



Chusquea gigantea

Chusquea gigantea, previously listed as *Chusquea* aff. *culeou* or *Chusquea breviglumis*, is a South American bamboo native to Chile. The species is considered to be the largest, and one of the hardiest within the *Chusquea* genus.

It is a beautiful evergreen, open clump-forming bamboo, that can grow quite tall, although staying slightly smaller in temperate climates.

One of the greatest assets of *Chusquea gigantea* is that the canes are completely solid, making it a potentially very valuable bamboo species for medium size timber production.

Summary

Height	6 - 15 m
Diameter	3 - 5 cm
Growth Habit	Open Clumper
Climate	Temperate - Subtropical
Hardiness	-18°C
Origin	Chile

Photos





Culms

The straight and solid culms of *Chusquea gigantea* are on average 6-15 m tall and 3-5 cm in diameter. They have an attractive, bright yellow-green, glossy colour, and a mid-green band around the pronounced nodes.

Culm sheaths

The culm sheaths of *Chusquea gigantea* have a red colour and are covered with small white hairs. The sheaths are tightly wrapped, and may stay on the culms for a couple of years.

The sheaths of *Chusquea gigantea* look different to many other species sheaths, they seem quite short and tight against the culm, and they tend to crack or split as the culm grows but don't fall off very readily.

Rhizomes

Although *Chusquea gigantea* is technically a sympodial (clumping) bamboo, the rhizomes are quite long, forming a slowly spreading grove with well-spaced canes, also referred to as an open clump.

The root and rhizome structure of *Chusquea gigantea* tends to be much deeper than with other bamboo species, making it more difficult to divide from established plants in the ground or being grown in pots.

Branches

Chusquea gigantea has a characteristic identification branch system. A bunch of branches will emerge with one dominant primary branch that reaches around a metre or more in length, and multiple subsidiary branches growing from a culm node.

Leaves

The narrow lance-shaped leaves have a mid green colour and are up to 12 cm long and 1 cm broad.

Shoots

Young shoots have a deep pink to almost red colour.

In its native habitat *Chusquea gigantea* grows in temperate forests and can withstand temperatures up to -18°C.

Habitat



Spread

This is a big open clumping bamboo and over a 10 year vigorous growth period the clump may spread up to 4 m wide. Under optimal conditions it could even spread to that width in 5-6 years.

Uses

There is a thriving cottage industry in Chile using *Chusquea gigantea* for furniture and flooring material, as well as smaller crafts such as bamboo door mats.

The solid canes are also frequently used as a timber in construction projects such as greenhouses or other structures.

Cultivation

Like most clumping bamboo species, *Chusquea gigantea* is very quick to establish. It can reach 4 m tall after two growing seasons, even in heavy clay soil. It likes to be in the sun or light shade.

For example, it would appreciate some sun in the morning for a few hours but may not like full sun in the middle of the day if it's a really hot climate.

Origin



Native to:

Central Chile

