A Request To Amend Rule Q34 of the Plant Quarantine Act (37 Stat., 315)

This rule was enacted October 1st 1918 and a lot has changed since then as regards plant propagation as well as the utilization of bamboo. This rule was intended to stop the spread of plant diseases specific to bamboo to the U.S. Since the time rule Q34 was enacted modern cultivation methods have been adopted in many countries now producing bamboo. Many new products like laminated dimensional lumber and clothing fabric are now produced using bamboo as a raw material. To increase production of plants to a level needed for this industry new propagation methods have been utilized .The method that is most productive is tissue culture and mericlone division of plants grown in a sterile laboratory environment. The plants selected for this process are thoroughly screened for disease and as they are grown in sealed flasks carry no risk of the presence of insect pests. This is the only reliable method to produce bamboo plants of uniform quality and in sufficient number to establish commercial plantations. Bamboo flowers only after very long intervals (up to 120 years) and due to genetic variation does not produce a uniform progeny. Traditional vegative propagation including division and cuttings methods are labor intensive.

The process used in producing bamboo mericlones is very complicated and has taken many years to develop. The company that is currently producing these plants, Oprin's Plants, is based in The Netherlands with production facilities there, in Belgium, Thailand and Indonesia. The process is subject to international patents and as such they own it. At this time Oprin's plants is not interested in operating in the U.S. or licensing the process.

Recently Maui and Hawaii Counties have approved the use of one species of bamboo for construction. The engineering firm that did the work needed for this first legal use of bamboo in the U.S. is now working on the data needed for approval of several more species. As this material is only produced in limited quantity locally the bamboo used must be imported.

Bamboo plantations have been started on a small scale on Maui and Hawaii as well as in several Mainland states. The time needed for a plantation to reach production is around 10 years. Once production begins bamboo can be harvested every year without replanting. Bamboo is very effective in reducing soil erosion and has the same effect on climate stabilization that natural hardwood and softwood forests have. The use of bamboo to supplement wood for lumber can help reduce the over use of our natural forest resources. As a source of fiber for textiles bamboo out produces cotton per acre by one hundred to one without the need for annual replanting or heavy pesticide use.

I believe that amending rule Q34 to allow the importation of bamboo plants as mericlones in flasks will pose no danger of introducing any pest or disease to the U.S.

The unintended consequence of this rule is that it severely impedes the development of bamboo as a crop in Hawaii and elsewhere in the U.S. thereby reducing and in fact eliminating our country's ability to compete in the global market for bamboo products, in fact the U.S is the primary end destination for bamboo products produced in other countries.

The use of bamboo as a substitute for wood and cotton can help reduce soil erosion, fuel consumption and pesticide use while providing a new source of raw material that by its nature is more sustainable than materials currently in use.

Mahalo Lennart Hilding Lundstrom
Hawai'i Chapter American Bamboo Society

# American Bamboo Society

Quara
Restrict
Bam

***Promoting the Beauty and Utility of Bamboo***

## Navigation



The following is the background of the Bamboo Quarantine and import permit system, as best I know it.

Gib Cooper kindly dug up the text of rule Q34, going back to 1918; it has apparently had only minor changes since.

## The Original Rule

**USDA, Office of the Secretary, Federal Horticultural Board**

*The fact has been determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and notice is hereby given, that dangerous plant diseases, including the bamboo smut (Ustiliago shiraiana), new to and not heretofore widely prevalent or distributed within and throughout the United States, occur in Japan, China, India, Philippine Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, Africa, Europe, South America, British West Indies, Cuba and Central America.*

*Now, therefore, I, D. F.*

Workshop
Bamboo Identification Manual
U.S. Climate Zones
Species Source List
Books on bamboo
Search
Commercial messages
Site feedback

*Huston, Secretary of Agriculture, under the authority conferred by the act of Congress approved August 20, 1912, known as the plant quarantine act (37 Stat., 315), do hereby declare that it is necessary, in order to prevent the introduction into the United States of the dangerous plant diseases mentioned above, to forbid the importation into the United States from the above mentioned countries and all other foreign countries and localities of bamboo seed, plants, or cuttings thereof capable of propagation, including all genera and species of the tribe Bambuseae.*

*On and after October 1, 1918, and until further notice, by virtue of said act of Congress approved August 20, 1912, the importation for any purpose of any variety of bamboo seed, plants, or cuttings thereof capable of propagation, including all genera and species of the tribe Bambuseae, from the above named and all other foreign countries and localities, is prohibited, except for experimental or scientific purposes by the Department of Agriculture: Provided, That the entry for immediate export, or for immediate transportation and exportation in bond, of bamboo seed, plants, or cuttings thereof capable of*

*cuttings and/or capable of propagation, including all genera and species of the tribe Bambuseae, may be permitted in accordance with the regulations governing such entry for immediate export, or for immediate transportation and exportation in bond, promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture October 20, 1917.*

*This notice of quarantine does not apply to bamboo timber consisting of the mature dried culms or canes which are imported for fishing-rod, furniture-making, or other purposes, or to any kind of article manufactured from bamboo, or to bamboo shoots cooked or otherwise preserved.*

*Done in the District of Columbia this 8th day of August, 1918 Witness my hand and the seal of the USDA.*

*D. F. Huston Sec. of Agriculture.*

## Subsequent History

That's the beginning of the story. For many years, the only bamboos brought into the US were those imported by the USDA under its plant importation program. That program had ended by 1979, when ABS was founded. Therefore, one of the primary goals of ABS, given in its original

ABS, given in its original Bylaws was: To preserve and increase the number of bamboo species in the United States.

To implement this, the corporation proposes to establish a bamboo quarantine greenhouse near the corporation's principal executive office to import selected species from foreign sources. Haubrich managed to obtain a permit to import bamboos, under *that exception in the rule*, "for experimental or scientific purposes by the Department of Agriculture." No, the plant smut that was the cause of the rule was never a problem.

Nor have other diseases of bamboo been brought in that have affected anything else.

For a while the permit issued to Haubrich for ABS (later renewed by Gil Voss) was the only one. That permit is now held by George Shor for the Southern California Chapter of ABS. To our knowledge only 9 other permits are currently active.

- Chris De Rosa for the Northeast Chapter
- The Pacific Northwest Chapter
- Brent Adrian
- Two are to tissue-culture laboratories

(Harry Highkin in Hawaii, John Woods in Tennessee).

- One is operated by the Northern California Chapter at the San Francisco Zoo.
- One is to James Waddick in Missouri.
- One is to Don Evans for Broward Community College.
- One is to Frank Linton for the University of Georgia Coastal Gardens (the former Barbour-Lathrop Plant Introduction Center) in Savannah.

The official at USDA who issues the permits has told me that he prefers to issue the permits to ABS chapters simply because it allows a maximum number of persons to use the existing permits and facilities at well-established locations, which minimizes the workload for his under-funded APHIS staff.

Last year some ABS members proposed making large-scale commercial importations. I asked USDA if this was possible. The answer was that if that meant importing large numbers of plants of a *single* species for direct sale, no. The rationale for the permits was to allow

importation of propagation stock, and under this guideline a reasonable number of plants of one variety would be not more than 6, to allow for attrition and variation between individual plants; this was again a policy to minimize the workload for inspectors, of whom there are very few.

## Importing Bamboo

If you are to import bamboos on a trip abroad, the permit holder must give you a copy of a permit and a letter of authorization to use it, and special mailing labels if you plan to ship. You must check the plants to make sure they are free of disease and pests, and must remove all soil. You may need permission to export the plants from the foreign country. Some countries issue "phytosanitary certificates" for bamboo. These are required for other plants that do not require post-entry inspection and quarantine. I have been assured by USDA that bamboo brought in under a Departmental Permit (like ours) are exempt. However, there is a proposed change in regulations that might eliminate this exemption.

USDA prefers that the plants be shipped directly to the inspection station

nearest their final destination, using the special labels which bear the permit number. If the plants are carried as baggage, the plants must be inspected when the plane first touches US soil. This means that plane schedules must be carefully planned; bamboos aren't inspected at an airport nights, weekends, or holidays.

After arrival and inspection, the plants must be taken directly to the Quarantine Greenhouse designated in the permit. The permit-holder is the nominal "importer." At first, the requirement was that the plants be held for 2 years in a locked greenhouse. That time is now one year. During that period they are checked regularly by County agricultural inspectors, and after a final inspection, released.

After release, under our Chapter's rules (other permit-holders may have different rules, or even not accept plants shipped by others), the plants are shared equitably between the Chapter and the person who covered the cost of importation. If there are 2 specimens of one variety, one goes to each; if there is only one, we propagate; if there are more we negotiate. We keep the Chapter's share of the plants at Quail

share of the plants in Quail Gardens for our collection, for planting, and for propagation stock. We do not give out "custody plants" as some other chapters have done.

## The ABS and Importation of Bamboo

The ABS general goal is to get more kinds of bamboo into general use in the United States. This Chapter's specific goal is to build a collection, from which new varieties can be propagated. That is why we run an import program. We do not sell our only specimen of a newly-released plant at a high price at auction; we wait until we have several propagules. The income of our Southern California sales comes almost entirely from selling large numbers of plants at low prices, not from spectacular bids for a few rare plants. That income supports operation of the import program, grants for bamboo research, and other worthy programs.

Yes, the bamboo quarantine law is antiquated, and is a bottleneck on importation of new varieties. As long as it is on the books, the system we have seems to be the best way to accomplish the

best way to accomplish the stated goals of ABS. It depends, of course, on competent volunteers to take care of the plants.

George Shor

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# You are invited to voice your concerns about the Farm Bill

Members of the United States Department of Agriculture would like to hear from you:

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?

6. How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

## Please join us on Saturday, Nov. 12th, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**At the Sheraton Keauhou Beach Resort in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island.**

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