

Bamboo

Arundinaria sp., *Phyllostachys* sp., *Bambusa* sp., *Dendrocalamus* sp. (Bambuseae)

Fast Facts:

Acres in Washington: none grown commercially Per Acre Value: Has yet to be determined due a variety of uses for bamboo. Number of Growers: 20 for nursery stock
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Description Of Crop:

Bamboo is a woody, perennial, evergreen plant that is in the true grass family. More than 1300 species of bamboo are recognized. It ranges in height from dwarf varieties that may reach 1 foot to the giant timber bamboos that reach over 100 feet. Bamboo shoots are used extensively in Asian cuisine. The shoots are harvested for food before they are two weeks old or under a foot tall. The bamboo shoots, stems and leaves are a major food source for the giant panda of China and other herbivores. Bamboo is also used for building material, paper, floors, furniture, textiles and fencing. It grows faster than trees and after harvesting no replanting is necessary. Bamboo is a significant carbon mitigation plant that reduces Co2 buildup in the atmosphere. It is a fast growing, sustainable and clean plant that requires few if any pesticides. Bamboo is found in diverse climates that range from cold mountains to hot tropical regions. It has two patterns of growth that are characterized by its type of root system. Bamboo is either a runner that has a root system with rapidly spreading rhizomes that sends up new corms, or is a clumper that has rhizomes that slowly expand from the original corm. Bamboo is also classified as temperate and tropical. The clumping bamboo is typically tropical or subtropical and cannot withstand freezing temperatures. The running bamboo is temperate and can withstand occasional low temperatures of -10° F. Here in Washington we have the temperate bamboo. Commercial production of bamboo has been very limited in the United States since bamboo isn't easily produced from seeds or cuttings. However, recent technology now enables bamboo to be grown from tissue cultures, which will enable bamboo to be reproduced on a major scale. Bamboo is the Chinese symbol for longevity.

Key pests:

The major insect pest in bamboo is the bamboo spider mite. It is a concern to the nursery and landscape industries since it can cause leaf discolorations and reduce plant vigor. The bamboo spider mite spins a dense webbing nest that is found on the underside of the leaf. They suck the juices out of the leaf and leave a white discoloration. Aphids are also a problem. They show up in early summer and their excretions leave a black sooty film on the leaves. In new bamboo plants,

gophers, voles and moles are a problem since they eat the roots and rhizomes. Bamboo grows so well weeds are not a problem.

Key pesticides:

The bamboo spider mite is controlled with insecticidal soaps, Talstar-10 wettable powder and Sanmite. Growers can also use biological control by maintaining predatory mites. Aphids are controlled with Provado, Assail or Actara. Gophers, voles and moles are controlled through trapping or baiting.

Critical pest

Control issues:

The dense webs of the bamboo spider mites can make pesticide contact with the mites difficult. Plants that are infected should be cut down and the debris disposed of.

Expert contact:

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Location

Of production: Skagit County



Bamboo

Bamboo Production in Washington State



Sources: American Bamboo Society