



Vern
NELSON

ON THE MOVE

Bamboo in a homemade box

Bamboo is well known for spreading aggressively once planted in the garden. It is the main reason people give for not growing bamboo.

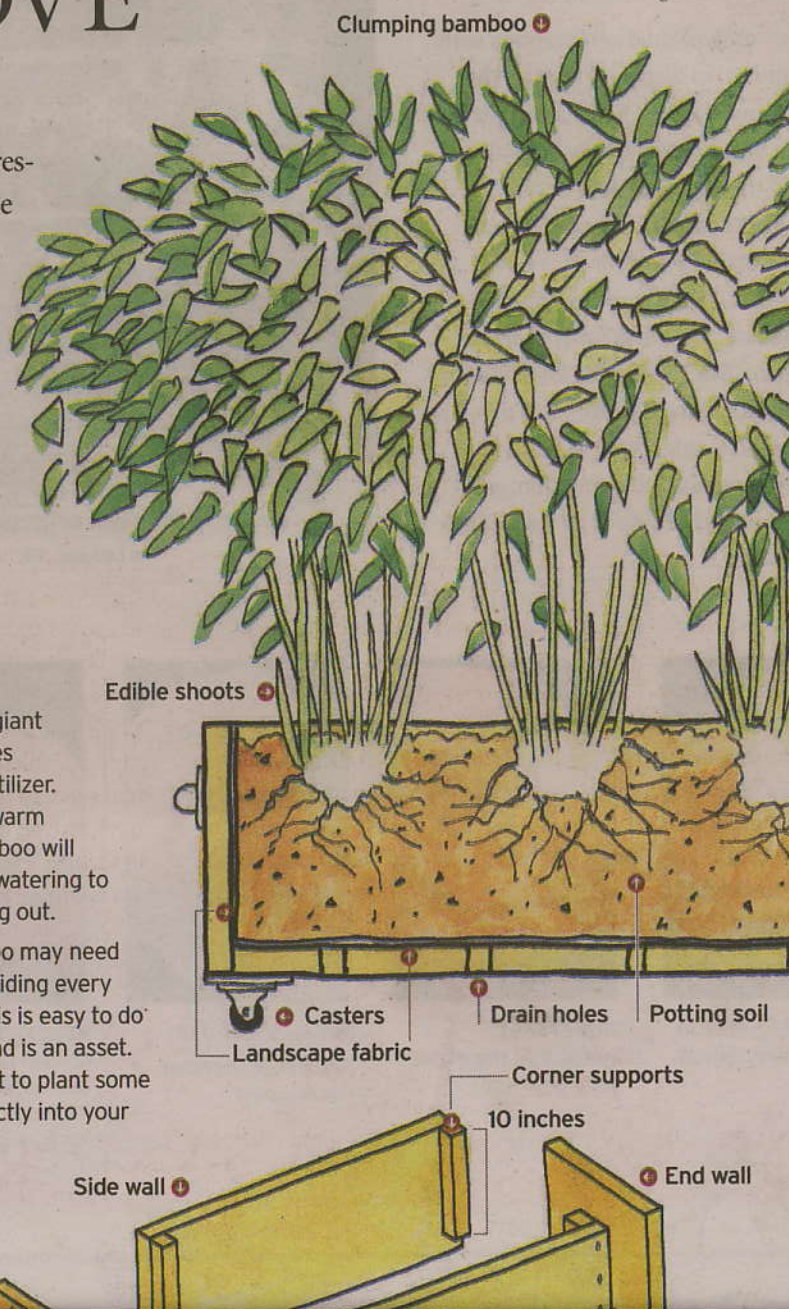
Movable bamboo screens have allowed me to block off the driveway when kids are playing there. Unwanted views can be blocked during garden parties or other events. Access to areas where holes are being dug or are otherwise unsafe can be restricted. Bamboo also softens the look and humanizes hardscape that would be hard to plant directly. Bamboo can create temporary shade for entertaining or for sheltering seedlings or transplants and can slow and diffuse the wind.

VARIETY SELECTION | Use only cold-hardy, clumping bamboos, such as *Chusquea culeou*, *Fargesia species* or *Thamnocalamus tessellatus*. When cruising catalog descriptions of bamboo varieties, remember that heights are for in-ground planting under ideal conditions. Bamboo won't get as big in containers. Most clumpers prefer some afternoon shade.

BUILDING THE BOX | For durability's sake I would use pine 2-by-12s to provide thick walls and adequate depth. Make the box 14½ inches wide overall and 4 feet 3 inches long. Use 2-by-2s for corner supports. Assemble the pieces with exterior ceramic-

TIPS |

- Bamboo is a giant grass so it likes water and fertilizer. In breezy or warm weather, bamboo will need careful watering to prevent drying out.
- Boxed bamboo may need lifting and dividing every few years. This is easy to do from a box and is an asset. You may want to plant some divisions directly into your garden.



HOW TO BUILD A 4-FOOT BOX SUPPLIES

- 2 8-foot-long 2-by-12s (for the least waste): \$6.89 each in pine, or \$4.09 per lineal foot in select tight-knot cedar. **Because bamboo shoots can be harvested for food, don't use pressure-treated wood.**
- 1-pound box of 150 2-inch exterior ceramic-coated screws (sufficient for building two boxes): \$4.59
- Screws for attaching the casters will vary in size depending on your choice of caster.
- Heavy-duty staples for fastening the landscape fabric: \$3.99 per box
- Two 2-cubic-foot bags of potting soil: about \$8 each
- Two to three 1-gallon clumping bamboo plants: \$20 to \$65 each
- Landscape fabric to fit your container (about 6 by 3 feet): Ask a friend for scrap.
- Casters: Choose casters with 3-inch or slightly larger wheels for ease of moving; rubber wheels are less likely to damage surfaces. Some casters swivel; some have brakes. Each caster should have a carrying capacity of at least 100 pounds. \$2.99 each to \$6.99 each. Caster #41516 at Harbor Freight Tools is a good choice.
- Two large handles, optional, for lifting the box

ASSEMBLY

- Cut two side walls and one floor board, 4 feet long each.
- Cut two end walls, 14½ inches long each.
- Cut four corner supports, each 10 inches long, from scrap.
- Screw corner supports to each end of each side wall.

Movable bamboo screens have allowed me to block off the driveway when kids are playing there. Unwanted views can be blocked during garden parties or other events. Access to areas where holes are being dug or are otherwise unsafe can be restricted. Bamboo also softens the look and humanizes hardscape that would be hard to plant directly. Bamboo can create temporary shade for entertaining or for sheltering seedlings or transplants and can slow and diffuse the wind.

VARIETY SELECTION | Use only cold-hardy, clumping bamboos, such as *Chusquea culeou*, *Fargesia species* or *Thamnocalamus tessellatus*. When cruising catalog descriptions of bamboo varieties, remember that heights are for in-ground planting under ideal conditions. Bamboo won't get as big in containers. Most clumpers prefer some afternoon shade.

BUILDING THE BOX | For durability's sake I would use pine 2-by-12s to provide thick walls and adequate depth. Make the box 14½ inches wide overall and 4 feet 3 inches long. Use 2-by-2s for corner supports. Assemble the pieces with exterior, ceramic-coated screws.

PLANTING | Move your box to a sheltered site for planting to allow the bamboo to settle in for three or four weeks. Use potting soil and set the bamboo at the same height as it is in the pot.

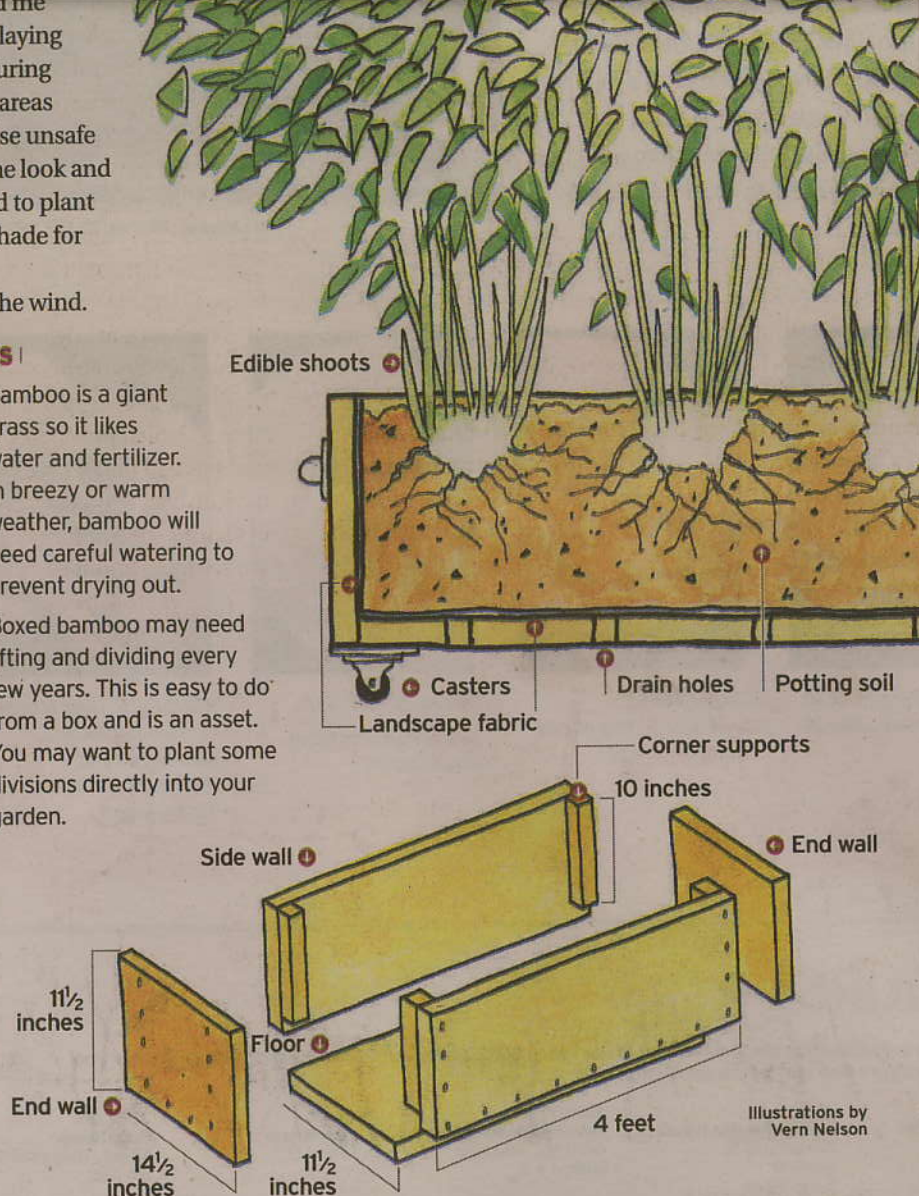
SOURCE |

For bamboo: Bamboo Garden carries more than 300 varieties of bamboo: 503-647-2700, bamboogarden.com

For casters and staples: Harbor Freight Tools, 2950 N.E. Hogan Drive, Gresham, 503-492-8386; 10270 S.W. Park Way, Beaverton, 503-296-6200; 15800 S.E. McLoughlin Blvd., Milwaukie, 503-659-2228; harborfreight.com

TIPS |

- Bamboo is a giant grass so it likes water and fertilizer. In breezy or warm weather, bamboo will need careful watering to prevent drying out.
- Boxed bamboo may need lifting and dividing every few years. This is easy to do from a box and is an asset. You may want to plant some divisions directly into your garden.



- Two 2-cubic-foot bags of potting soil: about \$8 each
- Two to three 1-gallon clumping bamboo plants: \$20 to \$65 each
- Landscape fabric to fit your container (about 6 by 3 feet): Ask a friend for scrap.
- Casters: Choose casters with 3-inch or slightly larger wheels for ease of moving; rubber wheels are less likely to damage surfaces. Some casters swivel; some have brakes. Each caster should have a carrying capacity of at least 100 pounds. \$2.99 each to \$6.99 each. Caster #41516 at Harbor Freight Tools is a good choice.
- Two large handles, optional, for lifting the box

ASSEMBLY

- Cut two side walls and one floor board, 4 feet long each.
- Cut two end walls, 14½ inches long each.
- Cut four corner supports, each 10 inches long, from scrap.
- Screw corner supports to each end of each side wall.
- Screw the end walls to the side walls.
- Turn box upside down and set the floor board into the space at the bottom of the corner supports. Drive screws through the box walls to secure the floor.
- Drill four 1-inch-diameter drainage holes through the floor.
- Use screws to attach a caster to each corner of the box.
- Turn the box right side up and line with landscape fabric to extend the life of the wood. Staple fabric into place. •

Freelance writer/photographer Vern Nelson: The Hungry Gardener, P.O. Box 16945, Portland, OR 97292; thehungrygardener@yahoo.com

07362-2