

# Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

## Golden, Yellow Groove & Giant Timber bamboo

*Phyllostachys aurea*, *P. aureosulcata* and *P. bambusoides*



Golden bamboo  
James R Allison, Georgia DNR



Timber bamboo Frank  
Jurcik, Bugwood



Yellow groove bamboo  
Caryn Rickel, Institute of Invasive Bamboo  
Research

### Background:

Bamboo species are enormous members of the grass family *Poaceae*, and are often introduced as an ornamental or visual screen. They can be classified as either clumping or running, with running species producing long rhizomes that spread aggressively. Golden, yellow groove, and timber are all running bamboo species.

### Range:

These bamboo species are native to Asia. Unfortunately, they can now also be found throughout the Southeastern region of the United States, and are being planted more often in the Mid-Atlantic region.

### Habitat:

These three bamboo species thrive in full sun, but will grow well in sparsely wooded secondary forests. The most vigorous growth occurs in moist, deep, loamy soils, where these bamboo can spread rapidly.

### Description and Spread:

At a height of 30 to 75 feet, these bamboo species tower over most other grasses. The hollow culms (stems) often have 2 stems per node, while native switch cane has only one stem per node. Golden bamboo often turns yellowish in sunlight; timber bamboo is often a dark green; and yellow groove bamboo have a distinctive stripe along the culm. Running bamboo species spread predominately through vegetative growth. Despite containment efforts, their rhizomes will often find their way out of confinement to infest nearby areas.

### Ecological Threat:

Due to the thick, tall nature of the colonies it produces, bamboo virtually eliminates all understory plants that stand in its way. In effect, it leaves little appropriate habitat for wildlife, sharply decreasing biodiversity. Once established in an area, it is quite difficult to remove.

### How to Control this Species:

#### Physical

Small infestations, or areas where herbicides are not permitted, can be controlled mechanically by cutting and mowing as close to the ground as possible. This will need to be repeated several times throughout the growing season since bamboo readily re-sprouts. Monitoring and retreatment over the course of several growing seasons is essential in order to ensure that energy reserves in the rhizomes are exhausted.

#### Chemical

Large areas of bamboo, where risks to non-target species are minimal, can be treated with foliar applications of five percent glyphosate mixed in water. Canes should first be cut and herbicides applied to newly expanded leaves. Alternatively, a 25 percent solution of glyphosate mixed in water can be applied to freshly cut stumps.