



## Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council Invasive Plant Manual

**Common Name:** Golden Bamboo, Fishpole Bamboo

**Scientific Name:** *Phyllostachys aurea* Carr. ex A.& C.

There have been over 750 bamboo plant introductions into the United States. Of these, twenty-four species and eleven cultivars have been in the *Phyllostachys* genus. Golden bamboo was introduced in Alabama in 1882. In China, these plants grow in deciduous and coniferous forests. It is used for paper pulp, handicrafts and as a food source in many countries throughout Asia. The name *Phyllostachys* comes from phyllon, meaning leaf, and stachys, meaning spike.

**Height:** Golden bamboo culms can reach a height of 8 to 10 meters. The basal internodes of this species are inflated, a distinguishing characteristic.

**Leaves:** The leaves are lanceolate; 1.5 dm long and 1 to 2 cm wide. The edges of the leaves may be rough or smooth without lobes.

**Flowers:** Golden bamboo flowers infrequently and may not flower for several decades. Spikelets are solitary and 8 to 12 flowered.

### Life History

*P. aurea* is a monopodial bamboo and primarily spreads by rhizomes. Shoots develop in the spring with initiation primarily controlled by temperature. The culms grow from side shoots at alternate nodes of the rhizome. Flowering is infrequent and in many cases will preclude the death of the plant.

### Origin and Distribution

Golden bamboo is native to China but has been cultivated in Japan for centuries. It was introduced to the United States in 1882 in Alabama. Since that time it has spread or been introduced to the Southeastern U.S. from Maryland to Florida, Louisiana to Arkansas and Oregon.

### Similar Species

One possible look-alike to *P. aurea* is *Arundinaria gigantea* or Cane, which is native throughout the Southeastern United States. These two species can be distinguished by *P. aurea* having one side of the stem flattened. The cross section of *A. gigantea* is more or less



Photo by James H. Miller



Photo by James H. Miller

round.

### Habitat

Golden bamboo thrives in full sun in all but the hottest climates where it requires some shade. It will grow in sparsely wooded secondary forests. Vigorous growth and spread is seen in moist, deep loamy soils. In habitats less than ideal, *P. aurea* will continue to grow and spread although at a diminished rate.



Photo by James R. Allison

### Management Recommendations

#### Mechanical Control

**Cutting/Mowing:** This method can be used on small infestations or where herbicides cannot be used. Cut plants as close to the ground as possible. Repeat several times throughout the growing season as plants resprout. Monitoring and re-treatment will be necessary for several growing seasons until the energy reserves in the rhizomes are exhausted.

#### Herbicidal Control

**Foliar Spray Method:** This method should be considered for large areas of bamboo where risk to non-target species is minimal. Air temperature should be above 65°F to ensure absorption of herbicides.

**Glyphosate:** Apply a 2% solution of glyphosate and water plus a 0.5% non-ionic surfactant to thoroughly wet all leaves. Use a low pressure and coarse spray pattern to reduce spray drift damage to non-target species. Glyphosate is a non-selective systemic herbicide that may kill non-target, partially sprayed plants.

**Cut Stump Method:** This control method should be considered when treating individual trees or where the presence of desirable species precludes foliar application. Stump treatments can be used as long as the ground is not frozen.

**Glyphosate:** Horizontally cut stems at or near ground level. Immediately apply a 25% solution of glyphosate and water to the cut stump, covering the outer 20% of the stump.

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The Bugwood Network, USDA Forest Service & USDA APHIS PPQ.  
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College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences - Dept. of Entomology  
Last updated on Wednesday, November 05, 2003 at 01:19 PM  
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