

Tips for Successful Restoration Plantings



1.) Planting Dates

Plant bareroot plants between December 15 and March 31 in the Willamette Valley. This early planting will help aid in drought tolerance. Potted plants can be planted later into the spring or in the fall. Avoid planting on hot, windy days. Planting site must be free of snow and the soil frost-free. If planting bareroot seedlings, be sure to keep plants cool and the roots moist until they are planted. **Utilize existing vegetation, debris, and stumps to provide shade for newly planted seedlings wherever possible.**

2.) Planting Instructions

a. Spacing

- Generally, trees can be planted at a 10' x 10' or 12' x 12' spacing, and shrubs can be planted on an 8' x 8' spacing. For an urban setting, these plantings can be closer (5' x 5').
- However, spacing the trees at somewhat non-uniform distances produces a more natural appearance. Try to avoid placing them in straight lines (unless they are lining a path or walkway).
- Utilize shade from existing trees when planting to the greatest extent possible to provide shade for newly planted seedlings.

b. Planting Tips –Trees and Shrubs

- Be sure to check for utility lines before beginning to plant; plant only low growing trees or shrubs under overhead power lines.
- Clear weeds around planting site by hand-pulling, mowing or spraying with an appropriate herbicide (in the fall) and clearing away debris.

For bareroot plants:

- Open a hole or slit deeper than the root size to be planted to accommodate the root system with all roots pointing down (don't bend roots into "J" or "L" shapes).
- Do not twist or bunch roots. In slit planting, push the tree down to the bottom of the slit, then with a shaking motion, raise it gently back to the correct level.
- Plant seedlings slightly deeper than they grew in the nursery (indicated by a change in bark characteristics) with roots naturally positioned.
- While holding the tree in an upright position at the correct depth, bring loose, moist soil in around the root system.
- Do not let dry soil or surface litter fall into the hole. When the slit or hole is filled, pack the moist soil down firmly.

Tips for Successful Restoration Plantings (cont.)

For potted plants:

- Dig a hole slightly wider than the pot.
- Carefully remove the plant from the pot and gently loosen the potting soil and roots.
- Place into the hole and carefully pack the soil down with your hands or feet around the main stem of the plant, making sure that the plant is not leaning in one direction.

For all plants:

- No roots should be exposed or foliage covered.
- Place a plastic tree tube (staked with a bamboo stick), mesh netting, or chicken wire around each cutting and mound a small amount of soil around the base of the tube to keep rodents out and provide for protection from browsing animals (if this is a problem in your area).

3.) Maintenance/Weed Control

Controlling vegetation that will compete for moisture is critical to the success of your planting. **Competing vegetation will need to be controlled for at least one year, but preferably two years.**

- To control competing vegetation, you can use an herbicide as a directed spray (be careful to shield the seedlings) or applied with a weed wiper around the hardwoods and shrubs in the spring or fall, but you **must** keep the chemical off the desirable plants. **Or:**
- Use some type of mulch, like sawdust or compost, spread to a 2" depth and 2'- 3' around newly planted seedlings.
- Two years after planting, inspect the plantings and flag or otherwise mark trees and shrubs that need to be replaced due to death, injury or disease.
- The tree tubes/netting may need to be physically removed, as the trees grow larger.
- Irrigation is recommended for the first 1-2 years during the months of July to September for newly planted native trees, shrubs, and flowering plants.

These tips were compiled by Marion Soil and Water Conservation District. We offer natural resource technical assistance to the residents of Marion County. Please call us at 503-391-9927 if you have questions or need assistance with your restoration planting.

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