

Small bamboo for power line-friendly landscaping



At Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), our most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve.

As part of that responsibility, we created this bamboo guide to help you select the right bamboo when planting near power lines. Planting the right bamboo in the right place will help promote fire safety, reduce power outages and ensure beauty and pleasure for years to come.

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Plan before you plant

Proper tree and site selection

Always consider the size of the mature bamboo when planting where space is limited—near power lines, in narrow side yards or close to buildings.

Bamboo is a vigorous plant that grows and spreads quickly. Unlike most trees, bamboo growth cannot be directed away from power lines. Instead, these plants need to be located at a safe distance to comply with safety clearance standards.

Planting with fire safety in mind

You can help reduce wildfire risks by choosing the right plants, trees and shrubs and by following vegetation and fire safety standards that require greater clearances between trees, limbs and power lines.

A Planting outside of high fire-threat areas

Planting restrictions for trees and other vegetation vary widely for different types of utility power lines—electric transmission, electric distribution and gas pipelines. Please consider the following when planting near:



Distribution power lines: Select only bamboo species that will grow no taller than 25 feet at maturity. (See next page for examples.) Any bamboo that can grow taller than 25 feet at maturity should be planted at least 50 feet away from these power lines.



Transmission power lines: Plant only low-growing shrubs under the wire zone and only grasses within the area directly below the tower. Along the border of the transmission line right-of-way, plant only small trees that cannot grow taller than 10 feet.

B Planting within high fire-threat areas

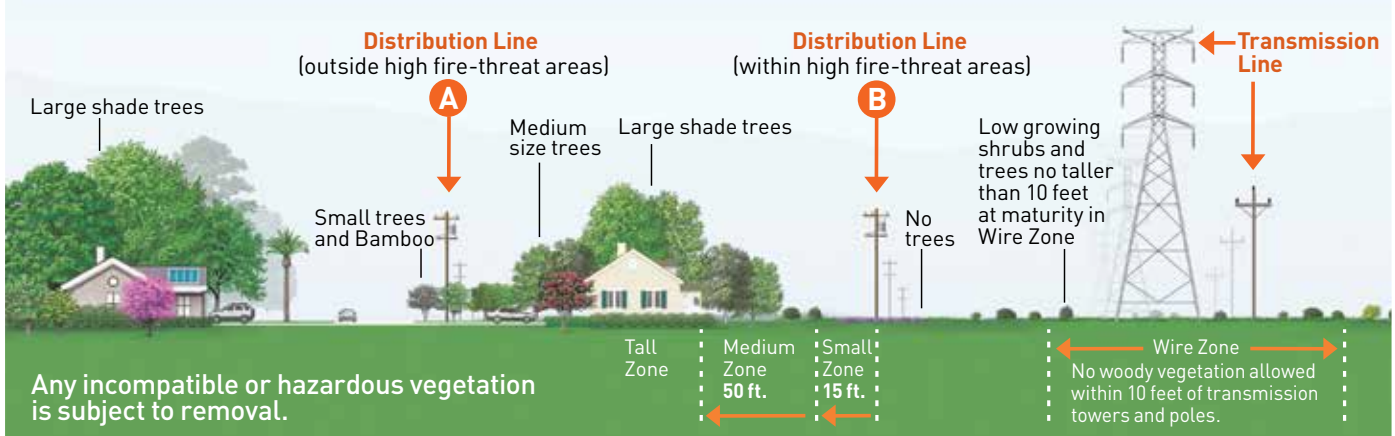
You play a vital role to ensure that the right bamboo is safely planted in the right place. This planting guide will help you select a type of bamboo and appropriate planting location that is compatible with our safety clearances.

Small zone: Within 15 feet of the wires on the pole, plant only low-growing plants less than 12 inches at maturity that have high moisture, and low sap or resin content.

Medium zone: From 15 to 50 feet of the wires on the pole, plant trees that reach no taller than 40 feet at maturity.

Tall zone: At least 50 feet away from the wires on the pole, you may plant trees that grow taller than 40 feet at maturity.

Avoid Conflicts with Power Lines—Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place



Key characteristics of recommended bamboo



Arrow

Pseudosasa japonica,
Arundinaria japonica

Sturdy, upright stems with branch at each point. Rampant, thick hedge in mild winter climates. Slow spreaders in cold winters, making dense, upright clumps.

Mature height: 18 feet. Zones* 6–9.



Fernleaf

Bambusa nana,
Bambusa disticha

Closely spaced leaves give a fernlike look. Loses this look and grows coarser with rich soil, ample water.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 7b–11.



Chocolate

Borinda fungosa, *Fargesia fungosa*

Stems facing sun turn a rich chocolate brown color. Graceful, weeping fountain shape. Best in half-day sun.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 8–9.



Fountain

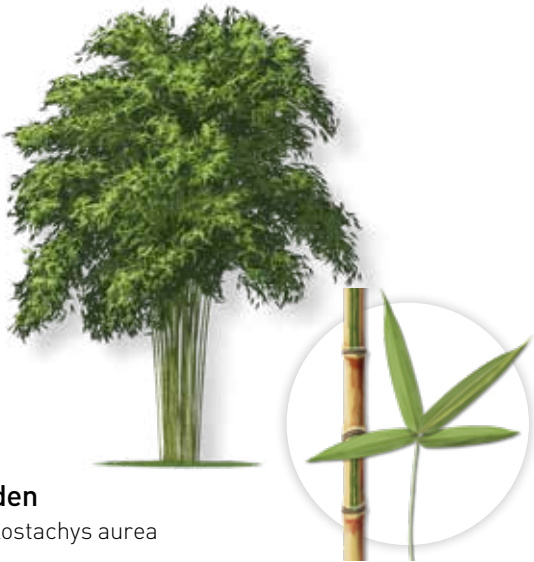
Fargesia nitida, *Sinarundinaria nitida*

Graceful, weeping fountain shape with wide-spreading foliage. Does best in shade. Greenish-purple stems mature to deep purplish black. Does well in coastal regions. Rare.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 5–9.

*Refer to the *Sunset Western Garden Book* map to find your planting zone.

Key characteristics of recommended bamboo



Golden

Phyllostachys aurea

Upright, sturdy stems. Normally crowded joints at base. Dense foliage makes a good screen or hedge. Good choice for growing in tubs. Drought-tolerant but looks better with regular water.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 7–10.



Mexican Climbing

Chusquea coronalis

Arching stems bear masses of tiny leaves on short, whorled branches. Exceptionally attractive. Sun or light shade. Rare.

Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 9–11.



Mexican Weeping

Oatea acuminata 'aztecorum' and others

Extremely narrow leaves give a lacy look. Fairly drought-tolerant when established. *Yushania aztecorum* and *Arthrostylidium longifolium* are also recommended species. Rare.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 9–11.



Mountain

Yushania chungii, *Yushania maling*

Myriad small leaves form patterns on blue-green stems. Forms dense masses of foliage and is effective for screening in shady areas. Leaves tend to curl in full sun.

Mature height: 12 feet. Zones 6–9.

Key characteristics of recommended bamboo



Okuyama-zasa

Sasa palmata 'nebulosa'

Tropical appearance with broad, handsome leaves. Stems are green with black spots. Extremely vigorous.

Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 7–10b.



Princess

Himalayacalamus asper

Fountain shaped. Good screen. Delicate, small leaves. Stems bright green in shade, shiny maroon in sun. Shade to half-day sun.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 8b–11.



Shiroshima

Hibanobambusa tranquillans

Variegated leaves with pigmented and nonpigmented portions. Does best in a sunny location to enhance leaf variegation. Can grow fairly well indoors.

Mature height: 16 feet. Zones 7a–9.



Variegated Simonii

Pleioblastus simonii 'variegatus'

Dense, upright hedge bamboo. Fast-spreading and drought-tolerant. Leaves are both variegated and solid green. Shoots appear late in the season. Good screen and windbreak. Salt-tolerant.

Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 7–10.

Key characteristics of recommended bamboo

The following is a guide to small bamboo suitable near distribution power lines only in areas that are not at high risk for wildfire. Work with your local nursery to identify other suitable plants for your specific planting zone.

Common/Scientific name	Height	Stem width	Cold tolerance	Clumping/Running
Arrow Bamboo <i>Pseudosasa japonica</i> , <i>Arundinaria japonica</i>	10–18 feet	¾ inch	0 °F	Running
Chocolate Bamboo <i>Borinda fungosa</i> , <i>Fargesia fungosa</i>	15–20 feet	1 inch	10 °F	Clumping
Fernleaf Bamboo <i>Bambusa nana</i> , <i>Bambusa disticha</i>	10–20 feet	½ inch	15 °F	Clumping
Fountain Bamboo <i>Fargesia nitida</i> , <i>Sinarundinaria nitida</i>	15–20 feet	¾ inch	-20 °F	Clumping
Golden Bamboo <i>Phyllostachys aurea</i>	15–20 feet	2 inches	0 °F	Running
Mexican Climbing Bamboo <i>Chusquea coronalis</i>	12–15 feet	¾ inch	25 °F	Clumping
Mexican Weeping Bamboo <i>Oatea acuminata</i> ‘aztecorum,’ others	20 feet	1½ inches	20 °F	Clumping
Mountain Bamboo <i>Yushania chungii</i> , <i>Yushania maling</i>	10–12 feet	¾ inch	32 °F	Clumping
Okuyama-zasa <i>Sasa palmata</i> ‘nebulosa’	12–15 feet	½ to 1 inch	-10 °F	Running
Princess Bamboo <i>Himalayacalamus asper</i>	15–20 feet	1½ inches	15 °F	Clumping
Shiroshima <i>Hibanobambusa tranquillans</i>	16 feet	1 inch	32 °F	Clumping
Variegated Simonii <i>Pleioblastus simonii</i> ‘variegatus’	20 feet	1½ inches	32 °F	Running

Safety tips for planting:



Mind the lines above

Always look up before planting or pruning trees and stay 10 feet or more away from power lines. If you see a downed power line, stay away and **call 911**.

pge.com/mindthelines

Know what's below

To remain safe while planting trees, shrubs or flowers, **call 811 at least two days before digging**. Workers will visit your property free of charge to mark the location of gas lines or other underground utilities so you can avoid them.



For more information regarding tree planting near power lines or gas pipelines and to download a copy of this booklet, please visit: pge.com/righttreerightplace.

To verify the type of utility line near you, schedule an appointment with our tree care professionals or request gas pipeline planting information, please call **1-800-743-5000**.

Keeping the lights on and your community safe

At PG&E our most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve. We know how much trees mean to our communities, and we are committed to helping you ensure the right trees are located in the right places to help reduce wildfire risks and improve public safety.

Every year, we inspect each segment of **approximately 100,000 miles** of overhead power lines, with some locations patrolled multiple times a year. We prune or remove **1.4 million trees annually** and work to address dead and dying trees in areas affected by drought.

By planting the right tree in the right place, you can help reduce fire hazards, promote safety and reduce the risk of damage to properties and power lines.

Additional references and resources:

PG&E Vegetation Management Program:
pge.com/trees

Planting the right tree in the right place:
arborday.org/trees/righttreeandplace

High Fire-Threat District Map:
cpuc_firemap2.sig-gis.com

California Tree Selections:
selecttree.calpoly.edu

Climate Zone information is courtesy of
Sunset Western Garden Book, 2008.

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