

January Invasive Plant Highlight

Bamboo



What is Bamboo?



Yellow Grove Bamboo

Bamboo is highly invasive and damaging in the United States as it is an aggressive spreader. There are two species that are especially problematic in Virginia: *Phyllostachys aurea* (Golden Bamboo) and *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* (Yellow Grove Bamboo). Once this plant is established, it is difficult to remove. Golden Bamboo and Yellow Grove Bamboo are native to China and were first introduced into the United States in the 1880s for ornamental purposes.

If left uncontrolled or removed, bamboo will form dense, monocultural thickets that displace native species.



Golden Bamboo

These bamboos are perennial, reed-like plants that can reach heights of 16 to 40 feet. They rarely flower and mostly spreads through underground rhizomes. Both prefer full sun but can spread in shade conditions and will invade forests, pushing out native perennials. Both bamboos spread best in moist, deep loamy soils, so are very destructive in habitats near water bodies. In habitats less than ideal, bamboo will slowly grow, but will spread more.

Better Native Plants for Screening

American Holly, Eastern Redcedar, and Mountain Laurel

Please Remove It!

If you have bamboo, please remove it before it spreads onto other adjacent properties. The rhizomes can be found within a foot of the ground's surface. Cut the bamboo down to a few inches tall. For small patches, dig up as much of the roots and runners as possible with a shovel or pick axe. Look for new growth and repeat if necessary. For small or large invasions, use power equipment to cut or mow bamboo close to the ground. Repeated cutting or mowing of bamboo through several growing seasons will eventually exhaust the energy reserves of the rhizomes. If bamboo is coming from a neighbor's yard, speak to them about removing and replacing with better alternatives.

More information about Bamboo:

<https://www.invasive.org/browse/subinfo.cfm?sub=3063>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/bamboo>

Why Native Plants?

As open space disappears, it is necessary to look at our own landscapes for biodiversity. Native plants promote the unique relationships between our native plants and animals, from the smallest microorganisms, insects and other invertebrates to birds and mammals.

Native plants, from grasses and wildflowers to towering shade trees, form the base of the food chain. Our native insects are uniquely adapted to eat native plants; some are generalists and can eat a variety of plants, but many are specialists that can only digest certain types of leaves based on the chemistry of the plant.

Research by the entomologist Doug Tallamy has shown that native oak trees support over 500 species of caterpillars whereas ginkgos, a commonly planted landscape tree from Asia, host only 5 species of caterpillars. When it takes over 6,000 caterpillars to raise one brood of chickadees, that is a significant difference.

More information on native plants:

www.vnps.org/natives

www.plantnovanatives.org

www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder

www.audubon.org/native-plants

More information on invasive plants:

www.invasiveplantatlas.org

www.invasive.org



Native Virginia Bluebells

Who We Are?

The City of Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team restores the local ecosystem in city parks. We remove damaging invasive plants then re-plant with natives that benefit our local birds, butterflies, bees, and pollinators.

We are a community task force that supports the City's Green Space department. We have monthly events in the Fall and Spring open to volunteers.

Contact Information

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Native Butterfly Weed