



Control Options for Bamboo

General Information

Bamboos are a large group of perennial grasses, many of which are used as ornamental plants. Bamboo has woody stems and many species can grow quite tall. Some of the ornamental bamboos escape cultivation and can be very invasive in landscaped areas, woodlands and riparian areas. Bamboos can be split into two different groups – clumped and running. Clumped bamboos grow in distinct clumps as an individual plant. The more invasive running bamboos spread by rhizome and can quickly form large stands.

Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Bamboo can be contained by using a barrier around desired bamboo plants or to limit the spread of an infestation. Barriers can be made of metal, plastic (30-40 mil thick if using sheet plastic) or other material that rhizomes cannot penetrate, and should be installed to a depth of 18-30 inches in the soil. Small stands of both types of bamboo can be controlled through hand removal. Plants should be dug, taking care to remove all of the roots and rhizomes that are found. The area must be monitored for new growth from any missed roots or rhizomes. Mowing can be effective if done every 1 or 2 weeks during the growing season, for a period of at least two years.



Chemical Recommendations

Bamboo can be controlled using specific herbicides. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Do not cut sprayed plants for at least 2 weeks after herbicide application. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.



Glyphosate (RoundUp® and many other brands) can be effective in controlling bamboo, although multiple applications may be required, over 2 to 3 years. Bamboo should be cut and allowed to grow until about 3 feet tall and the new leaves expand. Glyphosate should then be applied as a spray to the entire plant (a glyphosate product formulated at a 41% concentration should be used, mixed at a rate of 6 fl. ounces per gallon). Glyphosate will kill grass and other vegetation it is sprayed on so care should be taken if used around desired vegetation. Aquatic formulations of Glyphosate can be used in situations where the bamboo is close to water.

Imazapyr (Habitat®, Arsenal® and others) can be applied at a 1% solution to bamboo following cutting and regrowth as detailed for Glyphosate. Imazapyr may kill other woody plants and grasses which have roots extending into the treatment area, and will also require more than one application. Spray plants until they are just wet.

NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Herbicide information is taken from Clemson University Cooperative Extension, University of Florida. Photos courtesy of the King County Noxious Weed Control Program.