

Broad-leaved and Arrow Bamboo

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Species Description

Name: Broad-leaved bamboo (*Sasa palmata*) & Arrow bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*)

Native to: Mostly southern hemisphere, especially East Asia

Habitat: Moist and shaded areas in parks and gardens; rarely found in the wild

Bamboo is a group of woody perennial grasses with over 1400 different species (more than 20 species present in UK and Ireland), there is significant variation in appearance.

Leaves are generally flat and tough; with conspicuous longitudinal veins and a distinctively short petiole (leaf stalk). The rooting system (rhizome) of bamboo can be classified into either a 'running' (or creeping) bamboo or 'clump-forming' bamboo. Clump-forming bamboo rhizome is short and terminate in a new shoot producing a single culm (stem) in close proximity to the main plant. It grows in an expanding tuft and left unmanaged can become invasive. The rhizome of running bamboo are long, thin and usually grow away from the main plant. New culms can form at nodes along rhizome which result in a more widely spread plant; compared to clump-forming bamboo stems are separated further from each other. Running bamboo are more likely to become invasive.

Bamboo has been introduced to Northern Ireland as an ornamental plant, they are widely available to purchase and have been commonly used as a screen or boundary barrier in gardens.

The vigorous and extensive growth of bamboo can displace native species and once established it can be extremely difficult to remove.



Arrow bamboo
P. japonica



Broad-leaved bamboo
S. palmata

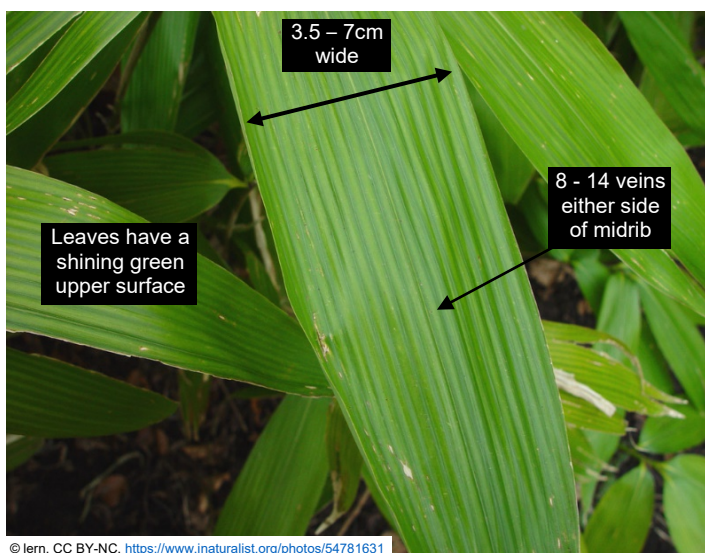
Key ID Features of broad-leaved bamboo

Broad-leaved Bamboo

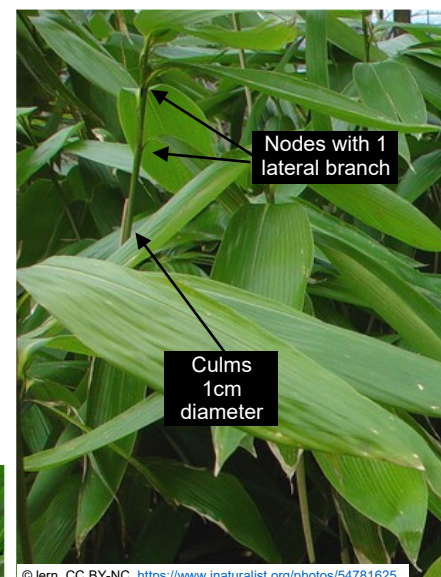
Scientific name: *Sasa palmata*.

Native: Japan & Sakhalin

This species of bamboo is large with far creeping running rhizomes. It can grow to a height of 2 - 3m. Stems are 1cm in diameter, mottled purple and have a round cross-section. Nodes usually have 1 lateral branch. Leaves are large; up to 40cm long and 3.5 - 7cm wide, they are shining green on the upper surface and paler beneath, with 8 - 14 veins either side of midrib. The leaf stalk is usually green. Flowers fairly frequently.



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Key ID Features of arrow bamboo

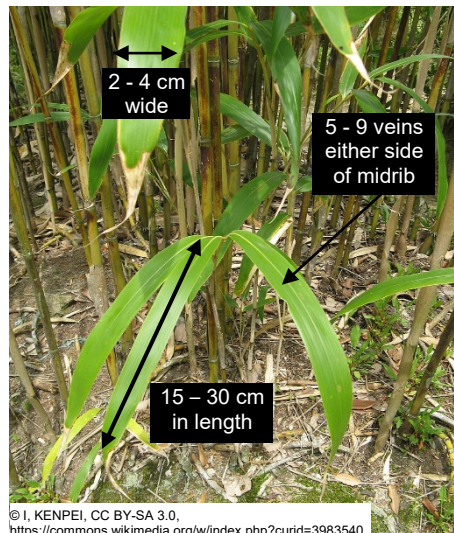
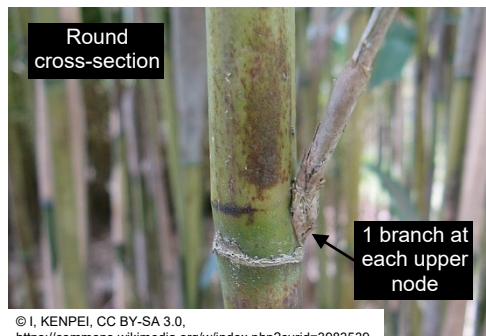
Arrow Bamboo

AKA: Metake

Scientific name: *Pseudosasa japonica*.

Native: Japan & Korea.

Arrow bamboo is large with very short running rhizomes, stems are round in cross-section and can grow to 2-2.5m in height. It leaves are 15 – 30 cm long, 2-4cm wide and are partly hairless on underside. They usually have 5 – 9 veins either side of midrib and can brown in cold snaps. Each upper node usually has one branch. Flowers freely and regularly.



Similar Species

Common horsetail

Native
(*Equisetum arvense*)



Bamboo has a distinctive appearance and is not easily confused with other plants in Northern Ireland. However some similar plants include; *Equisetum spp.* (horsetail) has a bamboo like appearance, but is much smaller (50 – 180 cm). Majority of stems and leaves are green, with black tips. Slender green branches radiate from joints or nodes in the main stem.

Chamadorea spp.

Non-native
(*c. elegans* & *c. seifrizii*)



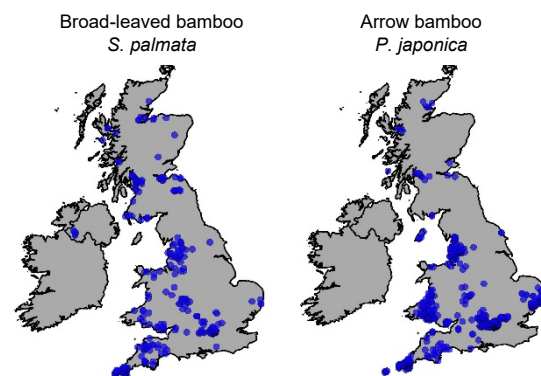
Mare's tail

Native
(*Hippuris vulgaris*)



Distribution

Widespread throughout GB with only a few records of broad-leaved bamboo in Northern Ireland.



Source: NBN atlas available at
<https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0000463226> and
<https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0000462101>
Check website for current distribution

References and further reading:

- Booy O., Wade M. and Roy H. 2015. Field Guide to Invasive Plants and Animals in Britain. Bloomsbury. London.
- Buziquia, S.T., Lopes, P.V.F., Almeida, A.K. *et al.* Impacts of bamboo spreading: a review. *Biodivers Conserv* 28, 3695–3711 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-019-01875-9>
- Chenfei, L. & Chen, J. & Qin, H. & Fuhrmann, J. (2019). Rapid bamboo invasion (expansion) and its effects on biodiversity and soil processes +. *Global Ecology and Conservation*. 21. e00787. 10.1016/j.gecco.2019.e00787.

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