and push up stalks, known as "culms", which can reach as high as 40 feet.

Anyone negatively affected should launch a campaign to recommend the State legislature pass a law requiring how certain types of running bamboo are planted, with potential penalties for those that don't follow the rules.



Laws governing the planting of bamboo are needed that require homeowners to install "proper containment" of the bamboo. Retailers and landscapers dealing with bamboo in the Phyllostachy's family should also be required to provide customers with information on how the plant grows and how to properly contain it; and "address situations" in which property owners fail to prevent spreading to neighbouring properties.

To prevent a running bamboo from spreading, a "rhizome barrier" is essential.

A barrier two or three feet deep is effective. It should be slanted outward at the top so that when the rhizomes hit the barrier they will bend upwards. A barrier does not stop a running rhizome, it only deflects it. The barrier should project an inch or two above ground level. Check the barrier once a year and cut off rhizomes that arch over the top.

If you have chosen running bamboo for your own yard it is up to you to be responsible and contain it within your yard. Just because your neighbour has not voiced their concern to you does not mean they are happy with all the extra work your bamboo is making by invading their yard.