

Seedling Planting Guide

Thank you for purchasing seedlings from Eaton Conservation District. The revenue generated by our seedling sale helps us to continue conservation programs in the county.

The Trip Home -----

All of the seedlings you have purchased are bare rooted. The bare roots are surrounded by moist moss or shredded paper and then wrapped in nursery paper or bagged. This will keep the roots moist for your trip home, but the plants should be planted within 48 hours. You can store your seedlings in a cool shaded location such as a cool basement or a garage. The roots must be kept moist but not wet.

- **Do not leave plants in the hot trunk.**
- **Do not let the plants freeze.**
- **Do not leave plants in direct sunlight or windy areas.**
- **Do not stack the bundles or leave them open.**
- **Do not store plants in buckets of water.**

Heeling-in-----

Are you too busy right now to plant your seedlings? Then “heel-in” the plants until you’re ready. Heeling-in is a very simple process. All you have to do is place the seedling in a trench, cover with soil, and then water them. The seedlings do not need to be spaced any particular distance apart in the trench—just open the bundles, untie any strings around the seedlings, and spread the seedlings out. There are resources online to provide more guidance.

Site Selection-----

Check for above ground and below ground conflicts. Do not plant your tree where it will interfere with buildings, overhead or underground utility lines, pavement, or intersection sightlines as it gets bigger. When selecting a site for your seedlings, you need to take into consideration the plant’s characteristics. Does the plant need shade, full sun, dry or moist soil? How tall will it grow and how wide?

Make sure your planting spot is at least-----

- 3 feet from pavement or fencing on both sides
- 10-15 feet from buildings or other trees
- 25 feet from overhead electric wires, if your tree will grow taller than 30 feet
- If your tree will grow taller than 30 feet do not plant it within 25 feet of overhead electric wires
- Not over a septic system drain field
- Plant only salt tolerant plants near roads where salt is applied for ice control

Site Preparation-----

Weed control is perhaps the most important measure to take to improve the survival and growth of your seedlings. Competition with weeds and grasses may stress or kill small seedlings, therefore it is very important in areas with sod or weed cover to scalp or remove a portion of the sod. This can be done by merely “scalping” the vegetation in an area 3 feet in diameter where the seedling will be planted.

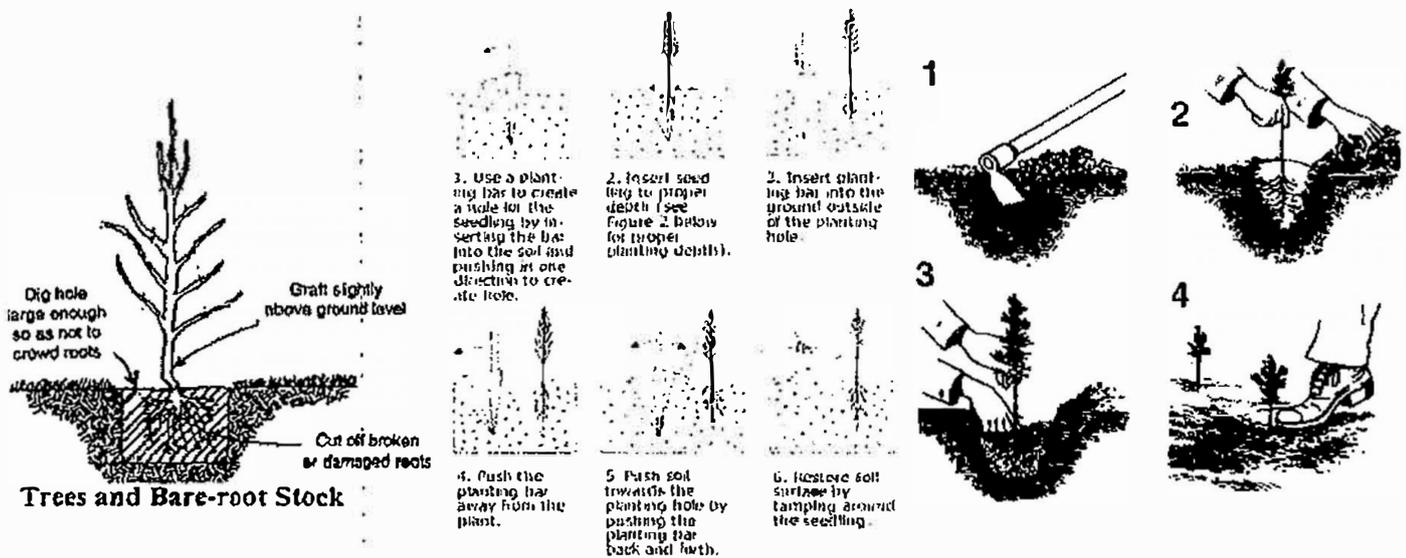
With a shovel, work up the “scalped” area to loosen the soil and allow for rapid root growth. With a trowel or other appropriate tool, dig a hole large enough to accommodate the roots without bending or cramping them. **Do not add any other amendments to the soil!** The seedlings will adapt faster in native soil and develop a superior root system.

Other methods of dealing with sod are to till the ground or to use herbicides. In light, sandy soils with no sod or grass competition, or an eroded area, scalping is not necessary.

Seedling Placement-----

During the planting keep the seedlings in a bucket of moist moss or burlap. Remove one tree at a time. Roots will dry too fast if you take out a handful at a time. The roots must not be allowed to dry before or during planting.

The roots must be in a natural, uncurled position when planted. Roots can be pruned (not broken off) proportionally to their height. Small seedlings (8"-10" from root collar to top) can be pruned to 8". 10"-18" seedlings can be pruned to 10" and 18" + seedlings can be pruned to 12". Make certain that the planting hole is deep enough and large enough. Avoid "J" rooting, roots should hang straight in the hole. The seedling should be planted in an upright position at the same depth or 1/2" deeper than it was growing at the nursery. The soil around the seedling after planting should be firmed to prevent the roots from drying out. Once planted, if available, water should be used to saturate soil around the roots to eliminate air pockets.



Chemical Herbicides-----

Chemical weed control on windbreak plantings has been very successful. Many landowners have used "Round Up" (labeled for ornamentals). If you do decide to use a chemical control be sure to follow the directions carefully and to shield the seedling from any contact with the herbicide. The best time to spray is several weeks after planting the seedling so the grass and weeds are sprouted and growing. Don't wait until the vegetation is high because it will rub and touch the seedling with the wet spray and may kill the seedling. The spraying should be done in the morning, on a sunny day, with no wind or very little wind, after the dew has left the seedlings. Using a pre-emergent herbicide will also help deter weed germination.

Fertilizing and Watering-----

Seedlings should not be fertilized within the first 12 months of planting. Fertilizers tend to dehydrate newly planted seedlings and encourage unwanted weed growth. The mulch placed around the seedlings will give it all the nutrients it will need. For the second and third year you can fertilize each seedling with 2 oz. (1/4 cup) of 12-12-12. Sprinkle the fertilizer around each seedling drip edge. Remove any fertilizer touching the seedling. The seedlings should be watered as needed-1" of water per week. If it hasn't rained for a week on well-drained soils you should water the seedling. Make sure to watch for signs of stress.

Planting Preparation

A little forethought can go a long way

Snow may be covering the ground now, but planting season is just around the corner. For many, that means putting new trees in the ground. But there are several things to consider before you dig that hole, or even before you make the purchase. By thinking about the following points you may save yourself some headaches in the years to come.

Plant for Final Size: Obviously, the tree you purchase is going to get considerably larger over time; you would be extremely disappointed if it didn't. So read up on the species you are considering to find out what the final height and spread might look like. Avoid planting trees too close to other structures or each other.

Plant for Energy Efficiency: Which side of your house you choose to plant on can make all the difference. A well placed tree can greatly reduce your home heating and cooling costs. Deciduous trees placed to the south, southeast and southwest can help reduce summer heat, while evergreens to the north and northwest can help block winter winds.

Plant for Safety: Think about what the adult tree will look like; does it block entry points to your home? If so, you might want to choose a different location. Concealing cover may aid those looking to break into your home.

Plant for Aesthetics: Trees can also add beauty to your yard. When choosing a species to plant, consider the scale, shape, color, seeds and flowers in order to pick the one that will meet your needs. Also consider the amount of yard care needed. Do you want to deal with the aftermath of the large flower petals of a Magnolia, the fruits of a Walnut or acorns of an Oak? Every tree species is different, and you should choose based on as much knowledge as possible in order to enhance your landscape as you desire.

Plant for an Ecosystem: By planting trees you are also planting habitat for all kinds of creatures. What you invite will depend on what you choose to plant. Different trees hold different food sources (crabapples vs. acorns for instance), and different heights will offer cover to different birds and mammals. But the habitat values go beyond wildlife. The roots of your tree will prevent soil erosion, filter water and reduce runoff. Basically trees = better regional water quality. And finally,

Plant for Posterity: With the potential to live for hundreds of years, trees can be living monuments to be cherished for future generations. The benefits a tree gives us will only increase as it ages. Trees planted now can be a gift for the present as well as the future.

