

## Running and Clumping Bamboos

Even though bamboo can grow to the height of a large tree its stem and root system bears a closer resemblance to turf grass. A single bamboo plant will send up dozens or hundreds of stems from a common root mass. It is likely if you have bamboo in your yard it all originates from a single plant.

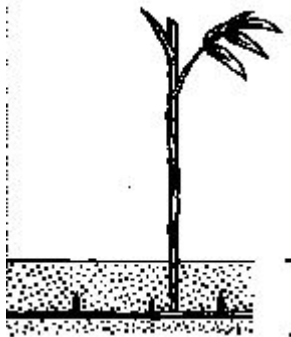
Not all bamboos are created equal. They are divided into two main types:

### Running Bamboos

Running (monopodial) types spread vigorously, sending out underground runners, or rhizomes, which sometimes emerge far from the parent plant. Running bamboos are very cold-hardy and difficult to contain in small yards. Runners grow quickly and will rapidly invade the yard of other members and common areas. For this reason running bamboo species should never be planted and should be removed or contained. (See *GHI invasive plant fact sheet on removing and controlling bamboo*).



Running grove appearance



Running root structure

### Running Species to Avoid

There are many species of bamboo on the market, sold under many different names for the various cultivars and ornamental breeds. Some are more invasive than others. In general all plant species from the genus *Phyllostachys* and *Pseudosasa* should be avoided. Two common types are:

**Golden Bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*)**

**Arrow or Japanese Bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*)**

\*Please consult a horticulturalist before planting any species of bamboo in your yard.

Source: American Bamboo Society, [www.bamboo.com](http://www.bamboo.com)

## Clumping Bamboos

Clumping (sympodial) types have a very short root structure, are genetically incapable of expanding more than few inches a year and will generally form discrete clumps. The clumps slowly enlarge as new culms emerge every year, and may require anywhere from 2-10 feet or more of space in order to reach their mature height, depending on species. Clumpers make excellent specimen plants and will form very dense screens, but more slowly than runners. Except for the *Fargesias*, the clumpers tend to be less cold-hardy than runners.



Clumping grove appearance



Clumping root structure

## Clumping Varieties Suitable for GHI Yards

In general, all *Bambusa* species are good substitutes for running bamboo a few suitable choices are:

**Common bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*)**

**Buddha's Belly (*Bambusa tuldoidea* 'Ventricosa')**

**Hedge Bamboo (*Bambusa multiplex*)**

Other suitable clumping species are:

*Borinda* sp.

*Fargesias* sp.

\*Please consult a horticulturalist before planting any species of bamboo in your yard.

## Other Good Native Substitutes to Bamboo

**Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium* sp.)**, summer blooming perennial grows to 6-7 feet tall, tolerates sun to part-shade, spreads quickly in wet soils, maintains winter seed heads.

**Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)**, medium evergreen shrub grows to 15-30 feet, fragrant summer blooms, requires wet to medium soils, tolerates full shade.

**Great Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*)**, medium evergreen shrub, grows to 15 feet, requires wet to medium soils, tolerates full shade, will form dense thicket.

**Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)**, tall evergreen tree, grows to 50 foot but maintains conical form, excellent wildlife value, requires moist to dry soils, full sun.