



DESIGN - BUILD - SUPPLY - GROW

HOW TO PLANT BAMBOO

Clumping Bamboos

Planting a clumping bamboo is much like planting any other tree or shrub. Choose a location with adequate sun exposure for your particular bamboo. Unlike the running varieties, *most* clumping bamboos which grow in the Northwest prefer shade or partial shade, and will do best if protected from the intense afternoon sun.

Dig a hole 1½ times the pot diameter and a few inches deeper. Fill the hole with water and let it drain. Fill again and observe how quickly the water drains. Bamboos are thirsty but need well-drained soil. If your soil is heavy clay, consider mixing pumice, peat moss and/or compost into the top 12 inches of soil to improve drainage.

Make sure that the soil in the hole is wet. It is important, especially in summer, that the surrounding soil is wetter than the root ball, otherwise it will draw moisture out of the root ball and stress the plant (sponge effect).

Plant your bamboo at the same soil level as it was in the pot. Pack the soil firmly around the root ball and tamp to ensure that there are no air spaces. To complete your planting, spread a layer (2 to 4 inches) of mulch out to the drip line. This will help with moisture retention, protection from excesses of heat and cold, and shades the root system.

Water in heavily once the plant is in the ground and mulched.

Because of their compact root systems, clumping bamboos are excellent candidates for containers. See comments below.



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Ⓢ Running Bamboos

Running bamboos are generally light lovers and will thrive in full sun as long as there is adequate water. For shady locations, your friendly Bamboo Craftsman Company staff can suggest a variety that is shade tolerant.

In an urban setting, some method of containment should be employed when planting a running bamboo, especially if the planting site is along a property line. The following are recommended methods of containment:

- Ⓢ Containers: several forms of containers are suitable for bamboo. Be advised that a running bamboo will eventually need to be removed and divided - usually done in late Fall (October) or early Spring, before shooting begins (March, April, May) - in order to give it room to grow again. Depending on the species and its growth rate, dividing may not need to be done for several seasons, usually 2 to 4 years.
 - Ceramic pots – ensure adequate drainage. Glazed pots are best. **Do not** use terra cotta pots, as these allow the roots to dry quickly.
 - Wooden or concrete planters – with adequate drainage
 - Galvanized livestock tanks work well as planters. As with all containers, adequate drainage is essential. This means drilling several small (1/4” or less) holes in the bottom of the tank. A 2” layer of smooth river rock (1 ½- 2”) is laid down, covered with a layer of landscape fabric, and then the soil is filled in and the plant(s) planted.

Not recommended are:

terra cotta pots - they dry out quickly in the summer heat.
pots with tapered tops - hard to remove root ball for division

- Ⓢ Mounding: Growing bamboo in mounds 12” or higher than the surrounding ground makes it easy to spot errant rhizomes and cut them off before they enter unwanted territory.



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Rhizome trench or moat method: A trench around the planting bed, 12” deep and 12” wide and filled with sand, facilitates control by allowing you to run a pick through the sand periodically during the growing season. Any rhizomes growing through the trench can be cut off with a sharp shovel



.Rhizome barrier: Again, trench around the planting bed, 1 foot wide and 28 inches deep. Install 60-mil HDPE (high density polyethylene), 30” high, in the trench as a vertical wall. Use stakes to hold the barrier material against the outside wall of the trench when backfilling. The barrier is installed at a depth of 28 inches, leaving 2 inches or more above ground. The bottom of the barrier should be no less than 24” deep; any excess above ground can be cut off with a utility knife. Clamp the ends together using two 28” stainless steel strips held in place with stainless steel nuts and bolts.



Partial barrier method: You may want to keep a bamboo from crossing a fence line into a neighbor’s yard but wish to let it run into part of your own yard, where you can control it through root pruning. In this case, a trench paralleling the fence line can be dug and the barrier installed with ends curved away from the fence line so that any rhizomes approaching it will be directed away from the fence line. Variations of this method allow you to direct the rhizome growth toward or away from specific areas.

With all of the above methods, follow planting instructions as described for clumping bamboos.

Fertilizing in the early Spring and late Fall will help ensure vigorous growth. Being a grass, bamboo responds well to fertilizer with a balance of the three elements (such as a 10-10-10). A ratio higher than 15-15-15 is not recommended. Organic manure is also excellent, as are fish emulsion, bat guano, or any similar organic fertilizer.

Note: Leaf drop occurs throughout the year but is more pronounced in the Spring, before shooting, and in the Fall, before dormancy. Leaves will turn yellow before dropping. This is a normal process and is not cause for alarm. Letting dropped leaves accumulate around your bamboos allows them to re-use the silica and nutrients in the leaves and provides a natural mulch.