



HENRICO COUNTY

Department of Community Revitalization

BAMBOO CONTROL

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE

The Division works cooperatively with citizens through education, volunteer assistance, and communication to gain voluntary compliance with county codes to promote a healthier and safer environment. Our motto is “Service through communication and care.”

PURPOSE OF THIS BROCHURE

This brochure contains information about the types, containment, control, and eradication of bamboo. They are perennial members of the grass family and are often one of the most difficult ornamentals to control. They can grow anywhere, from one to seventy feet tall. While often considered beautiful, they can quickly turn into a homeowner’s worst nightmare if not properly maintained.

GROWTH TYPES

There are two basic types of bamboo: clumping and running.

The clump type of bamboo grows in large clumps and is relatively slow spreading. The root system can be rather extensive and quite competitive with surrounding plants.

Running types of bamboo, however, are very invasive and very competitive with other plants. Running bamboos can be very problematic once established, as they spread by thick, tough underground stems called rhizomes. These rhizomes can spread more than 100 feet from the mother plant and are very resistant to adverse environmental conditions and most herbicides. The running types of bamboo **SHOULD NOT** be planted unless a physical barrier of copper, stainless steel, or concrete, buried a minimum of 3 feet deep in the soil, is used.

CONTROL

Every effort should be taken to control a bamboo infestation in its entirety.

Because bamboo is so aggressive, it can re-establish rapidly if any small section is left untouched. Homeowners with bamboo infestations must be patient, as this weed requires an intensive control program over several years.

Bamboo can be controlled by removing the plant root mass and rhizomes. This can often be done by hand with small infestations, but larger problem areas may require the use of power equipment.

Regular mowing is another method that can help control bamboo over time.

Because bamboo is a grass, it can tolerate occasional mowing but does not tolerate frequent mowing. Mowing practices similar to that in a home lawn can

eventually deplete the bamboo rhizomes and offer some control. Two or three years of regular mowing are often needed to see results.

ERADICATION

A final, and often necessary, method of control for bamboo is the use of herbicides. A non-selective herbicide with the active ingredient glyphosate (e.g. Roundup, but many other brand names are available also) is the best option for homeowners. For glyphosate to be effective, the bamboo must be mowed or chopped and allowed to re-grow until the new leaves expand. Glyphosate should then be applied to the leaves. Keep in mind that it can potentially take two to three years to gain complete control. Do not apply these products next to creeks, lake basins, wetlands, or other water sources where spray drift will contact the water. Choose a glyphosate product labeled for use near water, such as Rodeo, Pondmaster, Aquamaster or Aquapro.

While bamboo control is not impossible, it can often seem that way. Staying on top of the problem is one of the most important things to remember. An intensive control method over several years will be necessary to eradicate a bamboo infestation. One of the best methods of control is prevention. Always do your homework before planting bamboo and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

HOW DO I REPORT A VIOLATION?

If you are aware of a property in Henrico County that is in violation of this ordinance, please contact the Division of Community Maintenance. The Build Henrico website and phone hotline are available 24 hours per day. When you report a problem, you will be required to give your name and telephone number. This information is kept confidential and will not be released under any circumstances. It will be used only when County staff require additional information to investigate the case or to update you on the status of your concern. Visit <https://henrico.us/build> or call (804) 501-4757, Option 1, to report a violation.