

# Tips for Successful Restoration Plantings

## 1.) Planting Dates

Plant bareroot plants between December 15 and March 31 in the Willamette Valley. Planting in winter and early spring will help plants resist drought damage during the summer. Potted plants may be planted later into the spring or in the fall. Avoid planting on hot, windy days. Planting sites should be free of snow and frost. When handling bareroot plants, 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.) Bareroot Care

- Plant seedlings as soon as possible after purchase. For best results plant within a day or two.
- Seedlings may be stored for a short time (1-7 days) but must be kept moist (not wet) and cool. Keep them in the shade and in the sawdust that was provided to you with the plants.
- If you cannot plant within 7 days and the temperatures are above 50, you can “heel in” your plants outdoors. To do this, dig a sloping trench long enough, deep enough and wide enough to hold the roots of all plants. Lay the plant in the trench with the roots against the steep side. Cover the roots with soil and soak with water. Plant trees/shrubs as soon as possible and before March 31.

Heeling in plants

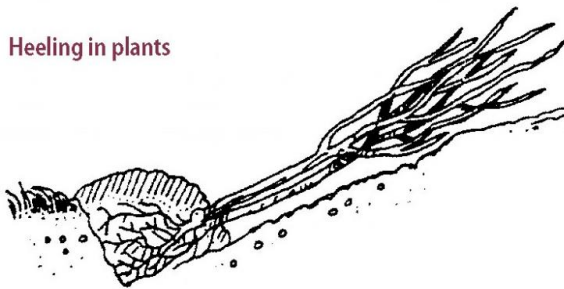


Image and instructions from Stark Bro's Nurseries and Orchards:  
[www.starkbros.com](http://www.starkbros.com)

## 3.) 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').
- Spacing the trees at somewhat non-uniform distances produces a more natural appearance. Planting in lines or rows makes maintenance easier, but it will take longer for the plantings to develop a natural appearance.
- Utilize shade from existing trees when planting to provide shade for newly planted seedlings.

### b. Planting Tips – Trees and Shrubs

- Be sure to check for utility lines before planting; 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 (envelope) 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 envelope planting, push the tree down to the bottom of the slit, then with a shaking motion, raise it gently back to the correct level.

# Tips for Successful Restoration Plantings (cont.)

- Plant so that the soil is at the level of the root crown or the highest side roots on the plant. Planting too deep can cause rot and eventual plant death. Planting too shallow will leave roots exposed.
- While holding the tree in an upright position at the correct depth, close the envelope. Use your feet to push the soil closed around the tree roots, being careful not to trap air at the roots. Alternatively, bring loose, moist soil in around the root system. Use the soil that was dug out of the hole to fill it back in.
- 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.

## *For potted plants:*

- Dig a hole slightly wider and as deep as 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.
- If you are doing a large restoration planting or have a lot of taller competing vegetation in the area, it may be helpful to flag the new plants so they are not accidentally cut down or mowed.
- Native plants do not need additional fertilizer.

### 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.**

- Use some type of mulch like woodchips or compost, spread to a 3-5" depth and 2'- 3' around newly planted seedlings. OR
- To control competing vegetation, you can use an herbicide as a directed spray (be careful to shield the seedlings) around the hardwoods and shrubs in the spring or fall, but you **must** keep the chemical off the desirable plants.
- 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.
- While your new landscape of native plants will be highly drought-tolerant once established, 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 the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District. The mission of the Marion SWCD is to protect, conserve and improve the quality of soil and water in Marion County through planning, technical assistance and education. We offer free assistance on natural resource issues to the residents of Marion County.

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