

4-H Forestry Project No. 1

Tree Planting

Tree planting is one of the most common activities associated with forestry. Anyone can plant trees, but not everyone plants them successfully. Tree planting is easy, but seedlings must be handled and planted correctly if the trees are to live and grow properly.

Tree planting is very important to forestry in Mississippi and the South. Millions of trees are planted in Mississippi annually, and private nurseries in the state produce millions of seedlings each year. However, demand for seedlings is sometimes still more than the supply.

Tree Planting Week is observed every year along with Arbor Day, which is the second Friday in February. Arbor Day is a day set aside for observing the importance of trees by planting memorial trees around schools and homes, along streets and highways, and on farms. You may be able to get some free seedlings during this week.

Check with local officials about a Tree Planting Week celebration. If there is an observance in your county, get involved. If no observance is planned, try to get one started.

It is important to have a purpose in mind before you plant your trees. You may want to plant trees to serve as windbreaks, for erosion control, for timber or wood products production, as shelterbelts, or for wildlife habitat improvement.

These are just some of the many reasons or purposes for planting trees. Your reason for planting will affect the kind of trees you choose to plant, where you place them, and how you go about the task.

Seedlings are taken from nurseries and planted during the winter months while they are dormant. During winter, seedlings are not actively growing and can better withstand the “shock” of being transplanted from the ideal soil at the nursery to a less favorable site that you choose.

Project References

Extension Publication 160 [Tree Planting Is Easy](#)

Extension Publication 146 [Know Your Trees](#)

Extension Forestry Management Technical Note 4E Seedlings Available from In-state and Regional Nurseries, available from your [local MSU Extension office](#).

Project Materials

At least 50 (preferably 100) tree seedlings (pine or hardwood). Pine seedlings will probably be easier to get.

A planting bar (also called a “dibble” bar) to use in planting your seedlings.

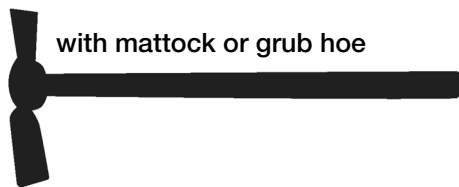
A 2-gallon bucket or canvas bag to hold your seedlings and prevent the roots from drying out.

Sources of Help and Information

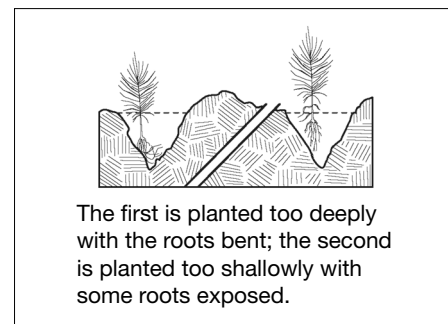
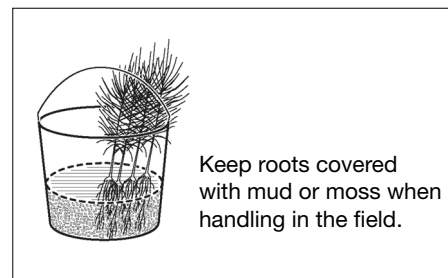
You should be able to get plenty of help and good information from several sources in your county. There should be local offices in your county for most of the following agencies or companies:

- ▶ County Extension agents
- ▶ Area forester, Mississippi Forestry Commission
- ▶ District conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- ▶ Project forester or district ranger, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- ▶ Industry foresters with any one of several forest industry companies
- ▶ Self-employed consulting foresters

Planting Techniques



A. Insert mattock, lift handle, and pull. B. Place seedling along straight side to correct depth. C. Fill in and pack soil to bottom of roots. D. Finish filling in soil and firm with heel.



with planting bar or dibble



A. Insert dibble at about a 45-degree angle and push straight up. B. Remove dibble and place seedling at correct depth (same as or half-inch deeper than at nursery). C. Insert dibble 2 inches toward planter from seedling and pull handle toward planter, firming soil at bottom of roots. D. Push handle forward from planter, firming soil at top of roots. E. Insert dibble 2 inches from last hole. F. Push forward and then backward to fill hole. G. Fill in last hole by stamping with heel.

Instructions

1. Contact a local forester for help finding tree seedlings and a planting bar. Seedlings should be available in December through March.
2. The Mississippi Forestry Commission no longer maintains public nurseries. To make sure that you will have seedlings during planting season, you may get several other 4-H'ers together and get a local sponsor to help you purchase a bundle of 1,000 seedlings from private nurseries. Contact your local county forester with the Mississippi Forestry Commission or county Extension agent to find out more about this.
3. In some counties in Mississippi, the U. S. Forest Service will have free seedlings. If the Forest Service has an office in your area, contact them to find out when they will have seedlings available.
4. Locate a suitable planting site. The site may be on your family's land. If you have trouble locating a planting site, get help from a local forester or Extension agent to help you find a site in need of planting. Be sure you have permission from the landowner if the land does not belong to your family.
5. Plant your trees as soon after you receive them as possible.
6. If you borrowed a planting bar, clean it and return it to the owner immediately after you finish planting.
7. If possible, get a forester to check your tree planting project. Ask the forester to sign your record sheet when your project has been satisfactorily completed.
8. Have your adult 4-H leader check your project and sign your record sheet. Cut out and give the record sheet to your 4-H leader. Save all of the introductory material as a future reference as you continue in other 4-H forestry projects.

4-H Forestry Project Record No. 1

Tree Planting

Your full name _____ Your age _____

Grade in school _____ No. years in 4-H _____ Date of birth _____

Your parent/guardian's name _____

Your address _____ County _____

Name of club _____ Adult leader's name _____

1. What species of tree did you plant? (**Examples:** loblolly pine, slash pine, cottonwood, yellow poplar, baldcypress, etc.)

2. Describe the type of site on which you planted your trees. (**Examples:** abandoned farmland, abandoned pasture, cutover timberland, eroded gullies, road or stream banks, old log landing, etc.)

3. Describe in detail the location of the area where you planted the trees. (**Example:** On Mr. John Smith's farm near the Pineville Community, 4 miles west of Smithville, Mississippi, in Smith County.)

4. Who owns the land where you planted your trees? _____

5. How many seedlings did you plant? _____

6. What tool did you use to plant your trees? _____

7. Where did you get the tool that you used to plant the trees? _____

8. When did you plant the trees? (days, month, year) _____

9. What spacing did you use between trees and between rows? _____ feet by _____ feet

10. What purposes do you expect these trees to serve as they grow and develop?

11. List the different companies, organizations, or agencies you contacted as you worked on this project.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

12. Did your county or community observe Tree Planting Week and Arbor Day this year? yes no

If so, were you involved in the Tree Planting Week observance? yes no

Check the activities you were involved in during Tree Planting Week.

planting trees

helped local officials distribute seedlings to the public

made and displayed poster promoting Tree Planting Week

gave visual presentation about trees or Tree Planting Week

other activities (explain) _____

Write down any suggestions you have on how this project could be improved.

As a forester (or forest technician), I have checked the tree planting project and found it to be accomplished in accordance with accepted forest management practices.

Forester or Forest Technician

Title and/or Organization

As an adult 4-H leader, I have checked this tree planting project and found it to be satisfactorily completed.

4-H Leader

Publication 1203 (POD-05-22)

Revised by **Brady Self**, PhD, Associate Extension Professor, Forestry, from an earlier edition by Thomas A. Monaghan, EdD, retired Extension Professor.



Copyright 2022 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution. Discrimination in university employment, programs, or activities based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law is prohibited.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director