

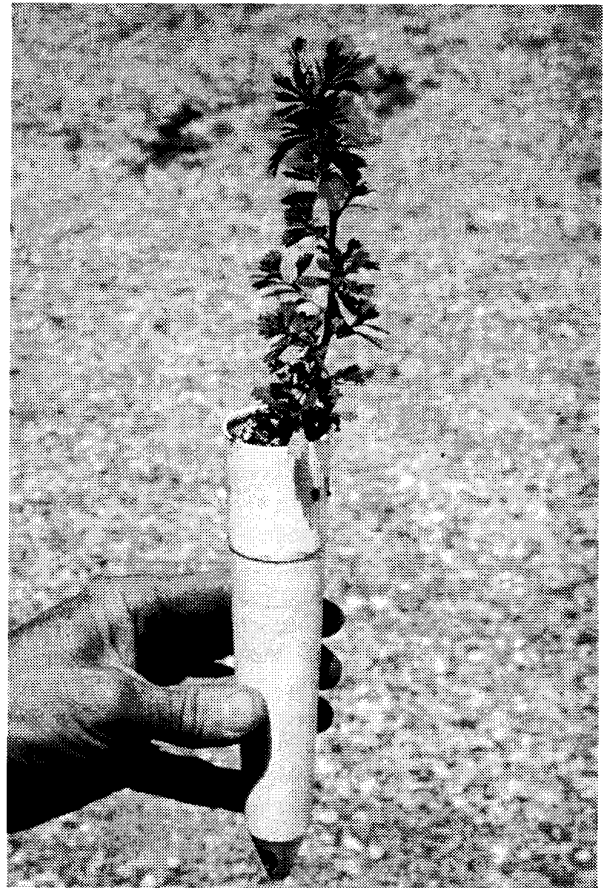
### Let's Standardize Nursery Terminology

**L**ike it or not, words are important and convey information and so I am proposing that we consider making changes in some traditional nursery terms:

**Seedlings.** Some time ago, Bob Kintigh of Kintigh's Mountain Home Ranch here in Oregon contacted me and suggested that we standardize the codes that we use to describe bareroot seedlings. This was an idea that Mary Duryea and I tried to get started back in 1984 when we published the *Bareroot Nursery Manual: Production of Bareroot Seedlings*. It didn't seem to catch-on, however, so I'm going to propose the idea again.

**Bareroot stock**—I propose that seedling age classes should be described with pluses instead of dashes because the years are cumulative and the sum gives the total age of the stock. For example: "The 1+0 seedlings were significantly smaller than the 1+1 transplants"

**Container stock**—The terminology of container seedlings is even more confusing because you will see "containerized", "container-grown" or "plug seedlings" frequently used in the literature. Again, I propose that we standardize and just use the term container seedling because it is simple and definitive (Figure 22). We already talk about "container nurseries", and the use of many different terms is confusing. For example, "containerized" is used by ornamental nurseries to describe bareroot seedlings that have been transplanted into containers. The "plug seedling" term also can be misinterpreted because an entire industry has developed around plug technology - container seedlings grown in miniature containers expressly for transplanting. Even if everyone agrees to standardize, this change is not going to be easy because these other terms have been used extensively in the literature - e.g. "Proceedings of the Canadian *Containerized Tree Seedling Symposium*". The problem of describing different sizes of container stock is a real "can of worms". The situation will not be simple to resolve because there are so many different types of containers and several naming systems are currently in use which, I am sure, is confusing to our customers. Because most container seedlings are grown in one season or less in the US, they are generally defined by the type and volume of the growth container. For example, a "Styro 4" refers to a seedling that has been produced in a Styrofoam® block container with cells that are approximately 65 cm<sup>3</sup> (4 in<sup>3</sup>) in volume. Other regions



**Figure 22.** An "RL10-49" container seedling

use different terminology. In British Columbia, some container stock types are grown for more than 1 year and so their names include container type, size, and length of growing period. For example, a PSB313B 1+0 seedling was grown for one year in a Styrofoam® block container that has cells that are 3 cm (1.2 in.) wide and 13 cm (5.1 in.) deep.

The ideal nomenclature would include the three things that are biologically and operationally important: 1) the composition of the container, 2) the volume of the cavity, and 3) the spacing between cavities. So, a Ray Leach (RL) container that has cells of 10 in<sup>3</sup> and are spaced at 49 cells/ft<sup>2</sup>, would be called an "RL 10-49" (Figure 22). Simple, yet descriptive.

**Planting vs. Outplanting.** I propose that we use the term "outplanted" when referring to seedlings on the reforestation site to avoid confusion with planting in the nursery. We *plant* seed and we *transplant* seedlings in the nursery but we ship the seedlings for *outplanting*.

**Metric vs. English Units.** Although the rest of the world is already using metric, it seems like the politicians here in the US will never allow us to change. So, I propose that whenever we use units in writing, we supply both. In FNN, I'm trying to use metric units with English units in parenthesis. When giving ranges of units, please use "to" because dashes can be misinterpreted as negatives. For example:

The height of the seedlings ranged from 10 to 18 cm (4 to 7 in.)

In conclusion, I'm not naive enough to think that all of you are going to agree with me but I still think that we

owe it to our customers to standardize the terms that we use in nurseries and reforestation. Think it over and let me know your opinion!

**Sources:**

Landis, T.D.; Tinus, R.W.; McDonald, S.E.; Barnett, J.P. 1995. Nursery Planning, Development, and Management. Vol. 1, The Container Tree Nursery Manual. Agric. Handbk. 674. Washington, DC: USDA Forest Service.] 88 p.

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