



Stream Team Academy Fact Sheet Series

#1: Tree Planting Guide

Watch for more Stream Team Academy Fact Sheets coming your way soon. Plan to collect the entire educational series for future reference!

TREE PLANTING GUIDE

An Educational Series For Stream Teams To Learn and Collect

Spring is tree planting time, and many Stream Teams have identified sites on their favorite stream to plant seedlings they ordered from the MDC nursery last fall. Whether you are planting trees along your stream or for landscaping in your yard, these tips will help your planting be successful.

When you receive your seedlings, keep them in a moist, cool, shaded place before planting day. Do not store the

seedlings in water because the roots can be damaged. To ensure healthy seedlings, protect them from freezing and keep them moist during planting. Seedlings can be planted in February as soon as the frost is out of the ground. Planting later in the spring results in slower growth and probable failure.

Whether you are planting by hand or using a hoe, shovel, or planting bar, follow these guidelines:

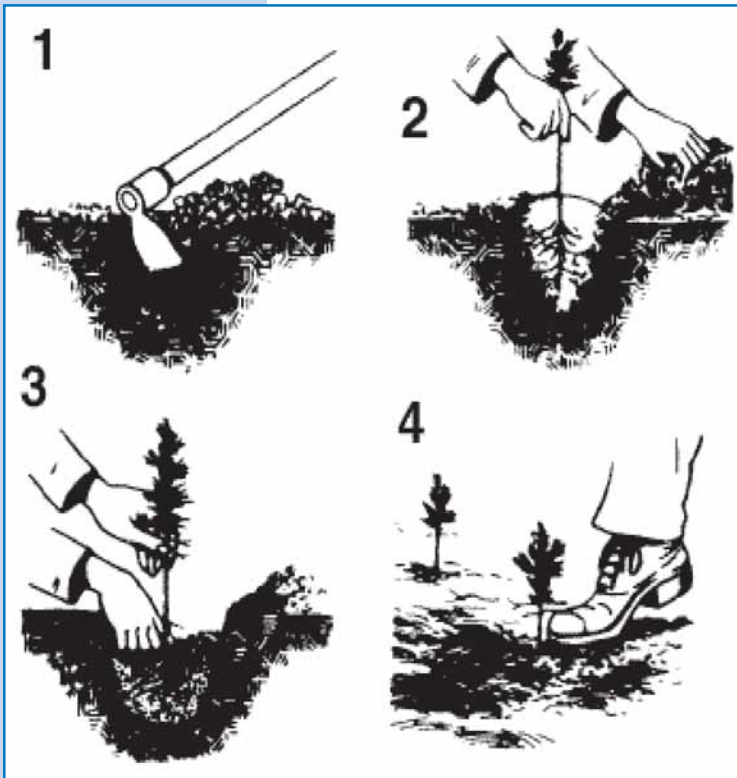


Illustration courtesy of University of Missouri Extension: publication G5008.

- ✦ Dig each hole to fit the root system.
- ✦ Set the seedling at the same depth that the tree grew in the nursery.
- ✦ Ensure the planting hole is deep enough so roots point downward. Planting with the roots pointing upward, “J” rooting, results in a dead seedling when the roots break the soil surface.
- ✦ Fill the hole half full of soil and tamp well. Finish filling the hole and tamp with your feet.
- ✦ Spacing is important. When planting seedlings, consider the height and spread to which they will eventually grow and the primary use of the planting. As a general rule, follow these guidelines:

Purpose of Planting	Recommended Spacing
Erosion Control	3 - 6'
Reforestation	8 - 12'
Wildlife Shrubs	3 - 6'
Windbreaks	5 - 12'

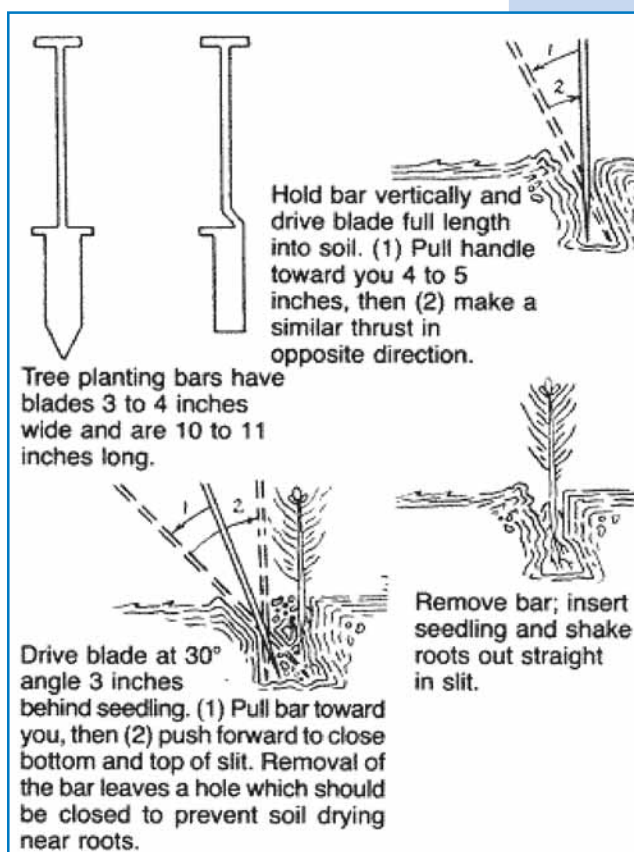


✦ Weed control is strongly recommended at least three times during the growing season. Tree seedlings do not compete well with fescue grass, giant horse weed, and the variety of other vegetation found on the moist soils along streams. Mechanical cutting of weeds around the seedlings with a string trimmer or weed whip is acceptable, as long as extreme care is taken not to nick the seedlings with the trimmer. Trunk wounds can kill a young tree. Use of an herbicide approved for use near streams and around tree seedlings is also acceptable. Treat a small area around each seedling.

✦ Fertilizing is not recommended. Fertilizer is expensive, is likely to also fertilize competing plants, and may cause chemical burning of the tender seedling roots resulting in death.

✦ Watering seedlings is a time consuming and labor intensive task, and may not be possible outside of landscaping projects. Most streamside projects will involve some water-related mortality, so plant accordingly; perhaps planting more than otherwise desired.

Good luck with your tree planting project! If you have questions, please contact your Stream Team Biologist at 800/781-1989 (voice mail) or your regional forester at the nearest Missouri Department of Conservation regional office.



Slit method of planting with a tree planting bar.

Illustration courtesy of University of Missouri Extension: publication G5008

Some of the information in this guide was taken from University of Missouri Extension: publication G5008, with permission.

Other Resources:

- www.conservation.state.mo.us/forestry/library/
- www.marc.org/corrent/currenttrees.htm
- <http://muextension.missouri.edu>
- www.righttreerightplace.com