

If bamboo is coming into your yard from your neighbor's yard.

Best choice: they remove the bamboo. If they like bamboo, they plant some clump-forming types to replace it.

How do they remove the bamboo? Most effective options:

- Dig it out manually. Rhizomes are usually shallow but can be quite extensive, woody, and tough. They can be chopped with an ax (Pulaski type works well) or hatchet, or cut with a reciprocal saw.
- Dig it out with a bulldozer or Bobcat.

Second choice:

- They allow a trench to be dug inside their fence, all rhizomes exposed, cut, and removed. A gap wide enough to walk along is left between the remaining bamboo and the fence, so there will be access for monitoring the rhizomes. Generally, a ditch trencher will be needed to create a ditch of sufficient depth and uniformity.
- Bamboo barrier is then professionally installed (see separate page) and monitored annually for any rhizomes that go over it. Those rhizomes are cut off. Once a year is sufficient if the inspection and removal is thorough. All mulch and debris should be raked or blown out to make sure there are no loosely buried rhizomes that escape notice. The debris (leaves and culm sheaths) makes excellent mulch, so it can simply be blown or raked onto the existing bed of bamboo or used elsewhere.
- This separates the bamboo between the two yards. Now the neighbors can dig out what has spread into their yards. Rhizomes are usually shallow and follow predictable patterns: Phyllostachys bamboo rhizomes (the most common running type) tend to grow in a straight line.
- Watering first makes the job easier. Washing off rhizomes as you find them to expose them makes it more obvious where they're coming from and going.

Third choice: you dig that trench on your side and do all of the above.

In theory you can just keep cutting it down. If all of the bamboo you're battling is now on your side, then simply removing all shoots and foliage consistently, persistently, will kill out the root system eventually. Combined with monitoring to prevent new invasion, this can be a manageable approach.

In very large rural areas with easy access, repeated mowing with a woody brush mower has been shown to be effective over time. After the initial removal, the goal is to never let leaves re-emerge. Eventually the root system will starve and wither away.

Bamboo that you cut down can be chipped and mulched. Bamboo will not sprout from chipped material. Or leaves can be stripped off and the canes can be dried in the shade for use in the garden.

Herbicides are generally not effective in this process.

Glyphosate works best when it is absorbed through the leaves, and the leaves are too high up on established plants for spraying to be practical. A method involving cutting, allowing resprouting and new leaf growth, and then treating with herbicide is often described, but repeated mowing and application will be needed. There is no published evidence that this is any more effective than simply repeatedly mowing by itself.

Absorption of glyphosate through the stems or cut ends is not a proven method or labeled recommendation.

Triclopyr, recommended for woody brush control and management of shrub and tree stumps, is not effective on monocots (bamboo is a grass).

Other materials tested were either ineffective or were substantially hazardous to other plants nearby.

Bottom line: removal of running bamboo is a mechanical process. Confinement is by proven barrier materials, correctly installed, or (better) by confining in containers. Best solution: plant the right kind of bamboo in the first place.

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