



## Ornamental Bamboos: A Beautiful Addition to Home Gardens

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Bamboos are considered as the perfect fit for gardens needing a little more greenery. They not only grows fast but also form a thick screen quickly that can be used for protection of privacy inside garden as well as hide other unwanted objects within the garden. Therefore, it is must to know their growing habits and adaptability before incorporating them to home garden as some of them can be very invasive and difficult to control. This particular article describes the types of bamboo, their growing habits, cares need to be taken and different bamboo species that can be successfully added to home garden.

### Introduction

Being an exotic plant to garden, bamboo can be served as a versatile and robust addition to home gardens. Owing to its fast and thick growth, bamboo in no time can impart a very lovely and lushly effect to the garden. The plant not only used as hedge or screen for maintaining privacy in the garden, but also it fits precisely to the category of feature plants. It is a plant, which works perfectly for any kind of garden, whether a tropical, contemporary or an oriental one.

**Types of Bamboo:** Broadly bamboos can be categorized into 2 groups-

**A. Clumping type:** Like the name suggests, these types appear as a clump of grass growing vertically. Managing clumping bamboo is quite easier owing to its vertical growth forming a super dense patch with shorter height.

**B. Running type:** Because of its horizontal rhizome spread at a faster rate, running bamboo is very aggressive and quite handful to manage. From the spreading rhizomes, new shoots emerge quickly. This bamboo types are required to be contained properly before taking over an entire area.

### Different types of ornamental bamboo:

Running Type		Clumping Type	
Outdoor bamboo	Indoor Bamboo	Outdoor	Indoor
1. Golden Groove Bamboo ( <i>Phyllostachys Aureosulcata</i> )			
2. Kuma Bamboo ( <i>Sasa Veitchii</i> )		1. Hedge Bamboo ( <i>Bambusa Multiplex</i> )	1. Large Leaved Bamboo ( <i>Indocalamus Tessellatus</i> )
3. Guadua Bamboo ( <i>Guadua Angustifolia</i> )	1. Black Bamboo ( <i>Phyllostachys Nigra</i> )	2. Umbrella Bamboo ( <i>Fargesia Murielae</i> )	2. Heavenly Bamboo ( <i>Nandina Domestica</i> )
4. Japanese Arrow Bamboo ( <i>Pseudosasa Japonica</i> )		3. Giant Japanese Bamboo ( <i>Phyllostachys Bambusoides</i> )	3. Lucky Bamboo ( <i>Dracaena Braunii</i> )
5. Chilean Bamboo ( <i>Chusquea Culeou</i> )			
6. Giant Bamboo ( <i>Dendrocalamus Giganteus</i> )			

## Caring of Bamboo plants

**1. Location and Soil:** Being a versatile plant, most of the species coming under Bamboo can thrive easily in several conditions. Bamboo, in general, relishes full sun to grow at a faster rate. Taking the soil requirement into consideration, well drained fertile soil with slightly acidic pH is considered best. During active growth period the soil must be kept moist.

**2. Planting of Bamboo plants:** Once the location has been confirmed, planting should be done. A pit of size twice as that of bamboo root ball was dug in which bamboo was placed ensuring some roots to be spread out of the pit. The pit is gently filled with soil and watered thoroughly to settle down the soil removing air pockets. The loose packing of soil around root zone makes sure quicker establishment and growth of roots as well as rhizomes. To avoid transplanting shock, some shade can be provided to newly planted bamboo for initial 2-3 weeks after planting.

**3. Care of Bamboo plants:** The bamboo plants can come up well with a least of 2.5 cm water in a week which can be availed either through rainfall or can be provided by manual watering. The fallen bamboo leaves need not to be raked up from root zone as they will be served as natural mulch in order to keep the root zone moist and protected. They will also release essential nutrient elements as they decompose, which will supplement bamboo growth. For feeding the plants, a layer of well compost or balanced dose of fertilizer should be incorporated during spring.

**4. Control of Bamboo growth:** Knowing the growth habit of the bamboo is a must before planting. In order to control vigorous growth of bamboo (such as running type bamboo), installation of barrier should be advocated after the clump establishment. The barrier needs to be inserted 5-7.5 cm underground leaving equal length (5-7.5 cm) above ground surrounding the bamboo completely. Bamboo growing beyond the top of the barrier must be cut back in order to refrain it from escaping and also to maintain desired shape and height.

## Some of the popular bamboo types suitable for home garden are:-

**1. Buddha Belly Bamboo (*Bambusa ventricosa*):** A very popular bamboo type typically featured with lumpy nodes giving similar appearance as that of bulging belly of Lord Buddha. It can be grown outdoors as well as indoors in small containers. It can grow up to a height of 15-16 meters at maximum. Being a tropical plant, it naturally comes up well under cool and temperate climates. The dense growing plants can form a thick screen which can excellently be served for protecting privacy.

**2. Umbrella Bamboo (*Fargesia murielae*):** It is a non-invasive cold hardy bamboo which can be raised happily round the year. It is considered as one of the most beautiful bamboos owing to its light blue stems that grow into a golden yellow colour with bright green leaves. The umbrella bamboos grow to a height of 3-4.5 meters in clumps of width 1.2-1.5 meters.

**3. Guadua Bamboo (*Guadua angustifolia*):** It is a thorny bamboo, belongs to Neotropical genus and mainly distributed in Uruguay, Trinidad, parts of Mexico with the biggest concentration in Amazon basin. These bamboos are majorly grown in an elevation up to 1500 MSL. Guadua bamboo is used as important raw material for house construction purpose in America owing to its strength and multiple watershed protection properties. Also reports are there stating its potential role in CO<sub>2</sub> depletion from atmosphere. While choosing this bamboo for indoors, care should be taken to select sympodial rhizome as they tend to grow in smaller clumps which is highly desirable.

**4. Japanese Arrow Bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*):** The particular name was coined by the Japanese Samurai who used stiff canes of this bamboo for preparing arrows. It is believed to be originated from Korea and Japanese continents. Being a cold species, it can be able to withstand an extreme fall in temperature and also reported to thrive better under partial or

complete shade condition. The leaves of this bamboo resemble as that of palm leaves and grow up to 13-33cm with an attractive yellowish brown hue.

**5. Giant Japanese Bamboo (*Phyllostachys bambusoides*):** Although it is named after Japan, but grown primarily in various parts of China. This plant comes with characteristic feature of smooth canes which upon maturing emerge a very beautiful dark green shade.

**6. Hedge Bamboo (*Phyllostachys glauca*):** It is a charming evergreen bamboo with strikingly beautiful canes, majority of which develop from the vibrant bluish green culms. However, this bluish tinge is most prominent in younger plants because as the plant start ageing, the turquoise hue lost and the canes turn yellowish green. The canes attain a width of about 5 cm with an upright growth. Being a warm season plant, undergo a phase of dormancy under extreme drop in temperature.

**7. Green Glaucous Bamboo (*Phyllostachys viridiglaucescens*):** They are highly suitable to be used as a living fence or a solid screen ensuring privacy in the garden. The canes of this bamboo arise with a deep emerald green colour turning to lime green hue with the advancement of time and finally taking a yellowish green colouration upon maturity. The canes are often noticed to be white striped having nodes and elongated, medium and wide foliage.

**8. Painted Bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris* 'Vittata'):** This particular bamboo is well characterised with stripes along the culms, beautifully marked golden canes and stunning pattern across each node. It grows up to a height of 12-18 m with elongated narrow leaves of 17-18 cm in length. It is a non-invasive plant equipped with excellent root system aiding in soil erosion control.

**9. Chilean Bamboo (*Chusquea culeou*):** It belongs to grass family (Poaceae/Graminae) and mostly distributed in parts of South America, Argentina, Valdivia and Chile. Being a frost resistant plant, it is widely grown in temperate areas. It is well known for its ability for controlling forest dynamics such as it regulates the growth of multiple trees at once in order to inhibit excessive undesirable growth. Chilean bamboo is featured with lanceolate hairs and light brown flowers which come up to 60 years.

**10. Moso Bamboo (*Phyllostachys edulis*):** This bamboo grows up to a height of 18 m containing extremely thick culms of width 20 cm. The light green canes possess a very soft velvety covering turning yellowish green over time. Moso bamboos are reported to thrive well in warm and moist areas therefore are likely to be found in parts of China, Japan, and other East Asian regions.

**11. Black Bamboo (*Phyllostachys nigra*):** The young yellowish green canes take a marble brownish hue until turning fully black over the next couple of years. The canes are about 5 cm wide with a precisely smooth and slimy surface. These canes are accompanied with bright green leaves giving rise to a strikingly contrast outlook. This bamboo is highly suitable for container planting growing up to 1.8 m height.

**12. Large Leaved Bamboo (*Indocalamus tessellatus*):** It is well suited to be grown as an excellent indoor plant because of its dwarf stature. This evergreen semi dwarf plant can attain a height of only 2-3 m. The glossy green leaves are around 60 cm in length and 10 cm wide often used in cooking for wrapping the food materials as in the same like banana leaves.



Buddha Belly bamboo



Umbrella bamboo



Guadua bamboo



Japanese Arrow bamboo



**Giant Japanese bamboo**



**Hedge bamboo**



**Green glaucous bamboo**



**Painted bamboo**



**Chilean bamboo**



**Moso bamboo**



**Black bamboo**



**Large leaved bamboo**

## Conclusion

Before selecting bamboos for home garden, care should be taken to have knowledge on their growth habit in order to accommodate them in the designated space without any hustle. They can be planted singly or different varieties in combinations to create a beautiful place inside garden and can be used for sitting quietly and enjoying the soothing breeze rustling through leaves. Bamboos can also be used for contrasting or softening harsh fencing and also for creating natural pergolas. The dwarf varieties (clumping types) can be well suited for small or large balcony areas, roof gardens, container planting, raised beds, hedges, mazes, screens and for creating secret areas inside home garden. However, if sufficient space is available the non-invasive running types can also be taken up efficiently.

## References

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