

# Phyllostachys nigra

## Black bamboo

*Phyllostachys nigra* (Lodd) Munro var. *henionis*  
(Mitf.) Stapf. ex Rendle

Family: Poaceae

**Description:** The *Phyllostachys* are running bamboos, with long, slender rhizomes, stems 1.2 inches in diameter, forming solid stands up to 25 ft tall. They have hollow internodes, flattened or grooved, forming a “D” in cross-section. Called black bamboo because of dark stems on var. *nigra*; var. *henionis* has green stems. Two or three branches at each node, ring of bristles above the nodes. Sheaths papery, fall readily, apex with a narrow reduced blade, ligules papery, 0.6 inches long. Leaf veins in checked pattern. Leaves drop readily. *Phyllostachys edulis* (Carr.) Houzeau de Lehaie is an edible bamboo, *P. bambusoides* Sieb. and Zucc. is the fishing pole bamboo. Greek: *phyllos*, leaf; *stachys*, spike, because the inflorescence is covered by leaves at the terminal<sup>(59,70)</sup>; *nigra*, black; *henionis*, meaning unknown; *edulis*, edible; *bambusoides*, bamboo-like<sup>(6)</sup>.

**Distribution:** Native to China. Popular ornamental. Occurs in extensive monotypic infestations in moist to wet areas on O‘ahu, Maui, and Moloka‘i. First collected on O‘ahu in 1951<sup>(70)</sup>.

**Environmental impact:** Displaces native vegetation; virtually no other plants grow within black bamboo groves.



**Management:** Difficult to control. Heavy equipment subject to damage by bamboo stems piercing radiators and hoses. Plant is sensitive to hexazinone and imazapyr and moderately sensitive to glyphosate. Foliar application difficult on tall plants. Most effective treatment requires mechanical clearing followed by herbicide treatment of re-sprouts. J. De Frank (Univ. Hawai‘i) recommended glyphosate plus fluazifop or imazapyr. Basal stem application of imazapyr looks promising. Does not invade grazed land, because cattle will graze the invading bamboo shoots, but animals cannot clear established stands.