

Planting Instructions

The tree planting season in WV for bare-root seedlings occurs late November through mid April. Shipping and planting of seedlings should only be done while seedlings are dormant. Planting seedlings after bud break, caused by warm temperatures, will result in decreased survival rates.

To optimize survival, plant seedlings immediately upon their arrival from the Nursery. If this is not possible, store the bundles in a cool place such as a basement. It is critical that the roots never dry out. Exposure to warm air and sun can kill seedlings in a few minutes. Seedlings are dipped in a polymer jell that will hold moisture for a few weeks after being bundled. Do not wash this off. If needed, water seedlings with a very fine mist. When transporting seedlings to the planting site, protect them from wind and sunlight. If necessary, keep seedlings in a bucket of mud slurry, keeping the roots coated at all times. **Do not put seedlings directly in water.**

Steps for Successful Planting of Small Quantities:

- Dig the hole large enough so that all of the root system can be spread out evenly.
- Only prune damaged or excessively long roots.
- Do not bend the roots to force them into a hole that is too small.
- It is very important to plant the seedling at the right depth. The upper roots should be just under the surface of the soil. **Do not plant too deep.**
- Place the soil back into the hole and gently tamp to remove any air pockets.
- The seedling will need to be watered well at the time of planting, especially if planted in late spring. It is very beneficial, although not always necessary, to water the new seedling weekly throughout the first growing season. **Lack of water** is the #1 killer of newly planted trees.
- Seedlings can benefit from mulching for several reasons: Reducing some weed competition, keeping soil moist, and keeping lawn equipment from the new seedling.
- If mulch is used, keep it from contacting the seedling stem, use less than a 3 inch layer, and cover a 12-18 inch diameter area around the seedling.
- **Do not add fertilizer to a new seedling.** It will burn very easily. Reducing weed competition and watering the seedling are much more critical for the seedling to become established.

For Planting Large Quantities:

Refer to the Planting Bar Method.