



## Care For New Seedlings Tips for Long Term Success

Now that you have your new seedlings you need to take care of them.

When you get them home:

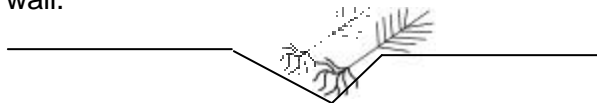
- Loosen the packaging and make sure the roots are moist. Add water if necessary, but do not flood. Roots need air too.
- Store in a cool place (around 50°F).

If you are not going to plant your seedlings within the next few days:

- Place trees in a cool and shady spot- out of direct sunlight, but not in complete darkness.
- Check the roots every couple of days to make sure they are moist and add water as necessary.

If you are not going to plant them within a week or two:

- Find a shady location with soil that is easily worked.
- Dig a shallow trench and place the trees in a line along the trench wall.



- Fill in the trench with soil.
- Water the seedlings thoroughly.
  - This is referred to as “healing in” and is a temporary storage solution.

Keep unplanted trees out of full sunlight to reduce their water needs and helps prevent wilting. Please plant your trees as soon as you can to reduce tree stress.

Once the tree has been planted:

- Give each tree some water- if feasible.
- Protect from damage (weed eaters and lawn mowers have killed many trees). This can be done by:
  - Flagging each tree so you know where it is.
  - Mulching around the tree (highly recommended for soil water retention as well as protection). Use woodchips, clean hay, newspapers, or cut a slit in a paper plate and slide it around the base of the seedling.
  - Creating no-mow zones.
- Prune off any broken branches.
- Water accessible trees every few days for the first few weeks, then when dry- especially in times of drought.
  - Be sure to water deeply by adding water slowly directly over the root zone. This will help prevent drought stress as it encourages the roots to grow deeper into the soil.

## Fertilizing

There is some debate as to whether fertilizer should be added when planting seedlings. If you're working in an area with unknown soils nutrients, consider have a full soil nutrient analysis done. Here are some general rules to follow when deciding to fertilize:

- If the land has sat without any heavy agriculture use, you probably don't need to fertilize.
- If the trees are being planted in a forest, you probably don't need to fertilize.
- If the trees are being planted in a lawn that is fertilized, you probably don't want to fertilize.
- If the land was recently used in crop production, you may consider having a soil test done to determine whether you need to fertilize.

Fertilizer is not plant food It is the addition of supplemental nutrients that make it easier for a plant to create food. The addition of too much fertilizer can burn roots or cause imbalances in the soil, which lead to plant stress. When in doubt have a soil test done.

## Winter and Wildlife Protection

Protecting trees from winter weather is usually not necessary. The snow will generally cover most seedlings, and that is the safest place for them.

Taller seedlings may require protection from deer browsing. This can be done through physical barriers (fences, tree shelters, burlap) or chemical repellants. Wildlife is usually the largest threat to young seedlings.

## Mortality Rate

Some of your seedlings will probably die within the first year due to drought, flood or handling problems. The average survival rate is 80%. If you have few than 5 in 10 trees survive, evaluate your planting practices and your site before you plant again.

## Planting Schemes:

### Planting Trees for a Windbreak

Space large trees 10-15 feet apart and inter-plant with small trees or shrubs.

Plant three rows with either staggered spacing or with tall trees in the center row, and smaller trees on the outer.

Great information on windbreaks can be found at the National Agroforestry Center web site: <http://www.unl.edu/nac>.

### Planting Trees for a Screen

Space trees by their mature spread to allow for lower branch retention:

Spruce and Fir: 15-20 feet apart

Arborvitae/White Cedar: 10-15 feet apart

Plant two rows with staggered spacing to fill in the gaps.

### Planting Trees for Reforestation

Forest plantings are usually spaced 8x8, 9x9 or 10x10 feet apart.

At an 8x8 spacing 680 trees are needed per acre.

At 9x9- 538 trees per acre

At 10x10- 436 trees per acre

Consider staggered planting to allow for more growing area per tree.

