



Linda said her Bambusa chungii 'Barbellata' (left) didn't seem to suffer like her Bambusa emeiensis 'Viridiflavus' (right) and her others did

BOO HOO.....WHAT TO DO WITH MY BAMBOO???

By Linda Gay
Horticulturist

These blustery winter days have certainly wreaked havoc with our giant tropical bamboos, so what is a gardener to do? Do nothing for now as long as we continue to get some rain to keep the roots moist but not over wet.

We still have the month of February to live through with more projected freezing, cold weather. Many of the bamboo plants are showing brown leaves on green culms which tell me they are alive and well. The brown leaves are caused by wind desiccation (drying) and cold temperatures.

With this being the case, just wait until after last frost and then rake the leaves and mulch away from the base, put 5-10# of organic fertilizer around the outside of the culm (3' out) and top dress with compost at least 3' out from the edge of the plant.

New leaves will push off the brown leaves as this technique will nourish the feeder roots and promote many new shoots from the base of the plant. The main tip is if your culm is green it will resprout!

If growing a more tender bamboo, this will be easily recognized because the "culms" (shoots) will be brown and dead and they won't have any leaves on them. Culms will need to be removed by cutting the bottom of the shoot at soil level.

You may have a Zone 10 bamboo like *Bambusa oldhamii* where all the culms froze and will need to be removed at soil level. The new shoots will be small and you will have to start over getting to those large culms again. If this is the case, I recommend replacing the bamboo with a much hardier one. The most common, cold hardy bamboos are, l to r, below: *Bambusa textilis* 'Gracilis', *Bambusa chungii* 'Barbellata' and *Bambusa multiplex* varieties.



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