

Guide to Volunteer Organizations

Self-Led: Johnsongrass, Bamboo & Giant Cane Control Workday

Your responsibilities

- Check Eventbrite Calendar
- Submit [form](#) to parksvolunteer@austintexas.gov 30 days prior to event
- Conduct site visit with Watershed Protection Department and/or Park Manager
- Establish, in agreement with Park Manager, site for piling the cuttings
- Estimate volunteer needs (2 units minimum suggested in 2-hour shifts; 1 unit = 2 hours with 15 volunteers)
- Post volunteer opportunities and registration
- Coordinate information/training tasks
- Confirm attendance prior to event
- Gather liability waiver signatures
- Give safety orientation
- Provide work gloves, hand pruners, bags
- Cleanup and organize piles of cuttings

Volunteer profile, age range: Activity appropriate for 10+ years old for Johnsongrass and 15+ years old for Giant Cane and Bamboo (volunteers under 18 years require adult supervision).

Volunteers must have received training on identifying Johnsongrass, Giant Cane, and/or Bamboo.

Volunteers must demonstrate having ability to safely handle/use hand pruners (training on site is OK)

Clothes and safety: Closed toed shoes, adequate drinking water, sun protection, poison ivy protection

Tools/Supplies: poison ivy block, gloves, pruners, loppers, lawn bags, invasive plant ID guides

Background

Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*), Golden bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*), and Giant Cane (*Arundo donax*) are invasive grasses that crowd out native plants, particularly in riparian areas. Ecological restoration is a long-term process. Control of exotic invasive species is only a part of this process and must be done gradually, particularly in areas with high densities on exotic invasive plants. Areas infested with Bamboo, Johnsongrass and Giant Cane need to be seeded with native grasses and wildflowers. Tree seedling planting and/or seed bank enrichment are crucial to restore the native plant community, especially in areas with very little growth of native seedlings. In addition, soil amendment is an important component of the restoration process.

Johnson grass is very difficult to control due to its long term seed viability and extensive root system. It is easily identified by its wide leaf blade with white stripe down the center. Removal requires manually pulling as much of the root system as possible with continued follow up. Seed heads are removed to decrease further spread.



Johnson grass

Golden Bamboo grows by runners and root rhizomes making it difficult to remove. Look for fan like cluster leaves and jointed wood like stems to identify. **Giant Cane**, “Arundo”, is identified by alternate pointed leaves



Bamboo



Giant Cane

with parallel veins.

Day of event, removing Johnsongrass, Arundo and/or Bamboo

Note: Positively identify invasive plants before removing. Refer to www.austintexas.gov/invasive

Johnsongrass

- Cut Johnsongrass to the base of the plant (in areas with gentle slopes, less than 3:1, remove root system if feasible)
- It is preferable to remove plants in early summer, when it is in full bloom and before seeds have formed.
- If seeds have **NOT** formed, removed plants can be laid on the ground as mulch. If seeds **are already formed**, even if green, bag seed heads to minimize reseeding.

Arundo and Bamboo

- Hand pull small plants and cut large plants to the base of the plant (in areas with gentle slopes, less than 3:1, and minor invasions, remove root system if feasible)
- Cutting these plants once with no plan for ongoing removal of re-growth will have little impact on the infestation, so plan for follow up monthly workdays (or every other week if possible) to remove regrowth.
- Bamboo and Arundo cuttings cannot be left on site; they can readily grow roots and re-establish. All cuttings need to be piled up in an orderly fashion, ready for pick-up. Piles must be not taller than 3’ and must be placed at least 5’ apart from each other. This location **must be agreed upon** through communication with PARD manager **prior to the event day**.

Workday follow up should include replanting and/or seeding (refer to Self-led Guide to Seeding)

Provided by Parks and Recreation Department

Retrieval of Bamboo and/or Arundo cuttings and/or bags with Johnsongrass. Location for piling removed plants **MUST** be agreed upon with Park manager **PRIOR** to event day.

Provided by Watershed Protection Department

Assist with initial site visit to help determine area extent, scope, and potential follow-ups of the project.