

ORDINANCE NO.

FILE OF CITY COUNCIL

BILL NO. 56 - 2017

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September 6, 2017

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AN ORDINANCE

Amending the Property Rehabilitation and Maintenance Code by prohibiting running bamboo.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALLENTOWN:

SECTION ONE: That Article 1753.03 Noxious Weeds, be amended to include

**1753.03 NOXIOUS WEEDS AND RUNNING BAMBOO PROHIBITED**

All exterior property areas shall be kept free from all species of weeds or plant growth which are noxious or detrimental to the public health. (12199 §300.2 8/4/76)

Running Bamboo is prohibited.

Running Bamboo" means any monopodial, or "running", woody grass that spread variously, sending out underground runners (rhizomes) which sometimes range far from the parent plant. The definition refers to all parts of the bamboo including the above ground plant, its roots and rhizomes. For the purposes of enforcement of this Article running bamboo shall be identified by the structure of growth and need not be by biological identification.

Any property owner who, with respect to running bamboo, plants, grows, maintains, or allows any of the same, on the property, shall be prohibited and subject to the penalties herein unless said owner can establish to the reasonable satisfaction of the City or court that the following conditions are met:

(a) Such running bamboo existed at its then present location prior to the enactment of this ordinance;

(b) No part of the running bamboo and its root system is closer than 20' from any property line, utility easement, and public right of way;

(c) Such running bamboo shall be isolated from all other vegetation by a barrier composed of a high density polypropylene or polyethylene, with a thickness of at least 40 mils. The barrier shall be secured and joined together with stainless steel clamps or stainless steel closure stripes designed to be used with such barriers and shall be installed at least thirty (30) inches deep. At least three (3) inches of barrier must protrude above ground level and the barrier shall slant outward from bottom to top.

Disposal of removed running bamboo plant or root system shall be done in an ecologically sensitive manner within a sealed container.

SECTION TWO: That all ordinances inconsistent with the above provisions are repealed to the extent of their inconsistency.

SECTION THREE: That this ordinance take effect ten (10) days after final passage.

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- **What Department or bureau is Bill originating from? Where did the initiative for the bill originate?**

This Bill is being introduced by City Council.

- **Summary and Facts of the Bill**

Municipalities are regulating the planting of bamboo as an invasive species. Invasive bamboo can rip up lawns, crack foundations, break water lines and bring down fences. Rules typically prohibit planting or growing bamboo unless the root system is entirely contained to prevent the spread of the roots. Bamboo is fast growing – it can grow 60 cm (almost 2 feet) per day in certain conditions. The American Bamboo Society recommends running bamboo be placed within a barrier with certain specifications – this legislation uses those specifications.

**The American Bamboo Society recommends using a barrier to control the spread of bamboo** - If you plan to install a barrier to control the spread of running bamboos, it is important to install it properly to insure its effectiveness. We recommend for most situations a barrier of 30 inches deep. In other than very light soils the bamboo rhizomes are usually in the top few inches of soil. However when the rhizome encounters an obstruction it will turn, and sometimes it will go down. It is important to avoid loose soil or air pockets next to the barrier or the bamboo may go deeper than you want and perhaps go under the barrier. When filling the hole after placing the barrier, tightly compact the soil next to the barrier. Any soil amendments must be added only in the top foot or so. You mustn't encourage deep rhizome growth if you want to contain the bamboo. If the bamboo planting can be surrounded by a shallow trench 8 to 10 inches deep, this can be a cheaper and easier method to control it's spread. You just need to check a couple of times in the late summer and fall to see if any rhizomes have tried to cross the trench, and cut them off. This check for spreading rhizomes is easy, but very important. It must be done each fall, whether you are using barrier or a trench.

**Running bamboo spread at moderate to fast paces.** They have a *leptomorph rhizome system*, which means the rhizomes don't usually turn up and become canes. Instead, as they push through the soil the lateral buds produce either canes or new rhizomes perpendicular to the parent rhizome. Because of this dual growth system runners are able to cover more ground per year than clumpers. Mature plants spread 3 to 5 feet on average, (most will also increase 3-5 feet in height per year as well). In some extreme cases runners can spread over 15 feet in a season. Running bamboo include many different genera and species, ranging in size from a foot tall to 80 feet tall, and can be either slow or quick spreading, and either open or dense growing, depending on the species and where it is planted. We carry over 100 different types of running bamboo, in all shapes and sizes.