



## Running Bamboo Ordinance

March 16, 2022

Dear members of the Board of Supervisors,

Friends of Accotink Creek hopes you will pass a running bamboo amendment on March 22nd. As the decision was deferred due mostly to the high costs to bamboo owners, here's a plan for the repeated mowing option.

For reference, the draft amendment is [here](#).

The lower cost, no-dig, no trench-barrier, no-herbicide, "repeated mowing" option:

**Installing a trench + containment barrier**, though the best solution, can be expensive. The recommended 80 mm-thick, 28 inch-wide HDPE barrier is \$3 per ft. in Merryfield Garden Centers -last year's price. That's just the product, without the installation fee. Trench + barriers are not always possible with utility easements and can damage the root zones of trees.

A less costly option is **an open trench (without containment barrier)** - suitable for small infestations. Then any new rhizomes coming into the trench must be unfailingly pruned every year.

**Digging out the rhizomes with a stump grinder** costs about \$300/hr. This work can also damage tree roots, and may leave rhizome fragments in the soil which can restart an infestation. A Bobcat can also work but is not suitable for all yards.

**A lower cost, but slower way which needs neighbors to work together, is to cut down the canes of the entire grove and then starve the plant by consistently, ruthlessly cutting or mowing all new growth.** Its leaves (and green stems) are the powerhouse of the bamboo plant. Deprived of green parts, it cannot photosynthesize to produce more glucose.

1) Cut **entire** bamboo grove as close to the ground as possible. This will include bamboo in adjoining yards or on park property. Homeowners can do this themselves with hand saws, electric saws, reciprocating saws, or loppers. The best hand saw to use is a metal saw as it has small teeth. A crew of two with chainsaws will cost \$125 to \$150 per hour. Chain saws won't cut the canes quite to the ground. It blunts the blades. However, in smaller, younger groves, loppers or handsaws will, in which case the cut area can be just mowed.

2) To deplete stored energy reserves, water and fertilize the cut area. Use manure or a high-nitrogen grass fertilizer.

3) Then, over the next 4 or 5 growing seasons, ruthlessly seek out and cut/mow whatever shoots the bamboo roots send up including those in neighbors' yards. Water and fertilize again. Cut/mow again.

A variant of #2 is tarping the cut area. After cutting the canes, put down for a year or so thick black plastic or a dark tarp to "cook" the rhizomes and starve the area of light and moisture. Hold the plastic/tarp down tightly with bricks, lifting weekly to remove any shoots. Monitor the whole yard and neighboring yards for new growth over the next 4 or 5 growing seasons.

Friends of Accotink Creek suggests the County produce an info booklet, along the lines of "Tree Basics" which is available free in all Fx. Ct. public libraries. The booklet should include directions on correctly selecting, diluting with water, and applying herbicides. Giving residents accurate, complete info would save each individual bamboo owner hours of online research.

I'd be happy to be part of such a working group. A landscape professional from Kelly's Tree Service said he'd be willing to participate, especially to verify claims like:

"Pouring boiling water on exposed roots (not rhizomes) will help kill bamboo." How much boiling water? How much exposed root? How often? What temperature range?

"Horticultural vinegar works as a greener option than glyphosate". If so, how much, at what concentration, and how often?

Yours sincerely,

## Friends of Accotink Creek

><(((°>`·,;,:~`·,;:><(((°> "Find just one other person who cares." ><(((°>`·,;,:~`·,;:><(((°>`·,;,:~`·,;:><(((°>