

bamboo

VOL 18 No.2

bulletin

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Reader Contributions

We would love to publish your bamboo experiences. If you would be interested in sharing your information on bamboo growing, managing, building or cooking, send text and attached photos to Mark McCarthy at: editor@bamboo.org.au

Front Cover Photo:
Schizostachyum brachycladum



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Bambusa tulda

From the President

This is my final report as president and as from the 2016 AGM we have a new president in Mark McCarthy, also a new treasurer in Steph Zannakis and secretary in Amy Bruce with help from Barry O'Connell. I have really enjoyed the three years on the job and feel it is most important that the BSA continue to promote the bamboo industry in Australia.

We held our third Bamboo Sculpture Contest in October at our biggest event so far, the Brisbane International Garden show with over 20,000 people attending. It was a great place for us to showcase the Sculpture Contest with a lot of interest in the sculptures. Congratulations to Carolyn Bailey & Lance Seadon for taking out first prize.

I would like to thank Victor Cusack who was our judge this year, for putting so much thought into picking the winners. This was our third sculpture contest and our first one to make a profit, it is most important that we turn these events into profit making on our limited finances.

I would like to thank the Brisbane International Garden Show for being our major sponsor for the event, also Jason from Bamboos Wholesale, Bamboo Australia, Victor Cusack and Cutloose Nursery for their sponsorship.

I would like to thank the members of the board who all volunteer their time for their help and support over the last three years, especially Peter who did a great job as treasurer. For me, it has been most rewarding and exciting to see how far the bamboo industry has come and how big it can be for employment and farmers along the east coast of Australia. It is most important that the BSA can stay strong and viable to promote the bamboo industry, we need to keep our membership growing. This has been happening through the workshops being held and the sculpture contests, but mainly through the great job Mark does on the Magazine.

I would encourage anyone interested in the bamboo industry to get involved and put forward their ideas.

Jim Mahoney
President BSA

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From the Editor's Desk

The cost of producing the Bamboo Bulletin has increased over time and now that the postage has doubled, we are finding it harder to make ends meet.

After much discussion, a couple of proposals have been suggested. We could reduce the size of the Bulletin from A4 to A5 (many European bamboo magazines use this format) OR we could return to the style of previous black and white A4, OR increase subscriptions (which have not changed in many years).

I would prefer none of the above, however, a moderate increase in Membership would help cover these rising costs. So, if you know anyone who would benefit by becoming a Member, please direct them to our Join page on the website or contact me at editor@bsa.org.au. We have a special offer for new Members - they will receive 4 Back Issues of the Bamboo Bulletin along with the latest Issue.

This issue's Feature Property is Durnford Dart's *Belli Bamboo Parkland* with most of the species featured being running varieties. In the last few years we have focused more on clumping varieties, as the board of the Society is based on the east coast at present and they mostly grow clumping bamboos. Running bamboos are more favoured on the west coast.

Recent restrictions on growing *Phyllostachys* species in NSW has emphasised the lack of understanding of this family of bamboos. The utilisation of these unwanted groves should be encouraged as the wood is straight, strong and hard, the shoots of *Moso* and *Aurea* are good to eat.

Mark McCarthy
Editor

Gigantochloa atrovioleacea
var. *watupawan*



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Photos by
Mark McCarthy

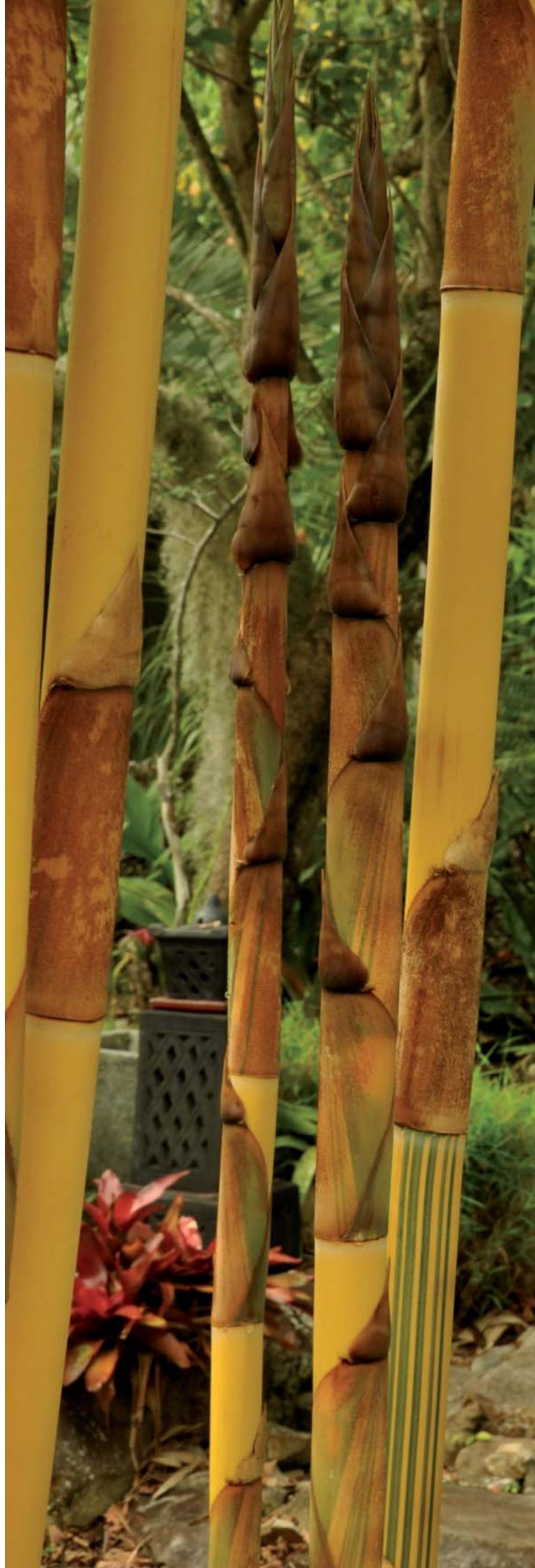
Schizostachyum brachycladum

Origin: *South-East Asia*
Average height: *13m*

Culm Diameter: *50mm*
Minimum temperature: *0c*

There are a number of forms available in Australia, one is all green and the one most commonly grown as an ornamental is yellow with green stripes.

Traditionally, the thin-walled culms are used for water cylinders, handicrafts and containers for cooking glutinous rice. Formally, women in North Sulawesi made clothes from the fibres, after chewing and washing the soft inner part of the culms to extract them. The shoots are edible but bitter.



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Left: New shoots on a well-watered clump.

Above: Seeds form on mature culms but are rarely viable. Seeds which have germinated soon die as they are chlorophyll deficient.

Right: Culms are golden-yellow with narrow green stripes. Leaves have narrow yellow stripes.

Brachycladum can be a challenge to keep looking its best. It needs to have a free-draining soil and must be kept moist at all times.

This bamboo flowers continuously, with mature culms bearing inflorescence, but viable seeds are rarely found. New culms will not form if conditions are too dry and the clump will eventually die. The specimens that I have seen looking good have been under a regular watering system with mature culms removed as they begin to flower.

As with most *Schizostachyums* it is best grown in part shade, this will also help with its intolerance to cold conditions.



Reference

Plant Resources of South East Asia No7 Bamboos by S Dransfield & E A Widjaja, Backhuys Publishers, Leiden 1995.



Cross-section Modification

by Paul Bourne

Paul worked for many years as a Patrol Officer and Fisheries Officer in Papua New Guinea, before returning to Australia and gaining an honours degree in Applied Geography. He subsequently worked in river management for many years, before leaving the public sector to experiment with various design ideas, including bamboo. Paul has a particular interest in light bamboo dome structures. He became involved as an overseas volunteer in Viet Nam and the Philippines, and returned to Viet Nam in September 2015 to undertake research at the Bamboo Village on invitation by the Director. The Bamboo Society had worked with the Bamboo Village and was able to lend its support for Paul to work there.

A simple trial at the Phu An Bamboo Village research station in Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam was set up to investigate the possibility of modifying the cross-section (XS), and re-aligning branches, of sympodial bamboos during their growth phase. XS modifications were trialed on the branch and culm shoots respectively of one unidentified species (UID) and *B. spp.* (Vietnamese name Lữ Ô Vàng). The secondary branch in the trial grew at an average rate of 9.29 cm per day for the fastest 7 days of growth. During the time that the shoots were growing, their lengths were measured daily for 5 weeks. Culm shoot growth for three culms in the trial was much faster than that of the branch, and averaged 26.86 cm per day for the fastest seven days of growth. The UID secondary branch was enclosed in a training form, which slightly changed its cross section (XS), but not greatly. The culm enclosed in a training form had its XS re-shaped into a square-like profile, with rounded corners.

Trials were undertaken to re-align secondary branch shoots of *Bambusa stenostachya* (Vietnamese name Đống ngà). It was found that branches can be trained to grow straight, and spiral forms are possible by bending young shoots, although training the shoot to grow into the spiral using a guided track might be more effective. A new branch shoot was enclosed in a tube, which prevented tertiary branch development and achieved a straight alignment, but led to fungal development, and is the likely cause of reduced growth. Recommendations are made for further experimental work to investigate the possibilities of re-shaping the XS profile of bamboo culms and branches, and re-aligning branches into desired shapes.

The concept of shaping the XS of bamboo is an interesting one, and particularly so in regard to large diameter species, as the ability to do so would benefit furniture-making, craft-making and possibly construction. Shaping bamboo could produce not only square XSs, but other forms as well.

A simple trial was set up, whereby forms (or moulds) were used to re-shape growing bamboo shoots into a squarish XS. Sympodial (clumping) bamboo species

were selected to investigate the concept. The process is not new and is described briefly by Reubens (2010, p.76). An unidentified branch shoot (UID) was chosen for part of the trial, which sought to impart a square section to the growing shoot. Photographs of the UID, which may aid in its identification, can be found in Attachment 1. Another sympodial bamboo growing at the Bamboo Village, *Bambusa sp.* (Vietnamese name Lữ Ô Vàng), began to develop new culm shoots, and was also selected to trial XS re-shaping.

Large bamboo can have its XS modified successfully, and this has been demonstrated by a North American nursery, Lewis Bamboo, which has grown large-size square-section bamboo from the temperate monopodial “Moso” (*Phyllostachys heterocycla pubescens*) using a four-sided timber training frame (Lewis Bamboo, Inc., 2016).

Ancillary to the XS modification trial, to gain further understanding about shaping bamboos, secondary branch shoots were trained to be re-aligned into straight forms, two were wound into a spiral, and one was enclosed in poly tube. It is possible to re-align quite large bamboos as they grow using forms, and this has been done successfully with *Guadua* bamboo using forms made from car tyres (Erickson, 2011).

Study site

The trial was undertaken on UID, *B. stenostachya* and *B. spp.* growing at the Bamboo Village research station. The Bamboo Village is located at Phu An in Ben Cat town, Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam, and is 35km NNW from downtown Ho Chi Minh City. Google Earth coordinates for the site are: 106o35'07"E, 11o03'58.6"N. The site is flat, with an elevation of 18m (Google Earth 30 January 2015 image), and lies 1.8 km NE of the Saigon River. Soils are sandy loam. Rainfall averages 1900 mm per year for nearby Thủ Đức Mlt, and is typically northern hemisphere tropical, occurring in a prominent wet season from May to October, and temperatures range from 25.6oC in January to 29.0oC in April (climate-data.org, 2015).





Bamboo training frame taped and wired to the trial secondary branch of UID.

Method

UID secondary branch XS modification

One newly forming secondary branch of UID was selected from a six-month old culm (Lê Văn Hiên, 2015), and encased in a four-sided frame made of split bamboo pieces each approximately 2.5 cm wide and 40 cm in length (Fig. 2), resulting in an internal dimension of approximately 1cm x 1cm. A secondary branch is the first branch growing from a bamboo culm, as the culm is the primary branch which grows from the rhizome (Yuming & Chaomao, 2010, p.16). The frame was held together using packaging tape, and later, light-gauge galvanized tie wire.

To determine the success of the trial, the trial branch XS had to be examined for “squareness” and compared with the XS of non-trained branches. Even in the early days of the trial, when the training frame was still in place, the XS for trial branch 10C4 appeared to be becoming “square”.

Bamboo branches are easier to re-align the younger (and softer) they are, however care is needed not to damage them. If they are kept in the formed shape until they have sent out their tertiary branches, and preferably until



The UID branch displayed a “square”-looking XS 3½ weeks after being enclosed.

they have grown for long enough to have the strength required for their intended purpose, then cut, and only released from the frame after they have reduced their moisture content, then it is likely they will retain the shape they have been trained to.

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Bambusa tulda

Origin: India
Average height: 18m

Culm Diameter: 80mm
Minimum temperature: -2c

Grown in India as a source of pulp for paper making, the wood is dense and is used in construction, basket weaving and furniture. These qualities have seen its distribution include Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and China.

It has smooth, dark-green culms with cream coloured rings at the node. Shoots are green with bulging blades and black hairs on the upper part of the sheath. They are edible but slightly bitter.

Quite fast growing, even in temperate regions, but will not tolerate frost. I had a plant die back every couple of years, due to frost. I moved it 10m away, under the cover of trees, where it is now thriving.

The culms are not suitable for shovel or pick handles, as the fibres in the wood are not very long and will break when bent.

References:

Bamboo World by Victor Cusack and *Bamboo for Gardens* by Ted Jordan Meredith.



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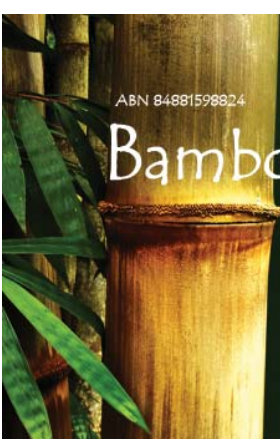


Far Left: The almost solid culms are useful pulped for paper.

Left: Two new shoots with their bulging sheath blades.

Above: Can become deciduous in dry conditions.

Right: Mature clump of Bambusa tulda.



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Sporadic flowering of *Dendrocalamus latiflorus* in plantation

By Ron Graham

Our plantation is at Wyrallah, which is near Lismore, NSW.

We have 400 plants which were planted in 1998, comprising of 100 Latiflorus, 150 Thai Asper, 1 Indonesian Asper and 150 Old Hamii.

Each harvest season, which is from January through to early May, we harvest and sell the fresh shoots. Our season probably starts later than other growers North of us because of our cooler climate - we get frosts in the winter.

From the early days we have had a phenomenon happening with the broad-leaf Latiflorus. Approximately every 15-18 months, one will flower and sometimes will set seed. This happens anywhere in the plantation. This plant will gradually die over a period of about two years.

I have tried different things to save the plant, but to no avail.

Something quite extraordinary happened with my last casualty. After setting and dropping seed, young plants appeared all around, under the flowering adult plant. It was a mass of young plants, totalling at least 1000 of them.

Rather than letting them die, I decided to pot some of them. I managed to pot 140 of the strongest plants, before getting sick of it.

After 12 months, most of them were as tall as me, good healthy plants.

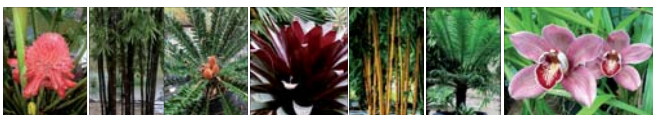
Thanks mainly to the BSA Information day, held at Kay's property, Byron Bay Bamboo, I sold every plant. Selling these plants is a one-off for me, as we normally only sell fresh shoots, not plants.



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Left: Within two years of flowering all culms have died.

Right: Rows of bamboos in plantation.

Below: Seedlings massing beneath the flowering plant.



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Feature Property

Belli Bamboo Parkland

Durnford Dart started planting in 1989 on an old 100 acre dairy farm after a number of profound bamboo experiences.

"I guess I would have been four or five years old and it is remarkable that I can still remember it so vividly. My mother and I would travel by tram from Moonee Ponds to the serenity of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens. It was during WWII, my Dad was away with the Navy. We would walk through a magnificent archway of tall, exotic greenery that whispered in the breeze, enfolding me with tranquility and coolness, on a hot summers day.

"My most profound experience with bamboo was in Japan, where I was collecting car parts for my auto parts recycling business in Sydney. I travelled to Yawata (between Osaka and Kyoto) two or three times a year on business. I remember one moist and humid day, walking into a bamboo forest next to a car dismantling business. The feeling of peace and serenity was unbelievable. I sat there in the misty rain, under the swaying fine-leaved culms of the Moso, with tears streaming down my face. Here I was, in what I believed to be the largest area of industrial destruction and pollution in Japan, sitting in this incredibly peaceful bamboo grove. The seed for growing bamboo at Belli had been sown."



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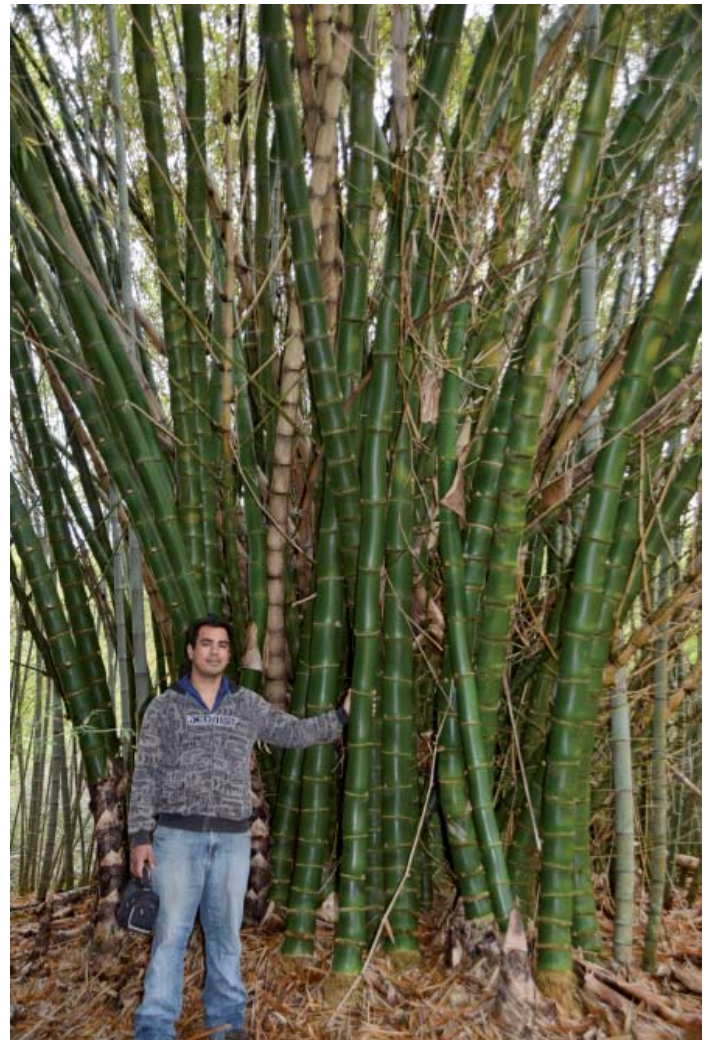
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Environmental conditions vary culm shapes, the older culms in the centre have very close internodes and the newer culms in the foreground have developed bulging nodes again.



*Shane Eder in front of a very large clump of mature *Bambusa vulgaris* Wamin.*

Planning the trip north for the Bamboo Sculpture Contest with my partner Helen, we decided to leave a week early and stay with friends on the Sunshine Coast and visit Durn and his Sales Manager, Shane Eder.

We arrived at Bamboo Australia early in the morning to take advantage of the perfect soft light for photographing bamboo. We walked back down the entrance road, past many stands of clumping bamboo going through the process of shedding their leaves, as conditions were quite dry. As we got down towards the creek, where the soil was moist, we came across a dense hedge of *Pleioblastus linearis*, its long, narrow leaves looking very grass-

like. On the other side of the road, stabilising the creek bank, *Phyllostachys nidularia* was sending up some new shoots. They are good to eat as they are not bitter and can be eaten raw.

We left the road and headed past mature clumps of *Bambusa vulgaris* Wamin and *Dendrocalamus brandisii*. We entered an area that had been recently cleared and there were *Phyllostachys heterocycla* f. *pubescens* 'Moso' shoots popping up everywhere. We entered the Moso forest from the bright clearing. The tall, straight culms with a soft light filtering through the leafy canopy created a cool and calming atmosphere.

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Pleioblastus linearis

To the left of us was *Phyllistachys bambusoides* f. *castillonis* with its bright yellow culms with green stripes. As we got closer to the creek *Phyllistachys bambusoides* 'Madaki' dominated the landscape. The shoots of this species are not the best, but the culms are straight and the wood is hard and good for construction. At the creek the *Madaki* stopped abruptly, as running bamboos cannot cross a permanent water-course.

On the other side of the creek was a magnificent grove of *Phyllistachys viridis* 'Robert Young'. This was the most dense and hardest to get through so far, with most of our progress being made sideways between giant yellow culms with green stripes blocking our path. I watched Durn occasionally look from side to side to get his bearings. A path he may have followed years ago as he checked on the growth of his new plantings has now been consumed by them.

Just as I was thinking this jungle was impenetrable we broke out onto a path lined each side with clumping bamboos. Rows of *Bambusa tulda* with its white-ringed nodes and clusters of *Bambusa blumeana* bristling with thorny branches lead us back to the road.





Above: Phyllostachys nidularia - new shoots can be eaten raw.
Left: Bambusa beecheyana - a fast growing, cold tolerant bamboo grown for its edible shoots.

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Clockwise from above: New shoots of Phyllostachys heterocykla f. pubescens 'Moso'

Filtered light through the Moso forest.

Phyllistachys viridis 'Robert Young' has the ability to grow quite large in a restricted space.

A dense clump of Dendrocalamus brandisii.





Above: *Phyllistachys bambusoides f. castillonis*.

Right: *Phyllistachys bambusoides* 'Madaki'

Durn is able to sell his poles and employ staff to cut and maintain this large area of bamboo. Anyone undertaking a planting like this must have a strategy for controlling the spread, as running bamboos do not respect property boundaries. Rhizomes will not cross a water course or channel containing water for at least three months of the year.





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BRISBANE | *Garden*
INTERNATIONAL | **SHOW**

6+7+8+9 OCTOBER 2016



This years Bamboo Sculpture Competition was hosted by the Brisbane International Garden Show who sponsored the prize money. It was held over four days at the picturesque Pine Rivers Park in Strathpine, QLD.

Words and photographs by Mark McCarthy





Above: Darren Blackman's work "Build a bridge and get over it".

Centre: "A reflection upon the infinite".

The Garden Show supplied us with a tent and a large space next to a pond with a couple of black swans who would come ashore each day and preen themselves amongst the sculptures. To the right was the main stage, where familiar voices of television garden show presenters gave talks on all aspects of gardening. The tent was staffed by Pres. Jim Mahoney, Board Member Deb King, exceptional Ordinary Member Helen Golden and myself, busy selling raffle tickets, collecting People's Choice votes and answering questions.

Usually at the country fairs, half the questions people ask about bamboo are how to kill them! But in the outer suburbs of Brisbane, they were interested in what they could do with it, now they have grown it. It was nice



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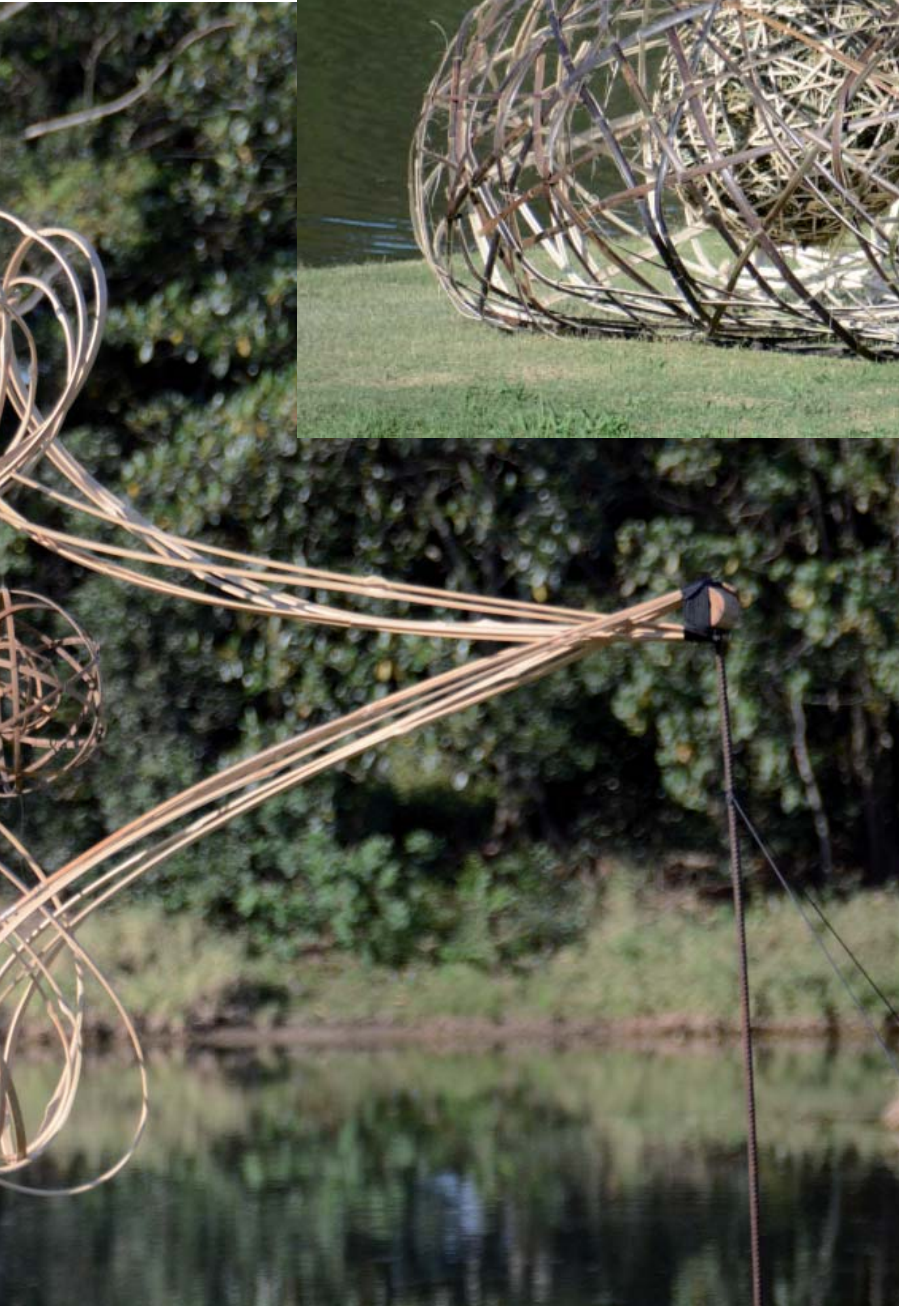


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Above: "Earth Reborn" by Tim Peek.

to suggest that they could cut it, split it (we had a splitter and samples to demonstrate) and weave a basket. If it was an edible species, you could mulch it well and cut the new shoots for cooking. It was amazing how many people had pictures of their bamboo on their phone. It was easy to identify which species were good for what purpose.

One fellow was happy to share a story of when he was in the army in Vietnam, where the bamboo forests were so thick that they could only walk on the paths, which made them vulnerable to ambush.

The hardest thing was to look surprised when, after the 100th time, people told me that the new buildings they saw when on holidays were covered in bamboo scaffolding.



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The Garden Show was huge - I don't think I've ever seen so many plants in one place, many in full bloom. I was interested in plants that would grow amongst the bamboo like Stralitzias and Bromeliads. There was a stall, as big as a house, selling only Bromeliads. Rick Warrick from Bamboo Down Under had a stall and gave a talk on bamboo and its maintenance, showing photographs of some of his landscape projects. Jason Bebendorf from Bamboo Wholesale also had a stall. I hadn't seen Jason in 25 years. I was working on Heron Island and on a trip to the mainland a friend had taken me to his property up near Gladstone.

The days were very warm, with the hat seller and the ice-cream man doing the best business. In the afternoons, a breeze would come up and Jim's sculpture would dance attracting many People's Choice votes. A tally at the end of each day showed him well ahead of any other sculpture. By Friday afternoon he was so far ahead that if his sculpture had spontaneously combusted overnight, he would still have won!

Mark McCarthy's "Don't feed the dragon". The head was made from an internode section of D. asper.



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We stayed a few kilometres down the road at Pine Rivers Showground. Surprisingly quiet after the peak-hour, with only a soft sound of music coming from one of the buildings, where dance classes were held. On Saturday morning, just before dawn, I could hear the sound of tent pegs being driven into the ground. Waking at dawn revealed a huge flea market with hundreds of stalls. Helen and I are keen market perusers and we had just visited Yandina markets (one of our favourites) and had a few hours before we had to be at the Garden Show, so we spent them buying more plants and fresh produce and a really good coffee.

Victor Cusack announced the winners on Saturday afternoon with Carolyn Bailey and Lance Seadon's colourful sculpture "Fish Bites" taking out first prize. Victor saw the significance in Jim's sculpture "Bamboo Peace" with the dragonflies hovering around a troubled earth and awarded him second prize.



"1260" by Ben Jones. This piece was highly commended by the judge. The title comes from the number of pieces it took to build.



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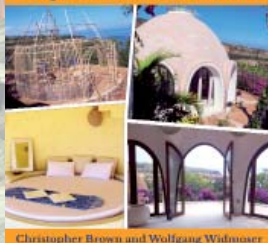
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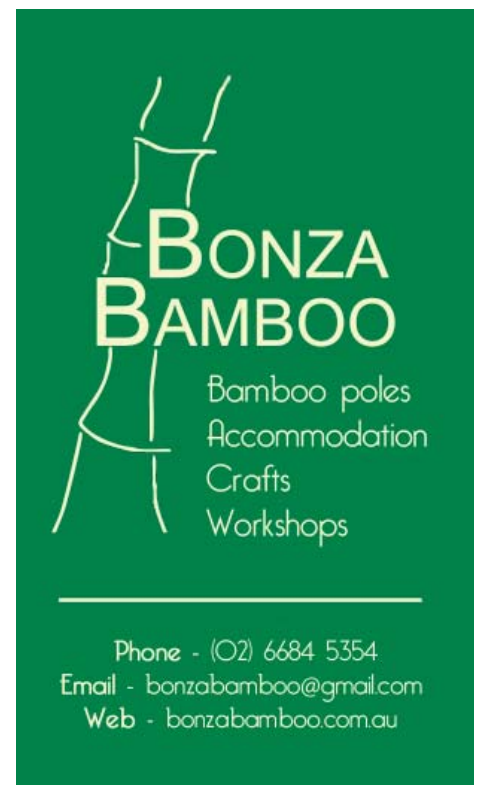
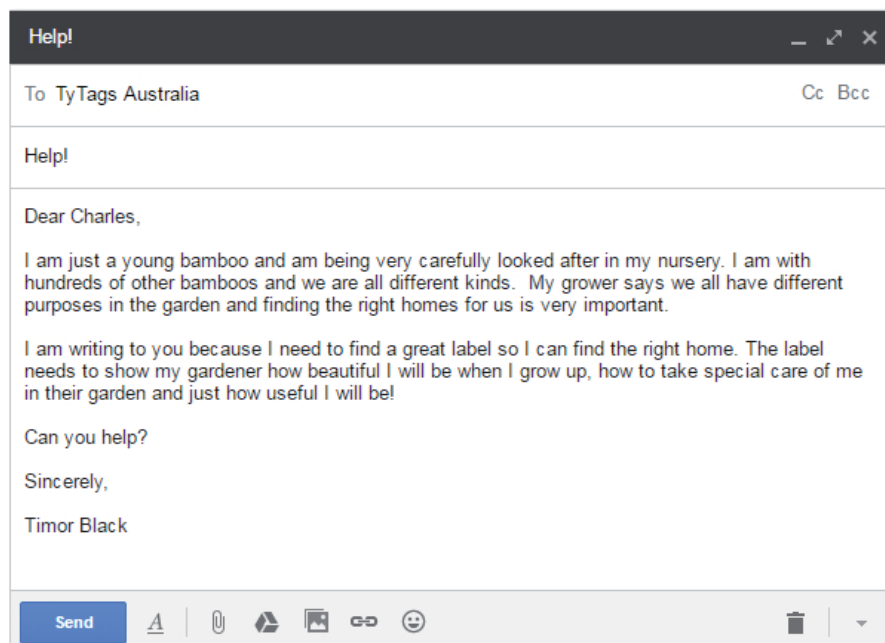


After the Show on Saturday, we held the AGM amongst the sculptures, with Steph Zannakis and Amy Bruce elected to the Board and afterwards, following tradition, we ate at a local Chinese restaurant.

Packing up on Sunday afternoon, it was becoming obvious that the bamboo and plants that I had collected over the last two weeks had left little room for my sculpture. Luckily, the woman who ran the hat stall made me an offer I could not refuse, so it was sold. After carefully packing it into her van, we said our goodbyes and headed off.

Left: Second prize winner Cutloose Nursery's work "Bamboo Peace".

Right: Rick Warwick and his daughter Asleigh at the Bamboo Down Under stall at the show.





Above: Jason Bebendorf and Leon Trimble at the Bamboos Wholesale stall.

Right: First prize winning entry "Fish Bites" by Carolyn Bailey and Lance Seadon.

We had planned to drive straight home but after an hour, we realised that we were too tired to travel very far, at least we were away from the city.

I rang Kaye Wood and asked if we could stay in the small camping area below her nursery. It was good to drive into the coolness of the bamboo after the heat of the highway drive. We parked beside a tall *Black Brandisii*, took out a couple of chairs and opened a bottle of wine. A great way to finish off a couple of very busy weeks.



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Winning entry
"Fish Bites"



What The...?

This page is for any strange anomalies that occur in your bamboo.

By Mark McCarthy



Spring planting was going well. A lot of new species that I had collected were now in the ground, next to the southern boundary, backing on to a large forest of Tea Tree and Jelly Bush. Checking on their progress a week later, I was horrified to find them dug up and their roots eaten away. Hoof prints showed it to be a pig. It took hours to replant the bamboos, having to remove most of the leaves to relieve the stress from drying out.

A friend put me onto a guy with pig-dogs and the next night we headed into the forest. The dogs had collars with GPS trackers and we followed them for a few hours until a shower of rain washed away the scent.

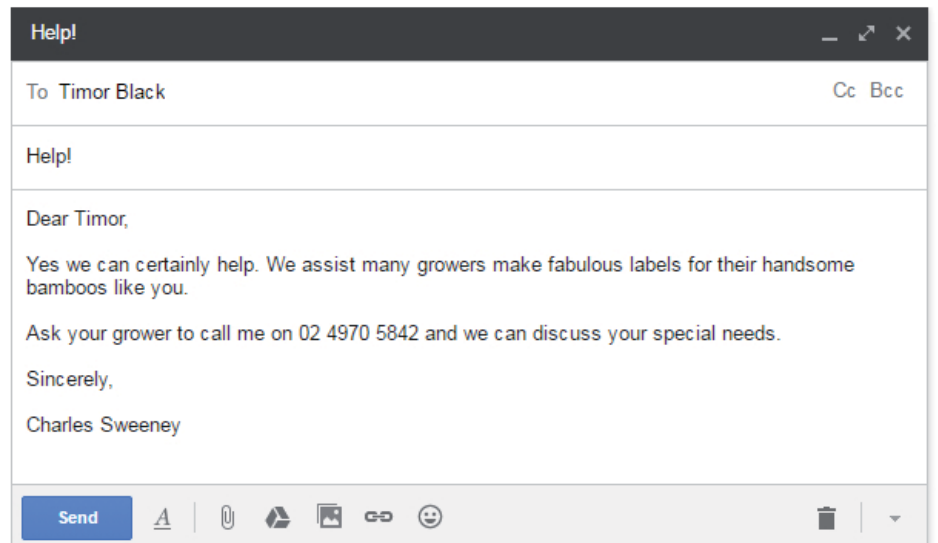
Things were quiet for a few weeks and then it hit again. This time digging up twice as many as before. I contacted Pastoral Protection who said to feed it for three more days and they would bring out a trap for the fourth. Well that was not going to happen! I had fed it enough!

I built a trap out of old farm gates and baited it with chicken layer pellets. The next morning I had him!





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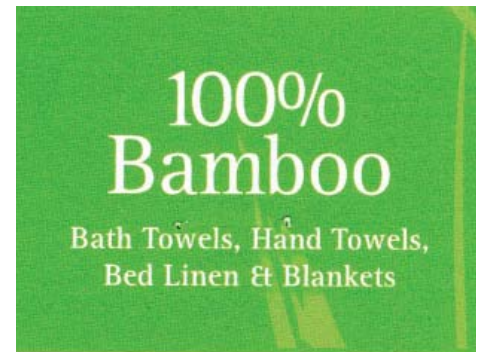


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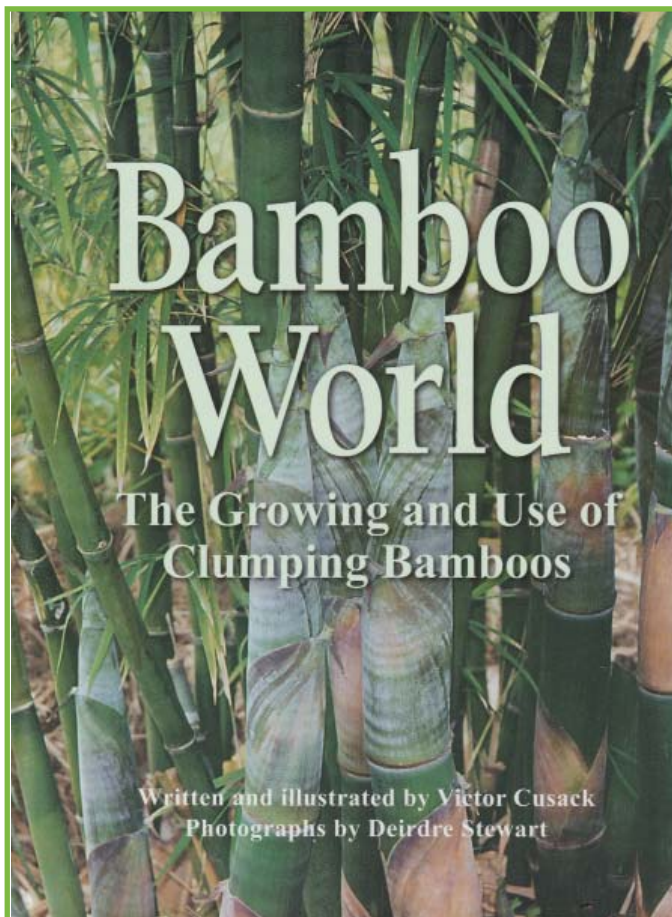


Preventing Cracking During Storage

It is best to cut and store your bamboo for 12 months before using it in projects. This allows the bamboo to dry out and any borer attack will happen in this time and can be treated. One problem that does occur during hot, low humidity conditions is cracking. The vascular tissues used to conduct water from the roots to the leaves are now allowing the moisture to escape quickly from the inside of the culms as the outside is sealed by waxes and impervious to moisture. The culm actually cracks from the inside-out. Painting the ends will slow the drying process. The use of oil-based paint mixed with 25% thinners will also help prevent attack by borers. Branch scars will also need to be painted. Use Polyurethane for projects requiring a clear finish.



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