

ROSE VALLEY'S NEW BAMBOO CONTROL ORDINANCE

The Borough of Rose Valley recently passed an ordinance to control the spread of running bamboo within the borough. Similar ordinances have been passed in many communities nationwide.

What is running bamboo?

Running bamboo is any bamboo that spreads from underground runners. None of the species of running bamboo are native to this area.

Why is running bamboo a problem?

Running bamboo spreads very vigorously and often escapes from the property where it was originally planted. New canes often pop up 20 feet or more from the nearest existing cane. Its roots and shoots are very strong and can penetrate foundations and roadways, causing damage to private and public property. Running bamboo is an exotic invasive plant that provides little if any value to native wildlife. Its colonies are so dense they eliminate our native understory plants and prevent any other plants from getting established.

What does the ordinance require? *The ordinance prohibits new planting or replanting of running bamboo.* Borough residents are encouraged but not required to eliminate existing plantings. However, if existing plantings are retained, *they must be permanently excluded from a buffer zone of at least 10 feet in width from any roadway or property line.*

How can running bamboo be controlled? Not easily, which is why running bamboo is such a nuisance. It can take years of effort to eliminate an established running bamboo colony.

If running bamboo is being eliminated: The safest and most effective method is to dig up the ground where running bamboo is growing and

remove all roots and underground runners from the soil. Where that is impractical, the canes can be cut and a herbicide containing 5% glyphosphate (Roundup is the most common brand) applied to newly emerging leaves. Alternatively, a 25% glyphosphate solution can be applied directly to the freshly cut stumps. [Note—specialized glyphosphate formulations with brand names such as Rodeo, Eraser AQ, Pondmaster, Aquamaster or Aquapro *must* be used when herbiciding near ponds, creeks or other surface water.] Eliminating a colony of running bamboo requires repeated cutting and herbicide application over three or more years.



If running bamboo is being contained: First, any running bamboo that is already present in the buffer zone must be eliminated. Then dig a trench at least 2 feet deep that completely encircles the remaining running bamboo and place a barrier in it to form a continuous wall around the bamboo colony's roots. One barrier that has proven effective is 24- to 30-inch-wide 60- or 80-mil high-density polyethylene (HDPE). Sheet metal often fails in time due to corrosion. Concrete or masonry barriers do not work because the runners easily penetrate any small crack. Adjoining sheets of the barrier material need to overlap. The joints should be securely sealed using stainless-steel barrier clamps with a 3-inch overlap or double-sided tape at both ends of a 4-foot overlap. Bamboo can pry its way through very small openings, so it's important to make sure the seal has no weak points. Leave 1 or 2 inches of the barrier above the soil line. Runners will attempt to jump over the barrier but they can be easily spotted and clipped with a quick inspection once or twice a year. Vigilance is required, especially during the early summer peak growing season.

Thank you for joining us in this effort to help make Rose Valley better for neighbors and better for wildlife!