

Golden bamboo

Phyllostachys aurea

Description

Widely planted as an ornamental and was first planted in the United States in Alabama in 1882. Also sometimes planted for use in making fishing poles.

Habit

Large, somewhat woody, rhizomatous, perennial grass that produces clumps of single branching stems. Grows quickly reaching 7-39 feet tall.

Leaves

Branches produce up to 6 leaves, which are arranged in fan-like clusters. Leaf blades are narrow, grass-like and generally measure 2-6 inches long and up to 0.8 inch wide.

Stems

Stem diameters may reach 6 inches but are typically 3.5 inches or less. Appear jointed because of swollen internodes. Branches often occur in pairs, and stems and branches are green turning golden yellow with age.



Flowers

Flowers are rarely produced by golden bamboo and in much of the United States, flowers have never been observed. Flowers occur in spikelets up to 2 in. long with 8-12 flowers. Mass flowering events occur every 7-30 years.

Fruits and Seeds

Seeds germinate once mature and moist. Dry seeds may sit dormant for several months, it is thought that viability is lost over time and lack any long-term dormancy.

Habitat

Native to China. Can be found in forest clearings, forest edges, and roadsides. Although rare, golden bamboo has been reported in both prairies and pine woodlands.

Reproduction

Vegetative growth from established clones can be rapid. Stems may reach full height within 1 month. Rhizome growth can result in the development of dense thickets and colonies. A single plant can produce up to 9.3 miles of stems in its lifetime.

Similar

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Repeated cutting or mowing may kill plants by exhausting rhizome nutrient stores. It is recommended that stems be cut close to the ground. Should be repeated throughout the growing season and will continue for several years. Can also be controlled by applying herbicide to cut stems.

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