Brief Look At Tree Planting
Leigh Klein

1. **Know why you want to start a plantation:**
   - What are your long term goals: what will you do when the trees are mature?
   - What are your short term goals: will you use your land while the trees grow?
   - What time and resources can you give to the care of your plantation?

2. **Select tree species which will meet your goals.**

3. **Ensure that the species you select will grow well on your site.**
   - Does your soil provide what the trees need?
   - Is your climate the correct one for those trees?
   - Are there diseases or insects in your area which might damage your seedlings?

4. **Determine what kind of SITE PREPARATION is required.**
   - Site Preparation is based on soil type, desired tree species and existing vegetation.
   - On sandy soils, you may only need spot weed control.
   - On heavy soils and old fields, start your site preparation the fall before planting.

5. **Design your plantation and draw a sketch of where you will plant your trees.**
   - Your design ("layout") should include access, harvest and fire roads.
   - Your goals should be reflected in the design (wildlife openings, stream buffers, etc).

1. **Keep seedlings cool (35° F) and moist (90-95% humidity); handle them gently.**
   - During transportation, vigorously protect your seedlings from all sources of heat.
   - If packages are warm, open and remoisten the roots. **Reseal the package**
   - Optimal storage is refrigerated and short term (maximum 2 days).

2. **Move only a 1/2 day’s seedlings to the planting site at a time.**
   - Protect your seedlings on site from heat, wind and physical damage.

3. **Cull weak seedlings from your planting stock.**
4. **When planting, make sure that the roots hang freely in the hole or planting silt.**
   - Place the seedling so that the old soil line is 1/2" below the surface.

5. **Make sure no air holes remain in the soil, and that you do not shear off roots.**
   - Hand planting: fill the hole with soil and firmly press the soil into place.
   - Machine planting: hold the seedlings in place until the packing wheels take over.

1. **Be vigilant about reducing competing vegetation.**
   - You must control weeds and grasses to obtain maximum seedling growth.

2. **Watch for browsing or clipping injuries.**
   - These indicate the presence of an animal population you may need to control.

3. **Watch for signs of disease or insect infestation; contact your forester for advice.**
   - Look for yellowed, brown, mottled or withered shoot tips, needles or leaves.
   - Look for mushrooms around base of seedlings.
   - Look for localized swelling or lesions on the stem or branches.
   - Frost and drought may cause similar symptoms; evaluate the problem carefully.

4. **Check the survival rate of your plantation.**
   - Estimating survival allows you to identify problems and find appropriate solutions.

*For more information: see the Wisconsin Woodlands Tree Planting Series from UWEX and contact your local forester.*

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