



**San Diego Zoo**

# **Botanical Tours**



**Bamboos**

This tour begins at the top of Tiger Trail, just before the fishing cats, and continues past tiger viewing. It then proceeds past okapis and hippos on Hippo Trail, then toward map locator 15 on Park Way and across the road. From there, it advances toward map locator 14, ending at Panda Pagoda.



### 1. Arrow Bamboo

*Pseudosasa japonica*

Also known as metake, this species was introduced into France from its native Japan in the 1850s. In the 1860s, it made its way to the United States—one of the first ornamental Asian bamboos to be grown here. It is less aggressive than other running bamboos and is a good background screen or container plant.

#### Fun Fact

Japanese Samurai honed their skills by using this species of bamboo for arrows, due to its stiffness and straightness.



### 2. Painted Bamboo

*Bambusa vulgaris* 'Vittata'

With its vibrant colors, this large, tropical bamboo is especially prized as an ornamental in its native China. Although its emerging shoots have a high cyanide content, they are still consumed after being boiled—the boiled water is then used medicinally.

#### Fun Fact

*Vittata* is the Latin term used to describe a stripe or band of color.



### 3. Buddha Belly Bamboo

*Bambusa ventricosa*

This bamboo is native to southern China, and is often used in bonsai because of its attractive, swollen nodes and dark green culms.

#### Fun Fact

The characteristically swollen nodes are induced by stress, such as lack of fertilizer and water, and growing in confined areas.



#### 4. Furi Shiiya Zasa Bamboo

*Sasaella masamuneana* 'Albostriata'

This Japanese native reaches a height of only three to five feet. As a dwarf running bamboo, it can benefit from and tolerate annual mowing. It is also useful as a ground cover and for erosion control. The varietal name 'Albostriata' translates in Latin as *albo*, meaning white, and *striata*, meaning striped.

#### Fun Fact

As an unofficial directive, residents of Japan were told to make their way into bamboo groves during earthquakes because it was believed the roots held the earth together.



#### 5. Sunburst Bamboo

*Bambusa pervariabilis* 'Viridistriatus'

Vibrantly colorful, this clumping bamboo is native to the Guangdong and Guanxi provinces of China. Culms are golden with dark green stripes. The species name, *pervariabilis*, means very flexible or bendable, while *viridis* means green, and *striatus* means lined.

#### Fun Fact

Bamboos are typically monocarpic, meaning they flower once—then die. This strategy is thought to increase cross-pollination and ensure a larger number of seeds survive predation.



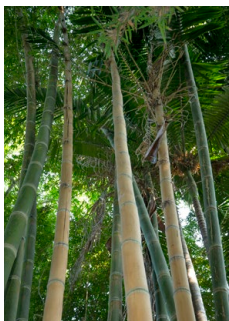
#### 6. Big-leaved Bamboo

*Indocalamus tessellatus*

The dark-green, oblong leaves of this species are the largest of the bamboos. They can measure up to 25 inches long and 5 inches wide, yet the culms only reach heights of 4 to 7 feet. It is a small running bamboo native to the temperate areas of central and eastern China.

#### Fun Fact

The large leaves of this plant are used for steaming and wrapping food in Asian cuisine.



## 7. Rough Bamboo

*Dendrocalamus asper*

This giant, tropical/subtropical bamboo, native to Southeast Asia and India, can grow to 100 feet tall with culms 8 to 10 inches in diameter. The emerging shoots are favored as an edible vegetable, while mature culms are used as cooking vessels, musical instruments, beehives, and other useful items.

### Fun Fact

Bamboo holds the world record for the fastest growing plant on Earth. One species has been reported to grow up to 35 inches per day—that's about 1.5 inches per hour.



## 8. Silver Stripe Bamboo

*Bambusa dolichomerithalla* 'Silverstripe'

Native to Taiwan, this clumping bamboo is characterized by growing in a tight bunch, with dark-green culms marked by silver-white stripes. The arching 35 to 40 feet culms make this an excellent choice as a privacy screen plant.

### Fun Fact

The straighter culms have been used as blowpipes and others are used as cooking vessels.



## 9. Beechy Bamboo

*Bambusa beecheyana*

A native of the Guangdong Province of southern China, its variable growth habit reaches up to 50 feet with a culm diameter of about 5 inches. Maturing culms usually have a white powder on them, and tender young shoots are eaten by animals and humans.

### Fun Fact

This plant is named after Captain Frederick William Beechy, an English naval officer, geographer, artist, author, and navigator. The naturalist on his ship, G.T. Lay, collected this species after the ship anchored in 1827.





## 10. Timor Black Bamboo

*Bambusa lako*

This bamboo is a tropical species native to Timor, one of the lesser Sunda Islands in the Indonesian Archipelago. Young culms of this bamboo are green; as they mature they transform to a glossy black with scattered, light green stripes.

### Fun Fact

Bamboos are members of the grass family or *Poaceae*. They are a diverse group; some grow as small herbaceous plants and others develop large woody culms. All grow naturally in both tropical and temperate regions of the world.



## 11. Mexican Weeping Bamboo

*Otatea acuminata*

This drought-tolerant and clumping bamboo is native to Central and Southern Mexico. An attractive species with soft, fully arching leaves and culms, this bamboo has numerous uses, from furniture to fencing to hats. All of these items are produced by skilled artisans throughout Mexico.

### Fun Fact

The species name *acuminata* means pointed or tapering, which refers to the leaf shape.



## 12. Blue Bamboo

*Fargesia papyrifera*

This bamboo grows at an elevation of 3,000 to 12,000 feet in its native habitat of Yunnan, China. It is a great choice as an attractive container bamboo, with bluish culms and softly arching branches and leaves. The botanical name *papyrifera* is derived from the Greek *papro*, which means paper, and *fera*, which means bearing.

### Fun Fact

Early in China's history, records were kept on thin strips of bamboo that were still intact and legible centuries later.



### 13. Alphonse Karr Bamboo

*Bambusa multiplex* 'Alphonse Karr'

Native to China, this species is also known as Cheena Bata (Chinese bamboo) in Sri Lanka. It makes an excellent ornamental and container plant. The juvenile, magenta-colored culms distinguish it from other *Bambusa multiplex* cultivars.

#### Fun Fact

This plant is named after Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, a French horticulturist, critic, journalist, novelist, and pamphleteer of the 19th century.



### 14. Black Bamboo

*Phyllostachys nigra*

This popular type of bamboo grows in many forms, varying in size and coloration. It is an excellent choice for a contained environment, since it is a running bamboo. This attractive bamboo ranges across eastern and central Asia.

#### Fun Fact

After being introduced into the southeast US, this genus was used by Thomas Edison to start his light bulb factory by using filaments produced from pieces of the culm.



### 15. Golden Goddess Bamboo

*Bambusa multiplex* 'Golden Goddess'

This cold-tolerant cultivar is a good choice for an ornamental hedge or windbreak. Bamboo can be running or clumping in habit. Golden goddess bamboo is a clumping bamboo, making it more controlled in a landscaped setting.

#### Fun Fact

Bamboo flowers are small and borne in large clusters or inflorescences. They are often “perfect”—containing both male and female parts. Bamboo is usually wind pollinated, but may also be pollinated by insects.

