

**SEEDLINGS:** Purchase hardwood seedlings from a reputable nursery. The Alabama Forestry Commission has information on nurseries specializing in hardwoods.

**RECOMMENDED STOCKING LEVEL:** Typical spacing of hardwood species is 12 x 12, however, the desired stocking level may vary with the species planted, the site index and the objectives of the landowner. When using a cost-share program, spacing and number of trees/acre are specified in the cost-share plan and must be followed to qualify for reimbursement. To determine appropriate stocking level for a specific site, consult a professional forester or forest technician. Your local Alabama Forestry Commission office is available to assist you.



**EQUIPMENT:** Hardwood bare root seedlings are planted with a shovel, power auger, post-hole digger, hardwood planting dibble or machine planter. An acceptable machine planter has a coulter diameter of at least 32 inches and a planting foot/trencher plate assembly to create a trench at least 4 x 15 inches.

**METHOD OF PLANTING:** The planting hole must be deep and wide enough so the taproot is straight down without bending and the lateral roots are spread out. Plant seedlings with the root collar 1 – 2 inches below ground level with no roots exposed. Firmly press down topsoil around the seedling. To check firmness, grasp seedling with thumb and forefinger at ground line and try to move up and down. Properly planted seedlings will not move. When planting with machine planters, planting furrows must follow the contour. Failure to plant on the contour will result in disapproval of the practice under cost-share. Coordinate release of seedlings with tractor speed to prevent "sweeping" of roots or shallow planting.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Seedlings are perishable; keep seedling roots moist at all times. Plant only dormant seedlings and plant promptly after being received. Discard seedlings that are obviously small, diseased, dried out or damaged. Acceptable hardwood seedlings for planting should be a minimum of 18 inches tall and 3/8 inch in root collar diameter.

**CHECKING RESULTS:** Seedlings planted in a cost-share program will be checked for compliance. Determinations of correctly planted seedlings are based on above ground observations only. Seedlings should be free from excessive lean, and of sufficient height and root collar diameter. The number of living and correctly planted seedlings per acre must be within the minimum and maximum number designated by the program.

Photo Credit: Alabama Forestry Commission



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