



BAMBOO

The Magazine of the American Bamboo Society

GROWING DEMAND

How National Bamboo Is Powering
America's New Generation of
Bamboo Entrepreneurs

Winter 2025, Vol. 46, Issue 4. \$7.00 US. www.bamboo.org

THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS

To support the work and mission of the American Bamboo Society, please contact advertising@bamboo.org



Pahoa, HI

bambooliving.com / 808-359-3359

Bamboo Living Homes are the first and only code certified permit-able bamboo structures in the world. Since 1995, we have proudly designed and permitted more than 350 bamboo homes in the Hawaiian Islands and other beautiful locations in the world.



Holden, MO

bambpolygreentechnologycorp.com / 305-797-0745

Bambpoly Green Technology Corp is a USA company dedicated to the development of new material products based on its Research Development and Testing findings of the combining of the biological materials with polymer based materials. The very first efforts are on RD&T of creating new materials based on combining bamboo with plastic polymers.



Chapel Hill, NC

brightsidebamboo.com / 919-943-1048

We are the largest bamboo nursery in North Carolina, with over 50 varieties available. Bamboo landscaping services include consultation, removal, containment, management, and installation. We supply bamboo farms, edible shoots, and poles.



North Plains, OR

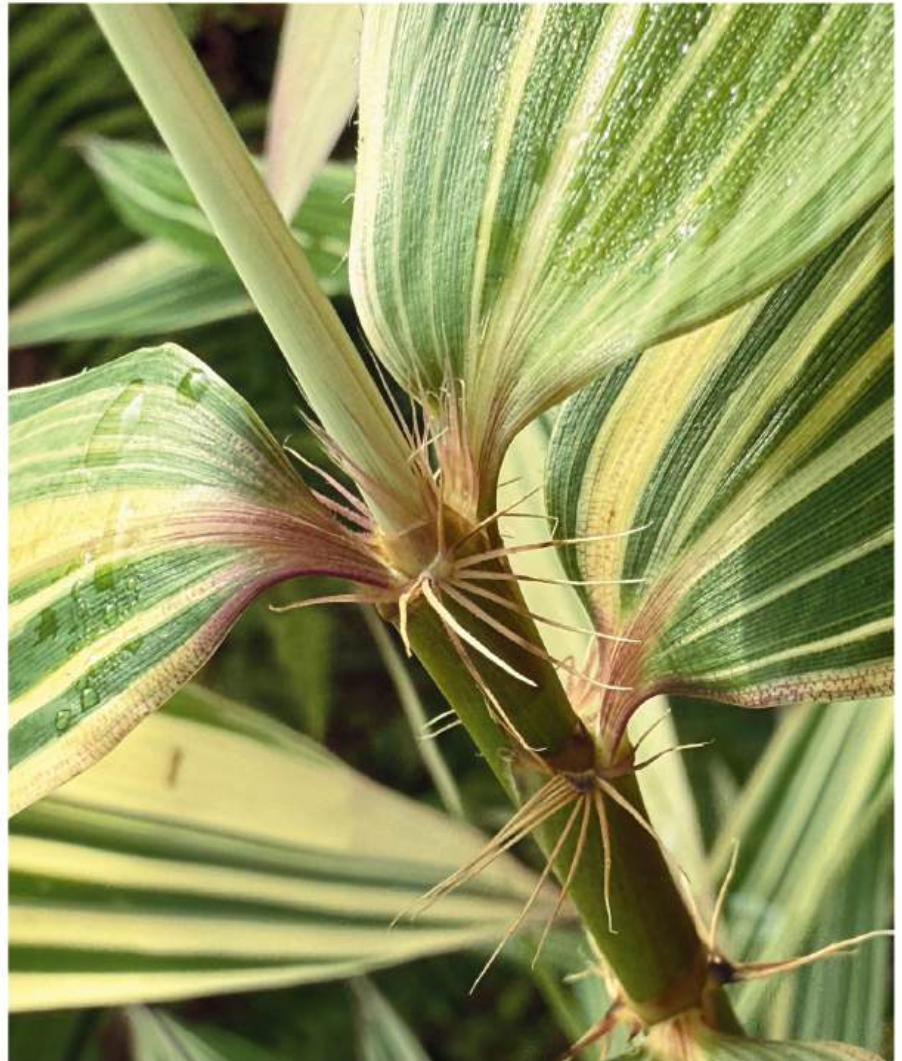
bamboogarden.com / 503-647-2700

Specializing in rare bamboo with over 340 species. Descriptions, growing instructions, and many pictures at bamboogarden.com. Retail, Wholesale, Internet, & mail order. Color catalogs available.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABS NEWS	05
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINA BAMBOO	15
FEATURE: GROWING DEMAND	17
FEATURE: URBAN BAMBOO IN SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING	23
OBJECT LESSON: BAMBOO WATER	25
BAMBOO IN THE SPOTLIGHT: HIBANOBAMBUSA TRANQUILLANS 'SHIROSHIMA'	27



Hibanobambusa tranquillans 'Shiroshima'

Join Us

The American Bamboo Society is a volunteer-run organization devoted to providing information on bamboos via its magazine and online journal, promoting bamboo for the public and botanical gardens, increasing the number of species in the U.S., disseminating research about its uses and potential, and to support bamboo research.

To learn more information about joining the ABS, visit <https://www.bamboo.org/membership-information> or scan the QR code.



ON THE COVER

Equipment and bamboo at National Bamboo's facilities

BAMBOO
Magazine of the American Bamboo Society
c. 2025 American Bamboo Society
ISSN 1554-8295
Published 4 times/year

THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS

To support the work and mission of the American Bamboo Society, please contact advertising@bamboo.org



Sebastopol, CA

bamboosourcery.com / 707-823-5866

Retail, Wholesale, Local. Drop ins are welcome but appointments are recommended. Many rare & hard-to-find species. Credit cards. Will deliver to SF Bay area. Catalog/prices via web.



Spicewood, TX

hciglobal.com / 713-665-7256

HCI is the reliable source for the most beautiful hard to find, specimen-quality tropical plant material prized by the nation's most demanding clientele. Botanical gardens, estates, private collectors, zoos, amusement parks, landscape architects, developers, and top landscape contractors look to us when only the best will do. The HCI Wholesale Nursery has been in operation since 1991.



Groveland, FL

beautifulbamboo.com / 352-429-2425

Need Privacy? Want Beauty? Plant Bamboo! Fast-Growing, Non-Invasive Clumping & Running Bamboos Giant to Dwarf Varieties - 30 min. west of Orlando, Florida. Open Monday-Saturday from 8-4. Online catalog.



Belle Chasse, LA

wildbearbamboo.com / 504-919-9266

Wild Bear Bamboo specializes in the wholesale cultivation of clumping bamboo varieties. Situated in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, we take pride in providing a variety of container-grown species, available in sizes starting from three-gallon containers and larger. We provide pickup and local delivery services, and we collaborate with wholesalers for regional delivery.

BAMBOO



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Florida-Caribbean Chapter	Shanti Pierce
Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter	W. P. 'Judge' Edwards III
Pacific Northwest Chapter	Ian Connor
Southeast Chapter	Lawton Rogers
Southern California Chapter	Landy Banks
Texas Bamboo Society Chapter	Carole Meckes
Mid-States Chapter	Dan Fox
International	Luc Boeraeve (Belgium)
At Large #1	Dain Sansome
At Large #2	John Kohler
At Large #3	David King
At Large #4	Mark Sanders
At Large #5	Autumn Ramsay
Hawaii Chapter	(Position open)

OFFICERS

President	Ian Connor, Pacific Northwest Chapter
Co-Vice Presidents	Dain Sansome, Pacific Northwest Chapter; Autumn Ramsey, Southern California Chapter
Secretary	David King, Director At-Large
Co-Treasurers	Bill Hollenback & Carole Meckes, Pacific Northwest Chapter & Texas Bamboo Society

OTHER POSITIONS

BAMBOO Magazine Editor	Mark Sanders, Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter
BAMBOO Magazine Publisher	Michael Bartholomew
Co-Editors, ABS Journal	Chris Stapleton, Eduardo Ruiz-Sanchez, International
Editor, Species List	Chris Stapleton, International
Source List Editor	Bill Hollenback, Pacific Northwest Chapter
Membership	Carole Meckes, Texas Bamboo Society Chapter
Advertising	Autumn Ramsey, Southern California Chapter
WBO Liaison	Susanne Lucas, World Bamboo Organization
Web Site Editor	Carole Meckes, Texas Bamboo Society Chapter
Bamboo Help Line	Carole Meckes & Daphne Lewis
Arts & Crafts Coordinator	Shanti Pierce
Cane Working Group	Danila Shevelko, Southeast Chapter

ABS NEWS

NED JAQUITH FOUNDATION AWARDEES

The Ned Jaquith Foundation Grant Award Report 2025-2026

The purpose of the Foundation is to encourage and support bamboo research projects, either science- or culture-based, increasing the collective knowledge of bamboo. The NJF awards grants annually, in collaboration with the American Bamboo Society. We encourage you to check out the website for more information on the application process, our previous award winners, and to make a donation: nedjaquithfoundation.org

This year, the NJF received 46 proposals from 18 different countries for a total request of over \$225,000.

This year, we are awarding a total of \$26,100, to the following recipients:

- Ned's Bamboo Journey – a children's book about Ned, Abraham Flores Cante & Oscar Rodriguez Velazquez - Mexico - \$4,000
- Development of a Bamboo Biochar Filter to Remove Mercury, Aidy Juliette Carrillo Cubides - Columbia \$4,000
- Bamboo Leaf Forage for Livestock Feed, Jamie LeLiever - U.S. - \$5,000
- Morpho-anatomic characterization of culms and leaves of *Guadua*, José Vicente González Figueroa - Argentina - \$2,300
- Restoration for Regenerative Ecosystems Bamboo Project, Permaculture Education, Action and Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation - Uganda - \$4,500
- Refractive Papillae in Neotropical Woody Bamboos - Brazil - \$3,300
- Restoration of Black Bamboo in Sukabumi West Java, Indonesia, Yayasan Restu Anugrah Alam - \$3,000 (partial funding, original request is \$5,000)

We are grateful to our generous donors and especially the American Bamboo Society for the constant support. We are a volunteer organization and 100% of our donations go to support bamboo research.

NJF Directors:

Susanne Lucas, President / Nancy Oberschmidt, Secretary / Mary Felice, Treasurer / Noah Bell / James Clever / David King / Daphne Lewis / Guillermo Mortera / Johan Gielis / Mark Sanders

Retiring from the board, Robert Saporito of Tropical Bamboo Nursery – thank you, Robert!

**HELP US SUPPORT BAMBOO
RESEARCH! CONSIDER A
DONATION TODAY.
NEDJAQUITHFOUNDATION.ORG**

ABS NEWS

RIVERCANE RESTORATION UPDATE

By Mark Sanders

The largest rivercane restoration endeavor in Alabama history is underway in York County, where the meandering Tuckabum Creek has proven to be a flooding hazard ripe for experimentation and floodbank improvement. The southwestern Alabama waterway crested its riverbanks in early 2024. The potential disaster was averted thanks to rivercane (*Arundinaria gigantea*).

As described in detail in the Winter/Spring issue of *BAMBOO Magazine*, stands of rivercane once dominated flat lands stretching from Virginia to Texas. Over the decades, the giant grass – one of a handful of bamboo species native to North America – was decimated by land clearing for farming and development, reducing the quantity of wild bamboo by an estimated 98 percent. The denuded landscapes were an erosion nightmare in the making.

In early 2024, environmental anthropologist Michael Fedoroff could be found planting rivercane on the Tuckabum Creek's riverbanks. As the Executive Director of CONSERVE (Community Oriented Nature-based Science for Ecosystem Restoration and Versatile Engineering), he is responsible oversees flood mitigation efforts on various projects.

Notably, Fedoroff is also the director of the University of Alabama program that hosts the Rivercane Restoration Alliance (RRA), which consists of federal departments and tribal groups. American Bamboo Society members participate in the RRA.

The RRA is just one of the groups involved in large-scale restoration projects like the one at Tuckabum Creek. Notably, Native American tribal involvement has become a key component of making restoration projects a success. Tribal members throughout the Southeast have historical knowledge of the plant, which offers more utility than erosion control. It's a cultural component, used in baskets and other handicrafts.

Fedoroff's team of scientists and engineers view the leptomorphic (running) rhizomes of rivercane as the solution, and the Tuckabum Creek project is proving them right.

Moreover, during the once-in-a-lifetime flooding that occurred in the wake of 2024's Hurricane Helene, which destroyed homes and natural landscapes in the Southeast, stands of rivercane proved effective in reducing damage caused by rising waters.

Challenges still persist in the regrowth of this historically and environmentally significant plant. Misperceptions about bamboo's invasiveness has impacted farmers' willingness to grow the plant. Add to that the scarcity of the plant itself, which is easy to grow but is in short supply nationwide.

With the ever-increasing threat to landscapes caused by climate change, flooding in denuded areas can be mitigated by rivercane. Learn more about restoration efforts by visiting conserve-group.org/rra.

ABS NEWS
WBO REPORT TO THE AMERICAN BAMBOO SOCIETY,
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dear ABS Board of Directors,

First, we would like to thank you for your continued status of Supporting Partner to the WBO. Our collaboration and mission overlap are very important as both organizations strive to advocate and educate on all things bamboo. We appreciate your support!

2025 has been a very busy year for WBO, albeit quiet on the public front. Behind the scenes we have developed “Working Groups” to better focus our efforts, with our key priority being the establishment of what will be known as The Global Bamboo Hub, led by renowned scientist Johan Gielis of Belgium. We aim to collect and curate the most relevant and vetted research on various topics, and with the help of a very competent team, create a new website to serve as an open-access global repository. We received a grant from the Asian Development Bank to compensate the team members; this is the first time WBO has received significant funds to pay for our efforts! Stay tuned!



Unfortunately, the plans for the 13th WBC in 2026 to be hosted by Brazil were scrapped. Our colleagues there tried but could not secure funds from either federal, state or municipal governments. Despite a lot of “talk”, the bamboo “networks” in Brazil are fragmented and not well organized. For late 2026 or early 2027, we have two possible hosts who have expressed interest to host a WBC, and we hope to have news soon. One is Colombia and the other is the Netherlands.

We continue to build a strong following on social media. We have over 21,000 followers on Facebook, 6,000 on LinkedIn, over 3,500 on Instagram. I think ABS could really benefit from more public exposure, especially on LinkedIn, where there is a great bamboo-related posts. ABS has a “group page” on LinkedIn; please find a volunteer to take it on. The ABS magazine should be promoted – it is truly worth the membership fee.

Respectfully submitted,
Susanne Lucas

ABS NEWS

PHOTOS FROM THE ABS CONFERENCE, GREENVILLE, SC, OCT. 29-NOV. 1, 2025



ABS NEWS

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Dear Members,

Six years ago, following the during the Portland ABS conference, I accepted to serve as President and I felt deeply honored serving the ABS for 6 years.

Looking back on these years, I realize that a lot has happened since then. Not only for the ABS but also in the world at large. The Covid-19 epidemic had a major impact on our daily life, restricting our social activities. On the other hand it stimulated people to maintain contact online. Since then the ABS board started to hold regular online board meetings which had a very positive impact on the day to day management of the organization and the interaction between the board and chapters.

Another big change happened to *BAMBOO Magazine*. It became a full color magazine, redesigned and with a new editor applying his former experience as a professional magazine editor.

During the last years the board started to provide more support to the chapters organizing the annual conference and later, even going further, by taking over the full organization of the conference, through its dedicated organizing committee with local assistance.

The interest in American native bamboo species (*Arundinaria* sp.), and its historical use, is growing and hopefully this should continue in close cooperation with the Rivercane Restoration Alliance and other interested persons and groups.

Although I am bidding farewell to my role as president, I will continue as a board member and International Representative during the coming years. My enthusiasm for bamboo and my support for the society remain unwavering. I am confident that the society, as well as bamboo, will continue to grow in the years ahead. Thank you again for the trust, friendship, and above all, your cooperation throughout the years.

I look forward to seeing the American Bamboo Society flourish under the new president and I will remain an active member of this remarkable bamboo community.

Bamboo greetings,
Luc Boeraeve

In November 2025, Luc Boeraeve's term as ABS President concluded.



THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS

To support the work and mission of the American Bamboo Society, please contact advertising@bamboo.org



Albany, OR

bamboovalley.com / 541-223-8555

Bamboo is appropriate and excellently suited for many applications. From tall groves to privacy screens and hedges, bamboo gives a striking aesthetic presence to any site. Our bamboos are all proven performers in the Willamette Valley and much of the Pacific Northwest.



Jones Creek, TX

utilityresearchgarden.com / 512-626-9825

We've been growing bamboo for the nursery & landscape industry, and homeowners since 2001. Buy directly from us, the GROWER. Delivering weekly across Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and the South. Field grown and container bamboo, clumping and running varieties.



Loxahatchee, FL

tropicalbamboo.com / 561-784-2413

Retail, wholesale, certified for mail order to most States. Field and container nursery growing mostly tropical clumping bamboos. Online Catalog. Display gardens with an extensive tropical bamboo reference collection. Visa/MC/AMEX/Discover.



Oviedo, FL

bambooforever.com / 321-578-0898

We carefully choose and carry the most suitable clumping bamboo varieties. Whether you are looking for privacy bamboo, ornamental specimens, focal points, food forest addition, plantation production, or commercial applications, we are your trusted clumping bamboo source.



boonboo.com

BOONBOO is a sustainability-driven brand offering high-quality bamboo-based products designed to reduce environmental impact. As a B Corp, Climate Neutral, FSC, and Plastic Neutral Certified company, we are committed to ethical sourcing, eco-friendly packaging, and responsible production. Through our 1% for the Planet commitment, a portion of our proceeds supports environmental and social causes, making every purchase a step toward a greener future.

ABS NEWS

AVERY ISLAND GROVE CLEARING, FEB. 20-22, 2026

Sponsored by the Louisiana-Gulf Coast Chapter (LGCC) Chapter of the ABS: 2026 will mark the 27th year that LGCC and ABS members have come to Avery Island to help clear and clean E. A. McIlhenny's plantings of timber bamboos. As in years past, the weekend is limited to ABS members (INTERESTED NEWCOMERS ENCOURAGED TO JOIN!). If you are not already a member please complete the *membership form online at the ABS website: bamboo.org/amember.*

REGISTRATION: Be first to register and guarantee your spot for the Saturday night dinner and extravaganza! The form is also available on the ABS website. Coordinators for the weekend are Ken Ringle (202-258-7361) and Judge Edwards (337-898-1469), who can also be contacted by email at lgcc.abs@gmail.com.

Register here:



Schedule of Events:

Friday February 20th: 6pm at the Hampton Inn Suites, 400 Spanish Towne Boulevard, just off Highway 14, New Iberia 70560, with drinks and registration followed by a buffet dinner at 6:30 pm. There we will reintroduce ourselves and catch up on each other's doings, conduct a brief LGCC business meeting, and organize our teams for the next day's work.

Saturday February 21st: We will meet at 8:30am at the Jungle Gardens parking lot on Avery Island for the centerpiece of the weekend: clearing and cleaning selected bamboo groves on the Island, including E. A. McIlhenny's original Moso and Madake groves, as well as the groves of mixed bamboos below Prospect Hill which comprise some of E. A.'s original study plots that have yet to be fully inventoried. At the end of the day's work, all will have an opportunity to take home poles from the selection we have cut, and to relax and enjoy the groves we've cleaned!

ABS NEWS

AVERY ISLAND GROVE CLEARING, FEB. 20-22, 2026

Saturday Evening: At 5:30pm we will gather at historic Marsh House for drinks and dinner. After dinner entertainment will feature the celebrated Bamboo Weekend Auction, featuring donated plants, artifacts, books, clothing, jewelry etc., with all proceeds going to the LGCC to help defray costs of the weekend **ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING AND DONATE BAMBOO-RELATED ITEMS FOR THE AUCTION!** Bids tend to escalate once the wine is served!

Sunday, February 22nd: We will reassembly at Marsh House, beginning at 9am, where ABS members will give presentations on bamboo culture and applications. If you have bamboo artwork or crafts to show off or skills to share, this is the time and place!

We'll then have a traditional complimentary red beans and rice luncheon at Marsh House and head for home.

BACKGROUND: For those who have never been to an Avery Island Work Party Weekend and would like a preview, ABS member Daphne Lewis has posted on YouTube an excellent video of our 2010 weekend. You can also read Ken Ringle's history of this bamboo weekend and Andy Ringle's excellent paper on E.A. McIlhenny's work with bamboo which gave birth to the grove we'll be clearing. Scan the QR codes for details.

2010 Avery Island Bamboo Weekend



History of the Avery Island bamboo groves



ABS NEWS

OPINION: THE HONG KONG FIRE AND BAMBOO

By James Wolf -Bamboo Master, 30-Year Bamboo Industry Veteran

Once again, the headlines have landed in my inbox, and once again, bamboo is the unwitting villain. For 30 years, I've tracked the world's coverage of bamboo, and the recurring theme is often one of "doom and gloom"—poverty, degradation, and now, fire. The recent, disastrous fire in Hong Kong has tragically followed this script. I've seen major global news outlets—from the BBC to Al Jazeera, AP news and CNN—craft narratives that subtly, or not so subtly, demonize bamboo scaffolding, implying it was the primary culprit for the fire's rapid, deadly spread.

As someone who has worked with both fire and bamboo for three decades, I must step forward and say: Don't blame the bamboo.

The Smoke Tells the Story: It Wasn't a Bamboo Fire

To understand the true cause of the rapid conflagration, we need to look beyond the sensationalist images of towering flames and focus on the physics of combustion.

1. **Bamboo is Not Kindling.** Yes, bamboo can burn. But the widely repeated notion that it's a hyper-flammable material is simply false. Bamboo requires more heat energy to ignite than traditional timber. Its density and silica content give it a natural resistance that often goes unacknowledged in general reporting. While it served as a fuel source once the fire was fully established, it was not the accelerator.
2. **The Oily Black Smoke is the Key.** I watched the videos of the fire, and the most telling sign was the nature of the smoke. A clean-burning organic material like bamboo typically gives off a relatively clean, whitish-gray smoke. What we saw engulfing the Hong Kong skyline was thick, rolling black smoke. This is the unmistakable signature of a petroleum-based fire.

The Culprit: Styrofoam and Plastic Netting: The structures were clad in highly flammable materials—plastic, petroleum-based netting, styrofoam panels or other plastic foam insulation around windows and construction areas.

Plastic Burns Rapidly: These materials are inherently designed to burn quickly and intensely. They drip, they melt, and they release massive amounts of energy and toxic black smoke, turning a difficult fire into an impossible inferno in minutes.

Bamboo scaffolding is a centuries-old tradition in Asia for good reason. It is incredibly strong, flexible, renewable, and—when properly managed—a safe and efficient building material. The bamboo did not start this fire, nor was it the main driver of the tragic speed at which it spread. It was simply the structure that the true fuel sources—the highly flammable plastic sheets and foam—were attached to.

Bamboo deserves a fair hearing, not a perpetual role as the scapegoat

THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS

To support the work and mission of the American Bamboo Society, please contact advertising@bamboo.org



Swannanoa, NC

nationalbamboo.com / 803-351-8520

National Bamboo is the leading U.S. supplier, processor, and service provider of sustainably grown timber bamboo. We empower landowners, drive economic growth, and advance bamboo as a renewable resource for a greener, more prosperous future.



Millville, NJ

capemaybamboo.com / 856-204-2037

USA's Largest Grower-Wholesaler: Yellow Groove, Japanese Arrow, Golden, Nuda, Timbers, Pygmies. Field dug OR Contract-Grown to specs. Privacy Hedge Specialist. Guaranteed Containment/Removal. Keep it Simple, Pass Savings to Client, Exceed Expectations!



Ventura, CA

oceanviewbamboo.com / 805-643-6388

We are a new nursery located near Santa Barbara off Highway 101. We have been growing for about ten years and now have a good amount to sell. We hope to ship in the near future. Come visit us!



Hockley, TX

bambootexas.com / 281-772-1875

Growing clumping and running bamboo species suited to South Texas, the Gulf Coast, and similar climates since 1995. Order by phone, through e-mail, or visit our family owned and operated 6-acre farm and nursery near Houston. Growing quality bamboo and helping customers choose the right bamboo for their climate, space, and needs are our top priorities. Retail and wholesale pricing available. Pickup and delivery available. Open by appointment.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CAROLINA BAMBOO

BY MARK SANDERS

For Aaron McCarty, the business of bamboo grew organically – in more ways than one.

The founder of Carolina Bamboo, a South Carolina-based company that offers classes on bamboo crafting, started his bamboo journey the way others come to the plant. He was interested in growing a resilient, natural green privacy screen to obscure the view of his neighbors' yards. The search for bamboo, a plant not commonly found at large-scale retail garden centers, led him to Haiku Bamboo Nursery in Henderson, NC.

Haiku, now permanently closed, was run by Keiji Oshima. Oshima had been a student of one of the pioneers of bamboo research in the 20th century, Koichiro Ueda. After talking bamboo with Oshima, himself a renowned Shakuhachi (bamboo flute) maker who moved to North Carolina from Japan in 1979 to grow bamboo, McCarty was taken on as a student-intern at Haiku.

"I started out learning the nursery side of things," McCarty says. "Keiji is a craftsman, and I became one, too."

McCarty's training in Shakuhachi making eventually turned towards basketry. This was a three-year process, during which time McCarty worked as a truck driver and landscaper. In 2024 McCarty went all in on Carolina Bamboo, running the business full-time.



Aaron McCarty

Along the journey, McCarty found another mentor in Nancy Basket, another North Carolinian whose Native American ancestry informed her approach to kudzu basketry. The notoriously invasive vine was at the core of Basket's basket-making, and as a 40-year practitioner of the art, had much to teach McCarty.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINA BAMBOO



A fascination with combining kudzu and bamboo – called KuBoo – was born from McCarty’s mentorships.

“I liked the idea of sourcing everything from nature,” McCarty says. “Kudzu was bridging artistic gaps.... Bamboo is one of the hardest plant fibers to learn, and when I combined it with kudzu, it became easier to work with.” The vine’s pliability and strength allows Carolina Bamboo’s baskets to be both beautiful and utilitarian, capable of carrying heavy objects.

McCarty has experimented with different types of bamboo for basketry, and over time has learned what works – and what doesn’t.

The ubiquitous and abundant golden bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*) that grows throughout the Southeastern U.S. is a poor basketry material. Compressed internodes are bad for weaving, McCarty says. Tapering is also an issue with *aurea* – culms of the species taper considerably within a short distance from the base of the plant. Also the culm walls of the species is a factor. There’s a sweet spot where internode lengths are long and uniform, McCarty says.

The best species he’s found for his baskets is *Phyllostachys rubromarginata*, popularly known as Rubro. *Phyllostachys makinoi* also works well, as does *Phyllostachys meyeri* and arrow bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*).

“Rubro is great,” McCarty says. “Soft species, which doesn’t break easily. Long internodes, less-pronounced supranodal ridge – if that’s too pronounced then it’s hard to make tight weaves.”

Carolina Bamboo’s focus is on education in the local community. McCarty’s company, which includes his wife Wendy, offers workshops throughout North and South Carolina. Info about workshops and upcoming events can be found at carolinabamboo.org.

Asked about the future, McCarty is optimistic.

“Carolina Bamboo is not just about basketry. The broader vision is to get people to value bamboo in America and understand that it’s not just an invasive exotic weed, but the most useful plant on Earth. I’m interested in changing hearts and minds. What I do is very human. It doesn’t use machines. I get to take raw nature, bring it home and craft it. It’s human-scaled. It’s therapy.”



GROWING DEMAND

HOW NATIONAL BAMBOO IS POWERING
AMERICA'S NEW GENERATION OF BAMBOO
ENTREPRENEURS

BY JAMIE LELIEVER

When more than 100 guests arrived at National Bamboo's Demo Day in Shelby, North Carolina during the American Bamboo Society's annual conference in the fall of 2025, they expected a showcase of equipment, ingenuity, and processing capacity. What they witnessed was something much bigger: The emergence of a fully integrated, American-based bamboo commercialization engine, one capable of taking bamboo ideas from concept to manufactured reality, entirely within the United States.

This capability is made possible by National Bamboo's unique, national-scale partnership with the Moxon Bamboo Cooperative (MBC), a fast-growing Amish production network with skilled artisans, craftspeople, sawyers, mill operators, and woodworking shops embedded in rural communities across the country. Together, National Bamboo and MBC form a turnkey bamboo product development and production ecosystem unlike anything that has existed before in the U.S.

One bamboo success story is from Georgia-based Frank Simotics, and his story epitomizes what's now possible in America.



Frank Simotics

A Bamboo Passion Project That Started Strong...Then Stalled

Frank Simotics is a licensed general contractor from Roswell, Georgia with more than 20 years of hands-on experience building structures with bamboo. Through his brand Tiki Rancher, he has built custom bamboo installations for residential and commercial projects and is regarded as one of the Southeast's most dedicated bamboo craftspeople. With projects all over the United States, from tiki-themed restaurants to transforming backyards to a tropical oasis, he has done it all with bamboo.

Simotics' career began in traditional construction, but was inspired to build with bamboo after spending his honeymoon in Tahiti. "Seeing all this giant clumping bamboo was amazing," he says. "It made me want to move there." Experiencing tiki culture at its source was the spark that lit a lifelong fascination with the world's largest grass.



He applied his expertise in construction to bamboo products, building tiki bars for restaurants in the Atlanta area, and eventually expanding his offerings to planters, via his company Planters with a Purpose. During the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, Simotics took advantage of his down time by taking an intensive online course from Green School, the famed Indonesia-based organization that has educated many bamboo builders. Vinc Math, who can frequently be seen at ABS workshops, was one of his instructors.

Eventually Simotics interests turned to large-scale bamboo manufacturing for planters, an endeavor that would require lots of bamboo and the kind of factory infrastructure that – he thought – did not exist domestically.

His designs quickly attracted strong sales from his friends and network but keeping up with production became an immediate challenge. He turned to a Chinese contract manufacturer who could supply products quickly and cheaply, but issues surfaced almost immediately. Delayed communication, inflexibility on quantities needed, inconsistent workmanship, various species used, cracking culms, long shipping lead times and unreliable material moisture and seasoning made the prospect of large-scale planter production less likely than he'd envisioned. Within a year, Simotics shelved the idea, but the dream never fully went away.

"I would ask them for something, and they'd say 'yes' but samples would arrive moldy, unfinished, or just not how we had wanted," Simotics said.



A New Beginning: Meeting National Bamboo

A mutual friend introduced Simotics to Jamie LeLiever, CEO of National Bamboo. After hearing about National Bamboo's vertically integrated model, U.S. bamboo genetics plantation model, established timber bamboo groves under management, harvesting machinery, logistics, processing, fabrication, and a national Amish manufacturing network (via MBC) – Simotics realized what he had been missing the first time around: The right bamboo partners, with the right craftsmanship, under the right system.

Where China offered speed and low prices, National Bamboo offered:

- Local supply of U.S.-grown timber bamboo (3-5-year-old culms, harvested sustainably)
- Kiln drying and borax treatment capabilities
- A Shelby-based bamboo mill with zero-waste processing
- Skilled Amish craftsmen, such as Herman – an elder woodworker (MBC member) from a shop just down the road from Demo Day host Henry Yoder
- Hands-on prototyping and iterative design support
- Direct collaboration with Simotics on refinements, fit, finish, and assembly
- Fully integrated white label service provider from warehousing, inventory management, bulk shipping logistics to direct-to-consumer pick & ship fulfillment services.

After 20 years of building with bamboo, this was the first time Simotics saw a complete American-made supply chain built specifically for bamboo products. With renewed confidence, Simotics partnered with National Bamboo (working through the MBC) to reboot his planter line, ensuring craftsmanship, consistency, and domestic sustainability.



“We have a wonderful symbiotic relationship with National Bamboo,” Simotics says. About his partnership with the Amish community, he explains, “The bamboo is grown in Shelby, North Carolina, kiln dried, cut and sanded. The Amish are great people, honest, very hard working.” Putting his gratitude into action, Planters with a Purpose is donating 5 percent of product sales to the Moxon Bamboo Cooperative to raise family gardens and farms.

Simotics is excited to partner with National Bamboo to expand its product range of premium kiln-dried crafting poles and borax-treated large-diameter timber-grade poles that can replace 30% of imported structural bamboo in U.S. projects (targeting non-structural building components) and saving money while supporting American families. The passion project he once had to abandon is now fully back on track. This time, it’s stronger than ever.



A Turnkey Commercialization Ecosystem for Any Bamboo Entrepreneur

Simotics’ story is not unique.

National Bamboo is now supporting multiple entrepreneurs – each with a very different bamboo idea, from a bamboo charcoal brand, bamboo festival tents, modular bamboo sheds, bamboo biryani cookers to next-generation bamboo bioplastics and nanocellulose producers. For innovators who have passion but lack the R&D capability or large-scale production capacity, this partnership model is transformative.

National Bamboo and Moxon Bamboo Cooperative offer something never before available in the U.S.: A capex-free, on-demand, regionally distributed bamboo manufacturing system. And because MBC members are located across the nation, National Bamboo can match the right entrepreneurs with the right skill sets – regional woodshops, bamboo millers, artisans, or fabricators – each supported by National Bamboo’s project management and production oversight.



Demo Day Proved It: This Is Real

It was a working demonstration showing dozens of ABS members, university researchers, and industry leaders that National Bamboo is actually doing what American entrepreneurs have needed for years. This is the beginning of a bamboo economic engine built on American soil. Simotics summarizes it best: “National Bamboo is making it possible to build quality artisan products in America again, and to do it the right way... using bamboo.”



A Vision for 25,000 Families Across the Rural South

At the heart of this movement is a mission shared across National Bamboo and the Moxon Bamboo Cooperative: To build a thriving bamboo economy that creates economic wellbeing and opportunities for 25,000 American families in the rural South.

With entrepreneurs like Simotics leading the way, Demo Day marked the start of a new chapter – one defined not just by bamboo’s potential, but by bamboo’s reality.



CHOP VALUE

ONCE A CHOPSTICK - NOW A STATEMENT

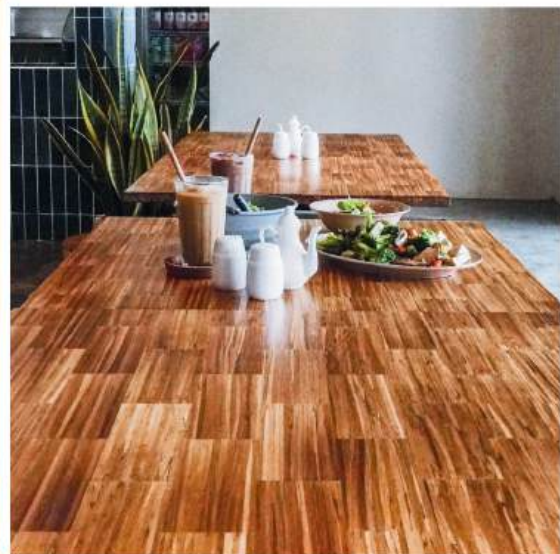


Urban Bamboo in Sustainable Manufacturing

A simple chopstick often has a short life, yet the bamboo behind it carries remarkable strength and potential that usually goes unnoticed. At ChopValue, we capture that hidden value. Millions of discarded chopsticks are collected and transformed into the foundation for engineered climate positive products. The result comes from a careful blend of design thinking, technical innovation, and a strong commitment to using materials responsibly.



23





REIMAGINING BAMBOO WASTE AS AN ENGINEERED MATERIAL


Billions of bamboo chopsticks end up in the waste stream every year. Our research and development team created a densification method that turns these discarded pieces into a high-performance composite. The process converts urban-harvested chopsticks into a strong, uniform material that behaves much like traditional hardwood while being produced through an efficient, localized system that keeps emissions low and supports global scale. Microfactories in nine countries collect, process, and manufacture on-site. Each facility becomes part of the community it serves, giving waste a second life as new material while reducing transport needs and removing the pressure to extract virgin resources.

PERFORMANCE WITHOUT COMPROMISE

The performance of the engineered bamboo stands alongside established hardwoods. Products made from this composite stay stable, dense, and durable, and they bring a clean, modern look that fits naturally into hospitality, retail, and workplace environments. Forward-thinking clients including Marriott, KFC, Arc'teryx, and Amazon have already integrated ChopValue materials into their spaces.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMPOSITES

The next generation of sustainable materials is already circulating through our cities. By reclaiming bamboo from everyday waste, transforming it into a valuable composite, and producing locally through a distributed Microfactory network, we're showing how circular manufacturing can support both performance and long-term economic value. Innovation doesn't require new extraction. With a fresh perspective, urban waste becomes a resource ready for its next form, and bamboo continues to shape the materials of tomorrow.

 www.chopvalue.com
 hello@chopvalue.com



OBJECT LESSON

BAMBOO ART AND ARTIFACTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Bamboo Water

BY SAKIE FUJITA (TRANSLATED FROM DUTCH BY GOOGLE TRANSLATE)

Japan has about 150–600 species of native bamboo (source: Wikipedia and depending on the definition). *Take* species common in western Japan, where I live, include the big three: Moso (*Phyllostachys edulis*), Hachiku (*Phyllostachys nigra* 'Henonis'), and Madake (*Phyllostachys bambusoides*).

New shoots grow from the rhizomes from February to April. The new *take* shoots are called 'takenoko', which means *take*'s baby and is a seasonal vegetable in Japan.

GROWTH RATE

The *take* shoots that are not eaten when *takenoko* grow rapidly through their final length between April and June. According to Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, *take* growth can reach remarkable heights in the spring: *P. bambusoides* once measured a length of 121 cm and from *P. edulis* has reached a length of 119 cm in 24 hours. While researching the growth rate of the *take* species, the existence of 'take-mizu' or bamboo water was discovered.

BAMBOO WATER

Also known as *Shin-sui*, which means God's water, *Take-mizu* is only available for 20 days in the growing season. *Shin-sui* is rainwater that falls at 12:00 on May 5 in the lunar calendar and is sucked up by the rhizomes and stored in the internodes. Medicines made with this water are said to have a good effect.



OBJECT LESSON

TRIAL

In the late afternoon of May 11, I cut a young culm of a 4.5 m long Moso at the bottom of an internode and put a plastic bag around it. The next day I found water in the bag. In total I had 5 bags attached to different take-culms. One culm yielded more water than the other. After I had cleaned all the water of impurities such as sawdust using a coffee filter, I was left with 700 cc of *take-mizu*. The next day I tried again on another take culm and then amassed about 500cc.

VARIED RESULT

The take is very soft during its growth period and easy to cut or drill. You know how soft when water drips from it while you're cutting. The yield varies every year and per shoot. Even older culms produce *take-mizu*. So possibly everything depends on the landscape, weather or the character of the bamboo.

PROPERTIES

The taste of the filtered water is slightly sweet and has a bamboo shoot-like taste. If you search the internet further you will find articles that the water has moisturizing properties, so I tried some water on my skin but didn't feel anything special. But skin lotions are made from *take-mizu*.

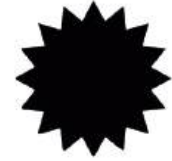
SHELF LIFE

Freshly harvested, *take-mizu* tastes good but quickly becomes cloudy and rotten after a few days. The differences in the components in the water may depend on the time of day and the local soil composition where the water is collected. What surprised me the most was that as soon as I made an incision in the bamboo, insects gathered around the hole from all over the place. The God's water may be a precious water that was seldom tasted by them.



BAMBOO IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

Hibanobambusa tranquillans 'Shiroshima'



DR. STEFFEN GREINER

The German Bamboo Society, EBS Deutschland, organizes every year a Bamboo of the Year (BotY) competition. The description and photos of the 4 nominated bamboo species are published in the 'Bambus Journal' and on the EBS-D website. The members can vote on one of the bamboo species up to the day before the Annual General Meeting which takes place during the 'Sommerfest'. The winning bamboo is then announced during the annual general meeting. The nominated bamboo species for the 2026 BotY were the following:

- *Fargesia nitida x murielae* 'Obelisk'
- *Fargesia Rufa*
- *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* 'Shiroshima'
- *Shibatea kumasaca*

Hibanobambusa tranquillans 'Shiroshima' was voted the Bamboo of the Year 2026.

Originally from the west coast of Honshu, the main island of Japan, the bamboo was introduced to France in 1981 from the Fuji Bamboo Garden to the Bamboueraie de Prafrance. The Fuji Bamboo Garden in Nagaizumi, situated in the Japanese prefecture of Shizuoka (Southwest of Tokyo and at the base of Mt. Fuji), has still the largest collection of different temperate bamboos, with around 500 species from mainly Asia. The Bamboueraie de Prafrance near Anduze at the foot of the Cévennes in France, is certainly also worth seeing. Today, 200 different species and varieties of bamboo grow here, some reaching heights of up to 25 m. From the Bamboueraie de Prafrance, which propagated the plant, it subsequently spread throughout Europe.



Fig. 1

ORIGIN

Originally from the west coast of Honshu, the main island of Japan, the bamboo was introduced to France in 1981 from the Fuji Bamboo Garden to the Bamboueraie de Prafrance. The Fuji Bamboo Garden in Nagaizumi, situated in the Japanese prefecture of Shizuoka (Southwest of Tokyo and at the base of Mt. Fuji), has still the largest collection of different temperate bamboos, with around 500 species from mainly Asia. The Bamboueraie de Prafrance near Anduze at the foot of the Cévennes in France, is certainly also worth seeing. Today, 200 different species and varieties of bamboo grow here, some reaching heights of up to 25 m. From the Bamboueraie de Prafrance, which propagated the plant, it subsequently spread throughout Europe.

HOW DID THE PLANT ORIGINATE?

Early on, morphological characteristics led to the assumption that *Hibanobambusa* was a genus hybrid between *Sasa* and *Phyllostachys*. *Phyllostachys nigra* 'Henonis' and *Sasa veitchii* were assumed to be the "parents." Molecular evidence that *Hibanobambusa* is indeed a generic hybrid was provided by Triplett et al. in 2014 [4].

By examining various gene loci, the authors were able to demonstrate that each locus examined in *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* has a *Sasa*-like and a *Phyllostachys*-like allele [4]. Consequently, it was also proposed to replace the genus name *Hibanobambusa* with *Phyllosasa*, which would then intuitively make it clear that it is a hybrid between *Phyllostachys* and *Sasa*. According to this logic, *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* should be called \times *Phyllosasa tranquillans* [5]. However, this name correction has not been accepted in the trade or among collectors, and for the sake of clarity, we will not use it in this article.

The origin of *Hibanobambusa tranquillans*: if *Phyllostachys nigra* 'Henonis' is indeed one of the parents, then the hybridization and thus the origin of *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* must have taken place during one of the rare flowering periods of *Phyllostachys nigra* 'Henonis'. The species is currently flowering, but the previous flowering was in the period from 1903 to 1912 [6]. The flowering interval is approximately 120 years. *Sasa veitchii* also flowered during the same period [3], which means that the species probably originated in the early 20th century. *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* itself then flowered between 1970 and 1972, but no viable seeds were produced.



Fig. 2

The cause of this sterility could lie in hybridization between species. However, shortly after flowering (1974), the form 'Shiroshima' appeared, which emerged after flowering from the form 'Kimmei', which is also more colorful than the parent form [2]. An increased frequency of mutations is often observed during the flowering of bamboo species, and variegated forms in particular often arise during such phases, although the reason for this is unknown.

CHARACTERISTICS

After explaining the confusing origin and development, we turn to the characteristics of this exceptionally beautiful plant. *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* 'Shiroshima' is a running bamboo (leptomorphic rhizomes) and therefore needs a rhizome barrier or plenty of space and regular cutting back. This vigorous plant has culms with a groove (sulcus, Figure 3) and a branching pattern similar to *Phyllostachys*, but its large leaves are a characteristic inherited from its *Sasa* parentage (Figure 1).

The culms are usually 1.5 to 3 m high, but in optimal locations and after a certain time, heights of up to 5 m are possible in the Central European climate. The diameter of the culms is usually less than 1 cm, with very large culms reaching a maximum diameter of 2 cm.

The young culms are dark green and the culm sheaths are whitish to ochre in color with fine hairs, without spots and falling off quickly (Figure 3). The most striking feature of *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* 'Shiroshima' are the leaves, which are large, measuring 20 to 25 cm in length and 4 to 5 cm in width, and are strikingly variegated in green/white/cream (Figure 1). The leaf sheaths have exceptionally long cilia (Figure 4).

As might be expected from its parents, experiences with winter hardiness are rather positive. Despite their large leaves, the plants can tolerate temperatures down to nearly -20°C . Unlike other evergreen variegated plants, the color of the leaves and their luminosity hardly change over the winter. The plant can be planted in sunny to semi-shaded locations; full shade is not advisable. In full sun, the white parts of the leaves may also take on a slight pink/purple color. *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* 'Shiroshima' looks best when planted as a solitary specimen, but also as a hedge due to its fairly good tolerance of pruning (Figure 2). Bamboos are generally not well suited to permanent pot cultivation, but this bamboo seems to be better suited than many others, provided that it is divided every few years and the pots are protected from freezing in winter when temperatures drop too low. Perhaps pot cultivation is an alternative for those with limited space or concerns about planting this very beautiful but spreading bamboo.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

In any case, this medium-height bamboo deserves greater recognition and distribution, if only for its very beautiful and distinctive leaves. This article is also published on www.bambus-deutschland.de, where you can find more pictures.

Bibliography

1. Eberts, W., « Bambusportrait *Hibanobambusa tranquillans* f. 'Shiroshima' », Bambusbrief 1988 (4).
2. Ohrnberger, D., « The Bamboos of the world » Elsevier, 1998.
3. Okamura, H. ; Tanaka, Y. « Les espèces de bambous horticoles au Japon : caractéristiques et utilisation des espèces de bambous ornementaux avec illustrations », Kobe : Hata Okamura (1986)
4. Triplett, JK. et al. « Des événements allopolyploïdisation indépendants ont précédé la spéciation chez les bambous ligneux tempérés et tropicaux », New Phytologist (2014) 204 : 66–73 doi: 10.1111/nph.12988
5. Demoly, JP. « × *Phyllosasa tranquillans* (Koidz.) », Bambou 21 : 14 (1995).
6. Greiner, S., « Die Blüte von *Phyllostachys nigra* var *henonis* », Bambus Journal (1) 2025, p. 10-11



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Footnote: The locus or gene locus is the physical position of a gene in the genome. Different expressions or variants of this gene are referred to as alleles. The plural is loci.

BAMBOO

GARDEN
 Bamboo Nursery
 Specializing in cold hardy clumping and timber bamboo
 Phone: (503)647-2700
 www.bamboogarden.com
 18900 NW Collins Rd.
 North Plains, OR 97133



Ned Jaquith
 FOUNDATION



Bamboo Valley Farm
 Stump Removal
 and Forestry Mulching Service
 20 varieties of hardy bamboo including Moso, Vivax, and *Fargesia robusta*
 Open Saturdays • 8 minutes off I-5 • (541) 223-8555
 489 NW Creswell Lane, Albany, Oregon 97321
 www.BambooValley.com

Tropical
BAMBOO.
 NURSERY & GARDENS
 Monday – Saturday
 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
 Palm Beach 561.784.2413
 Broward 954.461.7572
tropicalbamboo.com
 Display Gardens • Retail & Wholesale
 Online Shopping Cart & Mail Order





American
Bamboo
Society

24714 S Carman Rd
Cheney, WA 99004



To learn more about supporting
the ABS and its mission,
scan the QR code.

Everest Holmes of National Bamboo

