

Pseudosasa japonica

[Synonyms : *Arundinaria japonica*, *Arundinaria matake*, *Arundinaria metake*, *Arundinaria usawae*, *Bambusa japonica*, *Bambusa metake*, *Pleioblastus usawae*, *Pseudosasa japonica* forma *akebono*, *Pseudosasa japonica* forma *akebonosuzi*, *Pseudosasa japonica* var. *flavovariiegata*, *Pseudosasa japonica* var. *purpurascens*, *Pseudosasa japonica* var. *tsutsumiana*, *Pseudosasa japonica* var. *usawae*, *Pseudosasa japonica* forma *variiegata*, *Pseudosasa usawae*, *Sasa japonica*, *Yadakeya japonica*]

ARROW BAMBOO is an evergreen bamboo. Native to Korea and Japan it has long, pale brown stems with waxy white powder below each joint.

It is also known as *Arundinariya yaponskaya* (Russian), *Ee dae* (Korean), Hardy metake bamboo, Japanese arrow bamboo, *Jian zhu* (Chinese), *Me dake* (Japanese), *Pfeilbambus* (German), *Ri ben shi zhu* (Taiwanese), *Sahn jook* (Korean), *Shin wi dae* (Korean), *Shi zhu* (Chinese), *Trúc Nhât* (Vietnamese), and *Yadake* (Japanese).

The flowers are pollinated by the wind. After a period of rare flowering this bamboo will recover (unlike many others that will die) although it can take some years to do so.

Japonica means ‘of or from Japan’.

Cooked young shoots have been eaten locally as a vegetable.

This is one of the bamboos to which pandas can be partial.

Small canes have been used in Korea and Japan for building the frames for the mud walls of houses, as well as for basketry, and umbrella ribs. They are also used for making round fans and other small items. Stems have served as fencing material – and the ancient Japanese also used them for making arrow shafts as they do today for modern Japanese archery.

It is said to have been introduced to France in 1850 by Dr. Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866), a Bavarian physician and botanist. (He had served as a medical officer for the Dutch East India Company in Japan for six years until 1829.) Apparently it is believed to have been the first oriental bamboo to have reached North America, arriving there in about 1860.

This bamboo has been cultivated as hedging and screening in the West and has also been grown there as a windbreak. In this latter capacity it has been noted that it was planted in Cornwall (in south-western England) in the mid-1950s and within a decade it had reached 8-9 feet in height. It has also proved to be of value to environmentalists who have planted it along riverbanks. The bamboo has not only provided erosion control on them but also it has helped to break the direction of flooding water – when appropriately positioned to form groynes on rivers that are prone to burst their banks.