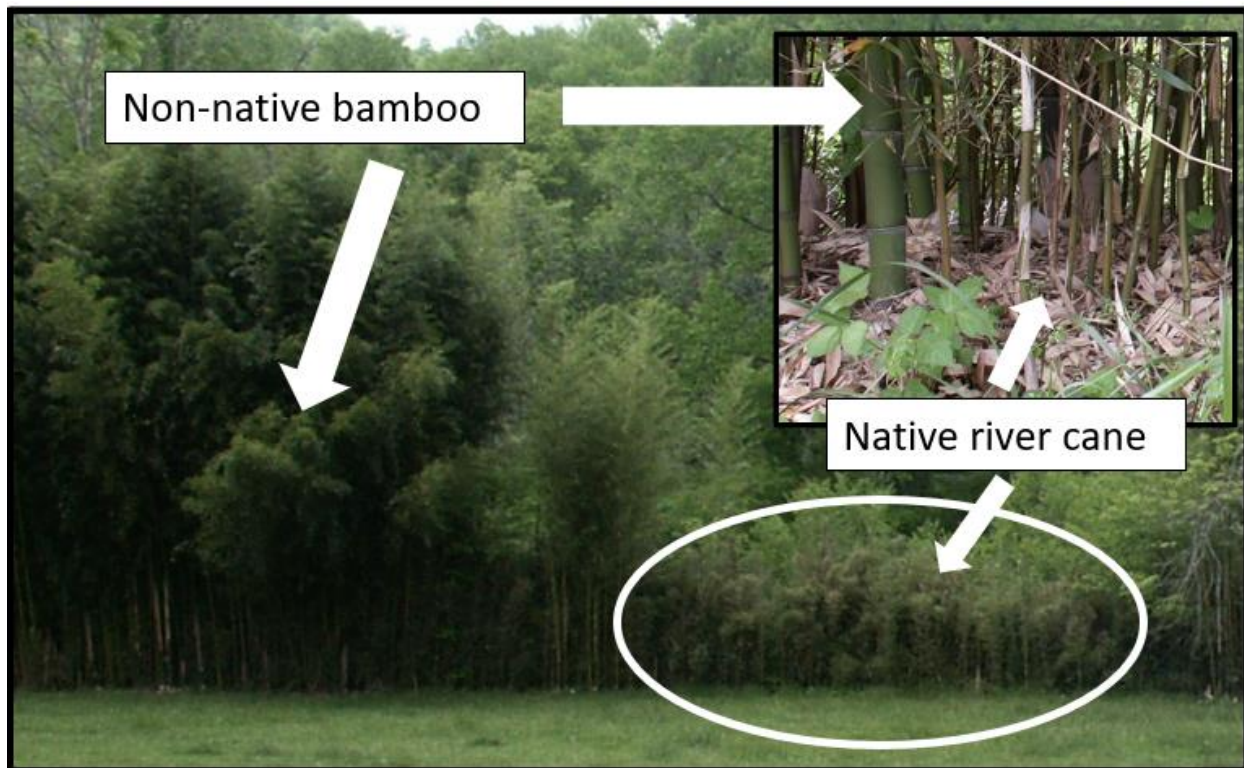




River cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) is one of three bamboos native to the United States, the southeast, and North Carolina. This guide is NOT meant to identify bamboo species, but rather to differentiate river cane from introduced species of bamboo. Three characteristics are the most useful to tell the difference between native river cane and non-native bamboos: size of the plants, the branching patterns, and the stems themselves.

Overall plant size is the most obvious and useful characteristic. River cane is typically less than 1" in diameter and 6 – 15 feet tall. Native cane can grow larger, but it takes decades for plants to reach this size. Non-native bamboos frequently have stems greater than 1" and can reach heights of over 30 feet. The photo below shows non-native bamboo on the left (15 – 20 feet tall) and native river cane on the right (6 – 8 feet tall).



The branching angle, number of branches, and patterns are also important. River cane branches are angled almost parallel to the main stem, while non-native bamboos often tend to be closer to a 45-degree angle or perpendicular. River cane has one major branch at each internode and adds another branch each year. Non-native bamboo also often has a groove, called a sulcus, along one side of the stem between the nodes. The photo below shows the low branching angle of river cane and the sulcus and angled branching of the non-native bamboo.



For more information on EBCI efforts to revitalize river cane, for river cane identification, or to allow harvesting on your property, please contact:

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