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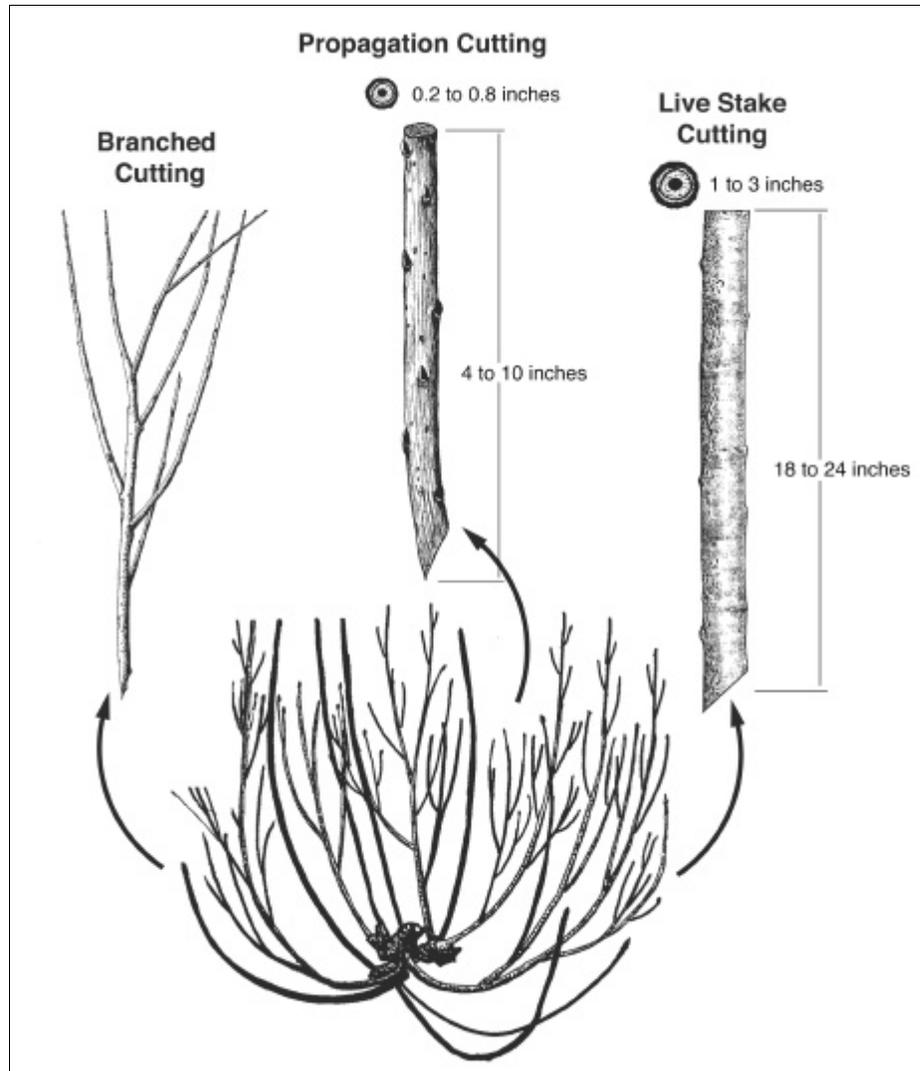
Forest Service

Pacific
Northwest
Region

Forest Nursery Notes

Winter 2007

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Please send address changes to Rae Watson. You may use the Literature Order Form on page 39 to indicate changes.



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Nursery Meetings

This section lists upcoming meetings and conferences that would be of interest to nursery, reforestation, and restoration personnel. Please send us any additions or corrections as soon as possible and we will get them into the next issue.

The 2007 **Northeastern Nursery Conference** will be held **July 16 to July 19, 2007** in Concord, New Hampshire at the Grappone Conference Center. For more information please contact:

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Tel: 603.796.2323
E-Mail: ddehart@dred.state.nh.us

The Forest Nursery Association of British Columbia (FNABC) will host a joint conference with the Western Forest and Conservation Nursery Association (WFCNA) on **September 17 to September 19, 2007**. The conference will take place in Sydney, BC at the Mary Winspear Centre (<http://www.sanscha.com>). For more information please contact:

Evert Van Eerden
NewGen Forestry Ltd.
5635 Forest Hill Road
Victoria, BC V9E 2A8
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Tel: 250.479.4165
E-Mail: ev.newgen@shaw.ca

The Society for Ecological Restoration Northwest Chapter (SERNW) and the Society for Wetland Scientists Pacific Northwest Chapter (SWS) will be holding a joint Annual Meeting at the Yakima Convention Center, Yakima, WA on **September 25 to September 28, 2007**. Sessions will feature an array of topics pertinent to restoration of plant communities in the Pacific Northwest. For information on submission of titles for presentations or posters or for additional information about the meeting, contact:

Jim Hansen (SERNW)
TEL: 509.454.6573
Email: jimbobtoo@aol.com
or
Jim Wiggins (SWS)
Tel: 360.856.2139
E-Mail: atsi@fidalgo.net

The meeting agenda will be available at a later date on the web:
<http://www.ser.org/sernw/calendar.asp>

Native Plant Materials Directory
By R. Kasten Dumroese

This summer, Native Plants Journal Inc and the Indiana University Press will publish their annual Native Plant Materials Directory. Trying to build a coherent directory of producers of native plant materials in the US and Canada is daunting, especially because directories are out-of-date as soon as they are printed. This directory is the only one updated annually. The *Native Plants Journal* contacts everyone in the directory to ensure only the best data is printed and is published as the summer issue of *Native Plants Journal*.

The directory has three sections:

1. A “professional directory” that lists companies and universities that support anyone producing native plant materials.
2. An alphabetical listing of the more than 1200 entities that produce native plant materials, including private, not-for-profit, tribal, state, and federal organizations.
3. A robust listing of all of the producers by location, subdivided by product type (either plants or seeds).

Any organization that produces native plant materials can be listed. Three types of listings are included. A **basic listing** is free to anyone and includes the nursery name, address, contact person, contact information, and business type. A **standard listing** (Figure 1) is free to subscribers of *Native Plants Journal* and available for a modest fee to nonsubscribers. Besides these basics, additional information about product types, business hours, ordering, and other services can be included

(Figure 1). This **enhanced advertisement**, available for a modest fee, also includes a bold listing of the nursery name, internet information, and a free paragraph of information about the business.

The USDA Forest Service Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetics Resources team is working to make the basic directory available in a searchable on-line database at <http://www.rngr.net>. In addition to the directory, anonymous data collected from native plant materials producers will be used to generate the annual Tree Planting in the United States report. This report helps guide development and implementation of national programs dealing with native tree and shrub planting, such as the Conservation Research Program.

To have your company included in the directory, please contact:

Suzy Franko
Native Plant Materials Directory
PO Box 8232
Moscow, ID 83843-0732
Ph 208.882.2601
sfranko@moscow.com

To purchase copies of Plant Materials Directory or subscribe to *Native Plants Journal*, please contact:

Indiana University Press
Journals Department
601 North Morton Street
Bloomington, IN 47404-3797
800.842.6796

You can also subscribe, purchase back issues, or purchase the directory on-line at <http://iupjournals.org/npj>

NATIVE PLANTS-R-US
123 Main Street, Anytown ID 83843
Contact John Q Public
Ph 800.555.1212 Fax 800.555.1212
E-mail plants-r-us@somewhere.com
URL <http://www.nativeplantnetwork.com>

BUSINESS TYPE: Private, wholesale, retail, mail order, 8-5 M-Sat.

BUSINESS HOURS: since 1985, Bareroot, container, seeds.

PRODUCT TYPES: trees, shrubs, forbs, 350,000/7, 200 tons/yr.

AMOUNT OF PLANTS: 100% native, 85% propagated, 15% wild collected.

% OF ANNUAL PRODUCTION THAT IS NATIVE: Min wholesale \$500, retail none.

% OF ANNUAL PRODUCTION THAT IS PROPAGATED AND (OR) COLLECTED FROM WILD: Services: on-line catalog and ordering.

MINIMUM ORDER: See ad p 45.

OTHER SERVICES OFFERED: See ad p 45.

VIEW THEIR ADVERTISEMENT: We offer more than 600 species of plants native to the northern Rocky Mountains, specializing in locally collected, source-identified Palouse Prairie plants. Our staff can help you plan your restoration project, facilitate collection and amplification of local seed sources, and supervise the restoration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Figure 1—The standard listing contains contact information as well as product types, business hours, ordering instructions, and other offered services.

Miniplug Transplants: Producing Large Plants Quickly

by Thomas D. Landis

Abstract

Miniplug transplants are a new nursery stocktype created when seedlings from very small containers are transplanted into bareroot nursery beds or larger containers. All miniplugs used in forest and conservation nurseries feature some sort of stabilized growing medium which allows transplanting before the plugs become rootbound. Miniplug transplants continue to grow in popularity because they are a quick way to produce large plants, they are very efficient in use of nursery production space, and have a very favorable seed-to-shipable plant ratio.

Introduction

To begin, what do we mean by a “miniplug”? In nursery jargon, seedlings produced in containers are called “plugs” because of the firm root mass formed by the end of the growing season. In forest and conservation nurseries, container stock has traditionally been produced in multi-celled containers with volumes from 2 to 30 in³ (33 to 492 cm³). Miniplugs, therefore, are very small container plants grown in containers less than 2 in³ (33 cm³) in volume.

Types of Miniplugs

In the ornamental and vegetable industry, plants have been grown in small plug containers for many years, but

this practice is relatively new for forest trees and other native plants. The published literature is also rather sparse. Whereas there are whole books on plug culture for horticultural crops (for example, Styer and Koranski 1997), only a few articles have been published about miniplugs in forest and conservation nurseries.

Miniplug stocktypes. Bareroot plug transplants have a traditional stocktype nomenclature - “plug”, followed by the number of years in the transplant bed. For example, container seedlings that will be in the transplant bed for one year are known as “Plug+1”, whereas those that will remain another year are “Plug+2”. There is no standard stock type naming system for container miniplug transplants but, following this system, we can add whether they were transplanted to other containers (C) or bareroot beds (B):

- Miniplug+1C = Miniplugs that have been transplanted to larger containers and remain there for one year.
- Miniplug+1BR = Miniplugs that have been transplanted to bareroot beds and grow there for 1 year.

Stabilized media. All of the miniplugs used in forest and conservation nurseries feature stabilized growing media, which I define as any growing medium that holds the root system together when removed from the container. Stabilized media allow miniplugs to be extracted from their containers before a firm root plug has formed (Figure 1). This allows miniplugs to be transplanted weeks before the seedling root system would have formed a firm plug, and is one of the

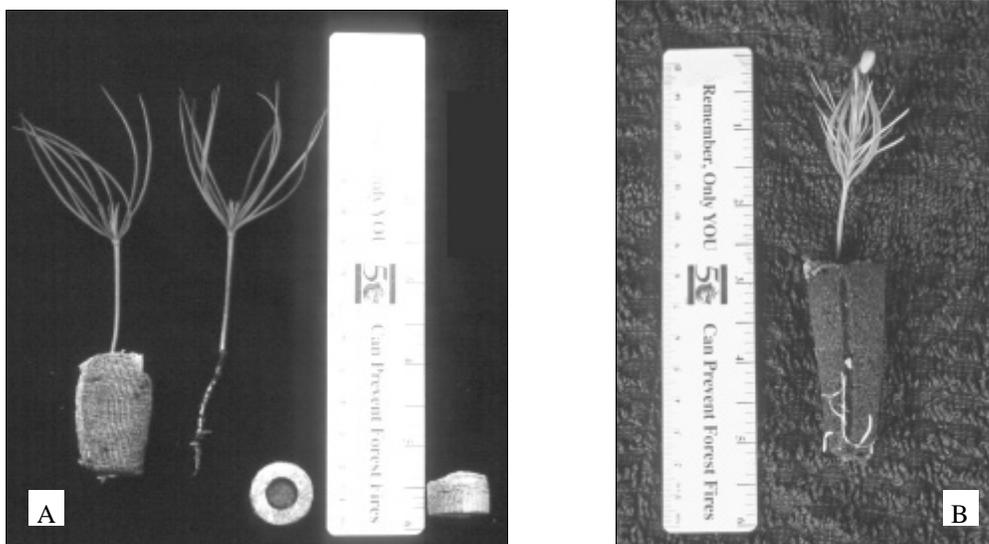


Figure 1—All miniplugs used in forest and conservation nurseries feature stabilized media which holds the root plug together and allows earlier transplanting: A) Jiffy-7[®] forestry pellet, B) Q Plug[®].

Table 1—Types of miniplugs currently used for transplanting in forest and native plant nurseries

Brand Name	Manufacturer	Container	Growing Media	Plug Sizes
Q Plug [®]	International Horticultural Technologies Hollister, CA Website: www.ihort.com Email: info@ihort.com	Prefilled Styrofoam [™] or plastic trays	Patented peat and bark mixture, or custom mixes	Wide range, from 0.22 in ³ (3.6 cm ³) to large sizes
		Prefilled Styrofoam [™] or plastic trays	Patented peat and bark mixture, or custom mixes	Wide range, from 0.22 in ³ (3.6 cm ³) to large sizes
Excel [®]				
Jiffy-7 [®] Forestry Pellets	Jiffy Products Norwalk, OH and Shippagan, NB, Canada Website: www.jiffypot.com Email: jiffy@vianet.ca	Compostable plastic net around plugs in plastic trays	Compressed peat mixture, or Carefree [™] pellets	0.7 in (18 mm) diameter pellet expands to 0.9 in (22 mm), with heights of 1.3 in (32 mm) or 1.6 in (42 mm)
		Prefilled Styrofoam [™] or plastic trays	Compressed peat mix with binding agent. Custom mixing available	Wide range, from 0.25 in ³ (3.6 cm ³) to large sizes
Preforma [®] Plug				
HortiPlug [®]		Prefilled Styrofoam [™] or plastic trays	Patented Coir-Bark blend with binding agent	Wide range, from 0.25 in ³ (3.6 cm ³) to large sizes
Ellepot [®] System	Purchase machine from Blackmore Co. Belleville, MI. Website: www.ellepot.dk Email: kmartin@blackmoreco.com	3 grades of porous biodegradable paper	Mixture of peat, vermiculite & perlite, or custom mix	0.6 x 1.6 in (15 x 40 mm) plug that fits into a standard 338 horticulture tray

system's primary advantages. In addition, roots in stabilized plugs haven't developed the deformities that characterize other root plugs, and often lead to structural defects in the transplants. There are two methods of stabilizing the media in miniplugs:

1. Physically Stabilized Plugs – This is the older method of keeping the growing medium together. Examples are Jiffy® Forestry Pellets which use plastic mesh (Figure 1A) and Ellepots® which feature treated paper (Table 1).
2. Chemically Stabilized Plugs - This newer system uses chemical binders to hold the growing media together (Figure 1B). All of the chemical binders are trade secrets but examples include Q Plugs®, Excel® plugs, Preforma® plugs and HortiPlugs® (Table 1).

Types of Miniplug Transplants

Although many miniplugs are on the market, only a relative few have been used for transplanting in forest and native plant nurseries (Table 1). Miniplugs are used in 2 distinct stocktypes: container-to-bareroot transplants, and container-to-container (plug-to-plug) transplants.

Bareroot miniplug transplants. Before we can discuss miniplug transplants, we need to look back at the whole concept of container plants transplanted to bareroot nurseries. The first published record of transplanting container seedlings was at the Ray Leach Nursery in

Aurora, Oregon in 1971. Apparently, that first crop wasn't too successful, because it was four years until it was tried again. In the spring of 1975, Phil Hahn grew a small trial of Douglas-fir container seedlings at the Georgia-Pacific container facility in Cottage Grove, Oregon and then transplanted them to the Tyee Tree Nursery near Roseburg, Oregon. The following fall, the crop was harvested and showed good uniformity and yield. The plants looked quite different from a normal bareroot transplant, especially in the root systems, which were very busy with many fine roots. Of course, the true test is on the outplanting sites, and these first trials were encouraging in spite of a severe summer drought. This new "plug+one" stocktype was slow to catch-on, but by the time of a 1983 survey, plug transplants had reached about 2 % of total forest nursery production (Hahn 1984).

Miniplug transplants are an even newer phenomenon. The first miniplug transplants that I saw were grown in Techniculture® peat plugs in Thunder Bay, Ontario in the early 1980s. Although these early trials were very successful (Klappratt 1988), this technology was never adopted on a large scale. A few years later, the Weyerhaeuser Company purchased the rights to the MiniPlug™ Transplant System from Grower's Transplanting of Salinas, California (Hee and others 1988). Extensive field testing on a variety of outplanting sites in western Oregon and Washington showed that miniplug transplants survived and grew as well as or better than other bareroot stocktypes (Tanaka and others 1988). Their transplanter, which used pneumatic plant setters to push the miniplug from the

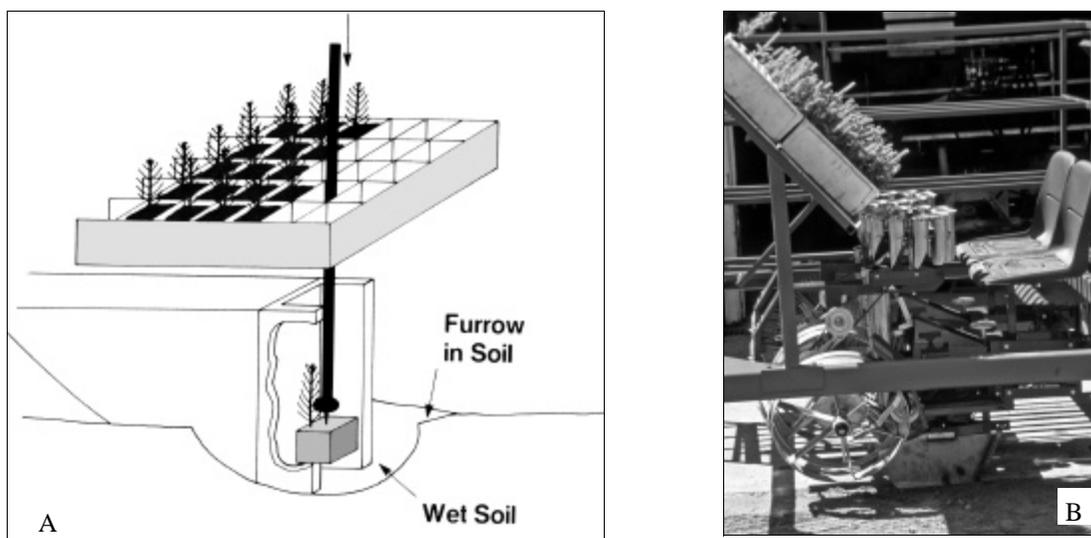


Figure 2—Although the MiniPlug™ Transplant System (A) proved impractical, the carousel-type transplanter (B) revived the popularity of miniplug transplants.

Miniplug container transplants (plug-to-plug).

Transplanting miniplug seedlings to other containers is a much newer phenomenon. The traditional practice of “pricking out” young seedlings from germination tray and transplanting them into a container has been done since container plants became popular in the 1970s. This practice has several operational drawbacks, especially root deformation and resultant stunting of the transplant.

Starting plants in miniplugs and transplanting them to containers has only become popular in forest and conservation nurseries in the last 10 to 15 years. Initially, all transplanting was done by hand and that is still the most popular technique. Mechanical transplanters are common in horticulture (Bartok 2003) and larger forest nurseries have experimented with the newest equipment, some of which use computer vision to deal with blank cells in the miniplug blocks (Pelton 2003). However, the high cost of the transplanters has limited their acceptance in most nurseries. Bartok (2003) estimates that a \$60,000 automatic transplanter will take at least 3 years to pay for itself in labor savings. This estimate is based on large numbers of a uniform crop, however, which is rarely the case in forest and conservation nurseries who deal with smaller orders and many different species and seed sources. So, for the near future, hand transplanting will remain the method of choice.

Microseed Nursery of Ridgefield, Washington (Moreno 2006) has developed a successful miniplug container transplant system based on Excel® miniplugs going into Hiko V265 containers (16 in³ [265 cm³]). The miniplugs are sown in late summer, and their stock takes 16 to 20 weeks to produce, depending on whether the customer wants fall or spring outplanting (Figure 4A). After the miniplug seedlings become established they are overwintered in the greenhouse and then transplanted the following spring. Then, they grow to

shippable size and are hardened in outdoor compounds. One unique innovation is that seedlings destined for fall outplanting are treated with blackout to haste the hardening process. This growing regime produces seedlings with hefty stem diameters (Figure 4B), and full, well-balanced shoots (Figure 4C).

Benefits of Miniplug Transplants

Several factors have contributed to the increasing attraction for this new stocktype by both nursery managers and customers.

Demand for larger stocktypes. Foresters and other native plant customers have been asking for larger and larger seedlings, and several things have contributed to this trend. New “Free-to-Grow” reforestation standards have created a demand for larger nursery stock that not only survive but will grow quickly. For example, reforestation laws in the State of Oregon require that trees outplanted on cutover lands must have grown above the competing vegetation in only 5 years. In addition, fewer mechanical and chemical site preparation options are available nowadays and larger plants with more buds seem better able to tolerate browsing (Landis 1999).

Larger native plants are also in demand for restoration projects. For example, when 3 stocktypes of blue oak (*Quercus douglasii* Hook. & Arn.) were grown in northern California, the miniplug transplants were considerably larger, especially in root mass and survived and grew as good or better than the other stocktypes after outplanting (Table 2).

Shorter nursery crop cycles. In addition to larger plants, nursery customers are asking for their stock in less time. Planning horizons for reforestation and restoration are becoming shorter and shorter, and so one-

Table 2—Comparison of blue oak (*Quercus douglasii* Hook. & Arn.) stocktypes in California*

Stocktype	Stem Wt.**	Root Wt.	Shoot:Root Ratio	Outplanting Survival%	Cost/100 Plants (1990\$)
1+0 Container	-----	-----	-----	88	\$92
1+0 Bareroot	1.4 a	3.9 a	0.36 b	91	\$50
2+0 Bareroot	3.8 b	5.3 a	0.68 a	97	\$65
Miniplug + 1BR Transplant	4.6 b	10.4 b	0.43 b	95	\$111

* Modified from McCreary and Lippitt (2000)
 ** In each column, means followed by different letters are significantly different by a Fishers Protected Least Significant Difference (LSD) Test.

Container Type	Cell Volume - in³ (ml)	Cells per ft² (m²)
Donor Container—Stryroblock™ 440/10	1.1 (18)	197 (2,121)
Destination Container—Stryroblock™ 35/340	20.5 (336)	19.8 (213)

savings in bench space (Table 3). In actual practice, the savings would be even higher because the miniplugs would be graded before transplanting and produce almost 100% yield. Pelton (2003) estimates that sowing in miniplugs saves approximately 70% in heating costs during that production phase, when compared to direct sowing in the same size destination container. After transplanting, most nurseries move the large containers to open growing compounds where production costs are much lower than in greenhouses.

Increased seed use efficiency. One of the most attractive advantages of miniplug transplants is that they have much better seed-to-seedling ratios than other stocktypes. This is because weak seeds or seedlings are culled out early in the crop cycle, and only vigorous miniplug seedlings are transplanted to bareroot beds or other containers. In some of the very first trials with miniplugs in Ontario, they were able to reduce the seed-to-seedling ratio from 12:1 to 3:1 (Klapprat 1988). Increased seed use efficiency is even more important with genetically-improved forest tree seeds, or with native plants where seed is scarce or has irregular germination due to complicated dormancy requirements (Figure 5).



Figure 5—Native plants, like this red alder, are being sown in miniplugs because it is easier to manage uneven germination rates.

Summary

Miniplug transplants are the newest stocktype in forestry, conservation and native plant nurseries, and I predict their popularity will continue to increase because they come closest to achieving nursery production goals:

- Close to 100 % yield – few culls
- Highest plant density per production area
- Maximum use efficiency of seeds or cuttings
- Shortest crop rotation
- Stock quality - plants with large stem diameter and fibrous root systems.

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- Weyerhaeuser Nurseries - Gale Thompson & Tina Herman
- Jiffy Products - Don Willis
- International Horticultural Technologies - Cor Baars
- Nursery-to-Forest Solutions - Steve Grossnickle

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Ethylene in Cold Storage - Is It a Problem?

by Thomas D. Landis

During winter, many nursery plants are in refrigerated storage and, almost every year, I get a question about possible ethylene injury. Ethylene is a plant hormone that is unique because it is a gas, and is best known for its ability to hasten the ripening of fruit. In ancient times, Egyptians used ethylene to stimulate the ripening of figs and Chinese burnt incense in closed rooms to enhance the ripening of pears. Ethylene has also been shown to have detrimental effects on stored plants; for example, when carnations were exposed to 0.5 to 1.0 ppm ethylene in storage, their buds failed to open (Sherman 1985).

In addition to ripening fruit, ethylene also affects many other vital plant functions such as:

- release of dormancy
- shoot and root development
- leaf and fruit abscission
- increased seed germination
- bud development
- protects plant against bacteria and fungi.

Although it is produced naturally produced by plants as part of normal metabolic activity, ethylene is also generated by stress or wounding. This stress ethylene can be induced by mechanical injury, extreme heat or cold, and moisture stress. In fact, stress ethylene

evolution has been used as an indicator of plant stress and was even considered to be potential index to cold hardiness. Subsequent testing, however, refuted this hypothesis (Burr and others 1990).

Ethylene in cold storage. Forest nurseries have often used commercial refrigerated fruit storage units for long-time overwinter storage and, because ethylene is known to be produced by ripe fruit, there has been concern about possible harmful effects. This concern spawned several research trials in the 1980's and early 1990's. The first tests showed that very high ethylene levels caused significantly reduced shoot growth in Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*), and inhibited root growth in Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) (Table 1). Subsequent research confirmed that rough handling of nursery stock could increase the amount of ethylene produced in storage containers. Hand-lifted loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) seedlings produced significantly less ethylene compared to machine-lifted stock (Figure 1), in which root were torn and stem compressed by lifting belts (Johnson and Stumpff 1985).

This concern lead to a search for a treatment to reduce ethylene inside refrigerated storage bags and boxes. Purafil ES[®] is a commercial ethylene absorbent that consists of alumina pellets saturated with potassium and is widely used to reduce the risk of ethylene damage to stored fruits and vegetables. When Purafil packets were included in kraft-poly storage bags, the initial tests were promising – the absorbent did reduce ethylene concentrations and increased new root growth and

Species Studied	Effects of Ethylene	Source
<i>Abies fraseri</i>	Shoot growth reduced at very high concentrations (17.5 ppm)	Hinesley and Saltveit (1980)
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Lateral root growth inhibited at 0.15 ppm	Graham and Linderman (1981)
<i>Pinus taeda</i>	Addition of ethylene absorbent increased root growth and survival after outplanting	Barnett (1983)
<i>Pinus taeda</i>	High concentrations increased outplanting performance	Johnson and Stumpff (1984)
<i>Pinus taeda</i> , <i>P. elliotii</i> , <i>P. virginiana</i>	1) No effect on outplanting performance 2) Minor effects on root growth potential	Garrett-Kraus and others (1985)
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> , <i>Abies procera</i>	1) Variable effects on new root growth 2) High concentrations (3 to 5 ppm) improved outplanting performance 3) Addition of ethylene absorbent did not increase performance	Blake and Linderman (1992)

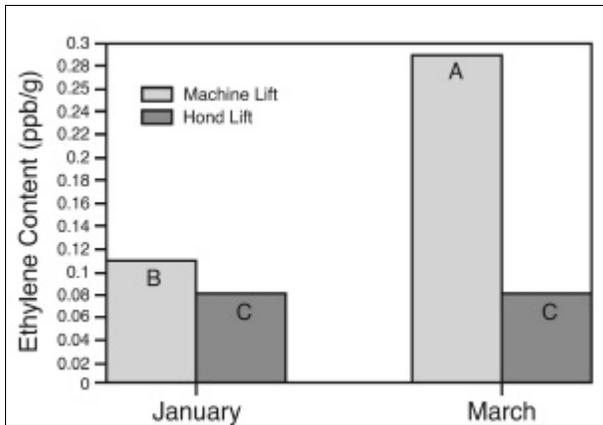


Figure 1 - When ethylene concentration was monitored in storage containers, a significant difference was shown between hand and machine harvesting. The amount of wound ethylene also increased in March compared to the ideal lifting window in January (modified from Johnson and Stumpff 1985).

survival after outplanting (Barnett 1983). Subsequent research trials confirmed that Purafil ES[®] was effective in reducing ethylene levels but did not find the same beneficial effects on seedling performance (Barnett and others 1985). In fact, the higher ethylene concentrations actually improved outplanting performance of loblolly pine nursery stock (Figure 2). Working with Douglas-fir, western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), and noble fir (*Abies procera*), Blake and

Linderman (1992) monitored ethylene concentration in refrigerated storage containers and found that Purafil ES[®] packets did not consistently improve seedling quality. They also observed that high (3 to 5 ppm) concentrations of ethylene improved seedling vigor and survival after outplanting.

There has been no additional published research on the effects of ethylene on stored nursery stock. However, in case you are still considering ethylene absorbents for your storage containers, some recent research by Reid and Dodge (1995) tested Purafil ES[®] against some newer mineral ethylene absorbents. They found that Purafil ES[®] absorbed the ethylene almost immediately whereas the other products were totally ineffective.

Summary

Ethylene is a gaseous plant hormone that has been shown to increase in closed storage containers, especially when stock has been handled roughly. Purafil ES[®] ethylene absorbent packets are effective in lowering ethylene concentrations in storage bags or boxes, but research results on whether they improve outplanting performance are inconsistent.

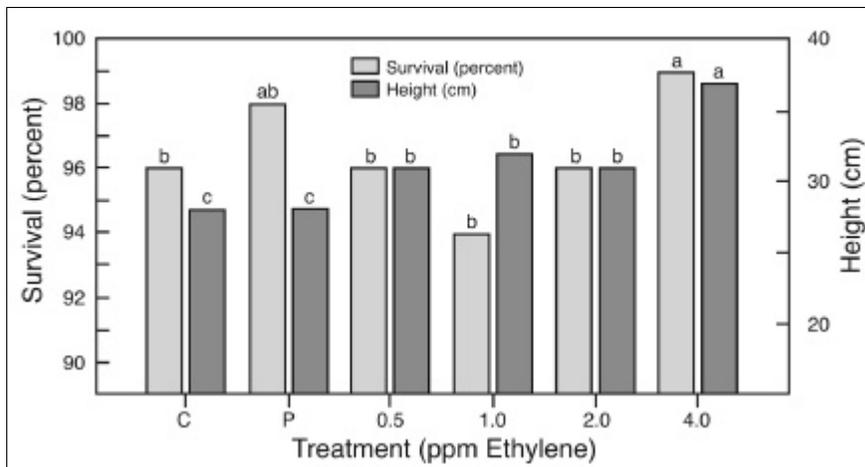


Figure 2— Although Purafil ES[®] ethylene absorbent packets significantly increased outplanting survival compared to the control, the highest ethylene concentrations actually increased both survival and growth (modified from Barnett and others 1985).

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Managing Fungus Gnats in Container Nurseries

By Thomas D. Landis

Way back in the late 1980's, when I was working on the nursery pests chapter for the Container Tree Nursery Manual, I did a lot of research on fungus gnats because I'd found them to be a serious pest in my nursery. The entomologists that I talked to then considered them to be more of a nuisance than a real threat to container stock but I'd observed injury to both seeds and seedlings. Boy, have things changed. In the past 25 years, there have been many articles published on fungus gnats and their control.

Fungus gnats (*Bradysia* spp.) are small, black flies that are a common nuisance in greenhouses, but actually, the adults are harmless. The larvae, however, can feed on the roots of young succulent tree seedlings, cuttings, or fleshy seeds when conditions are favorable. In a survey for the Container Tree Nursery Manual, fungus gnats placed fifth in the ranking of insect pests. The role of these insects in disease transmission has always been suspected and now has recently been confirmed. The adult gnats can carry spores of fungi and bacteria from one container to another and may be one of the primary reasons for the formation of disease pockets.

Hosts. The larvae normally feed on soil fungi and organic matter, but larger larvae can attack healthy root tissue of many plants including tree seedlings. Seeds and cuttings of many native plants have also been damaged.

Symptoms & damage. The first evidence of a fungus gnat problem is the presence of the adults, which hover around the host plants and fly when disturbed. Fungus gnat adults are small, dark, mosquito-like flies that are initially difficult to distinguish from many other small flies common in greenhouses. In particular, growers often confuse fungus gnats with shore flies which are harmless. If you look at a fungus gnat under a hand lens, you can see the "Y"-shaped vein in the wing which is diagnostic (Figure 1A)

Symptoms of injured seedlings include wilting and sudden loss of vigor. Examination of affected plants with a hand lens may reveal the presence of larvae in the upper layer of the growing media. Fungus gnat larvae are legless, semitransparent worms with black heads and range up to 0.5 cm (0.2 in) in length (Figure 1B). Several websites contain excellent color photographs of both fungus gnat adults and larvae which is a great help in identification.

The larvae may consume small roots completely or just the exterior of the larger roots, leaving just the stripped vascular tissue (Figure 2). By the time symptoms become evident, damage is usually so severe that control of the larvae is not practical. Instead, the adults should be controlled as soon as they are noticed.

Life history. Female gnats lay eggs on moist surfaces, preferring growing media that are rich in organic matter. Infestations appear to be most severe in containers that

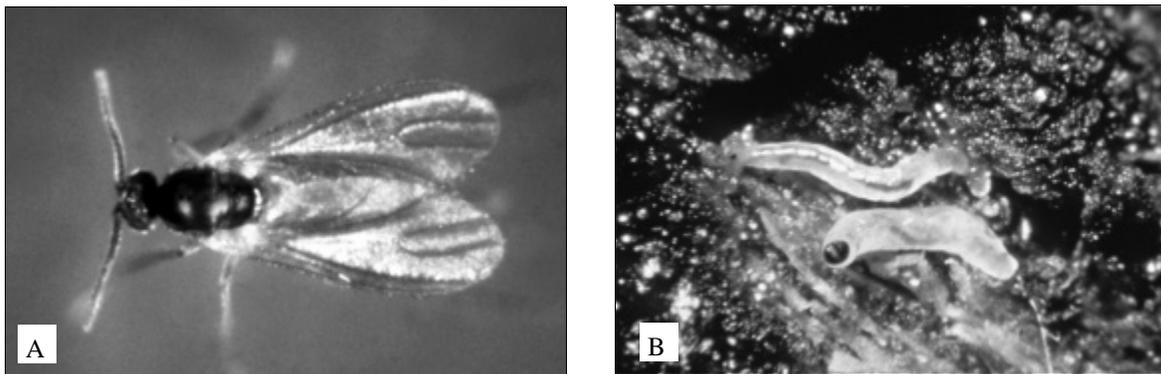


Figure 1—Use a hand lens to confirm the identity of fungus gnat adults – the “Y”-shaped vein in the wing help distinguish them from shore flies (A). Larvae are small, clear worms with black heads (B) which can be difficult to find in the growing medium. (Photos courtesy of Robin Rosetta)

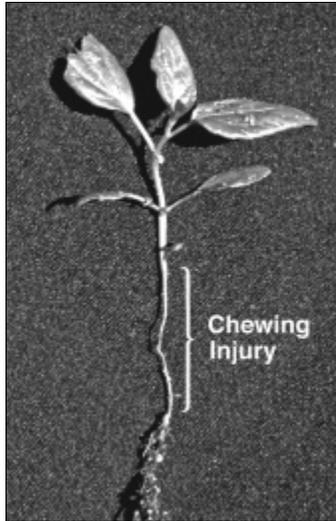


Figure 2—The larvae of fungus gnats chew on germinating seeds and the roots of seedlings like this quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). These injuries serve as entrance wounds for pathogenic fungi which the adults have been shown to transmit.

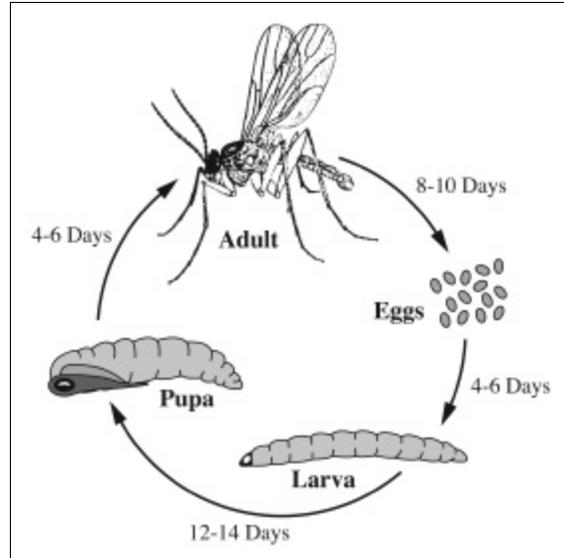


Figure 3—The life cycle of fungus gnats can be less than a month in the warm, humid environment of a greenhouse. Controls should target the larval stage which does the real damage.

contain algae or moss, which develop in response to overwatering. Eggs hatch in about 6 days, and the larvae feed for a couple of weeks and pupate in the growing medium. After 5 to 6 days, the adult flies emerge, completing the life cycle (Figure 3). Because of this short life cycle, populations of dark-winged fungus gnats can build-up rapidly in warm, moist greenhouse environments where algae and moss are present.

Pest management. Prevention and early detection are the keys to controlling fungus gnats and, in my experience, sanitation and proper irrigation practices are crucial.

Monitoring - The most effective way to identify the presence of fungus gnats and monitor their populations is with yellow sticky cards (Figure 4). Adult fungus gnats are attracted to the color and become stuck, and the relative numbers of gnats per card per unit of time gives a good estimate of fungus gnat populations. We are more interested in the number of larvae, however, and so a more recent survey technique has real application. Freshly-cut slices of potato are stuck into the growing medium and left for 48 hours. Recording the number of larvae on or near the discs provided a useful indication of fungus gnat larval populations (Cabrera and others 2004).

Traditional Pesticides - Insecticides can be used to control either larvae or adults but, since the larvae are

doing the damage, it makes more sense to target them. Insecticides can be applied as drenches to control the larvae, but all surfaces where the gnats are breeding must be treated. Hamlen and Mead (1979) tested 12 common insecticides on fungus gnats and found that all were effective, and that surface-applications were as effective as drenches. Today, many more insecticide options are available (Table 1). A recent test of several registered pesticides showed that some are better than

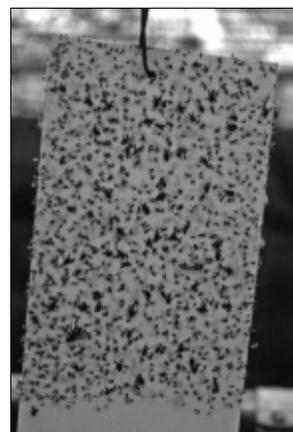


Figure 4—Yellow sticky cards are the most popular way to identify adult fungus gnats but potato slices have also proven useful for monitoring larval populations

Table 1—Insecticides commonly used to control fungus gnats				
Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Type of Pesticide	Safety Class	Restricted Entry Interval (hours)
Traditional Pesticides				
DuraGuard™	Chlorpyrifos	Insecticide	Caution	24
Adept®	Diflubenzuron	Growth regulator	Caution	12
Distance®	Pyriproxyfen	Growth regulator	Caution	12
Marathon®	Imidacloprid	Systemic insecticide	Caution	12
Citation®	Cyromazine	Insecticide	Caution	12
Safari™	Dinotefuran	Systemic insecticide	Caution	12
Organic Controls				
Azatin®	Azadirachtin	Growth regulator	Caution	4
Nemasys®	<i>Steinernema feltiae</i>	Parasitic nematode	None	0
BotaniGuard® Naturalis O®	<i>Beauveria bassiana</i>	Insectivorous fungus	None	4
Predatory Mite	<i>Hypoaspis miles</i>	Predatory mite	None	0
Gnatrol®	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis</i>	Pathogenic bacteria	None	0
Sterilants				
ZeroTol™ OxiDate®	Hydrogen dioxide	Algaecide & fungicide	None	0

others and that multiple applications are more effective (Figure 5). Due to their short life cycle, multiple treatments will be necessary to completely eliminate severe fungus gnat infestations.

Although they are not specifically labeled for fungus gnats, chemical sterilants such as hydrogen dioxide kill the spores of algae and moss which reduces their food source. They can be injected into the irrigation system, and when used regularly, operational experience suggests that these products are very effective in controlling fungus gnat populations.

Organic Controls - One encouraging development is the variety of organic controls for fungus gnats that are now available (Table 1). Some have been more

effective than others so it makes sense to give some thought to their mode of action. Pathogenic bacteria and fungi are not very mobile and so must come in direct contact with the larvae. On the other hand, parasitic mites and nematodes will actually search out their prey which is extremely helpful when larvae have migrated deep into the growing medium.

Cultural Controls - As previously mentioned, the presence of algae and moss and overwatering provide the ideal conditions for fungus gnats. Cultural control methods involve general greenhouse sanitation: removing infested containers, avoiding excessive irrigation, controlling algae and mosses, and sterilizing containers and surfaces. The type of growing medium affects fungus gnat populations and also the efficacy of

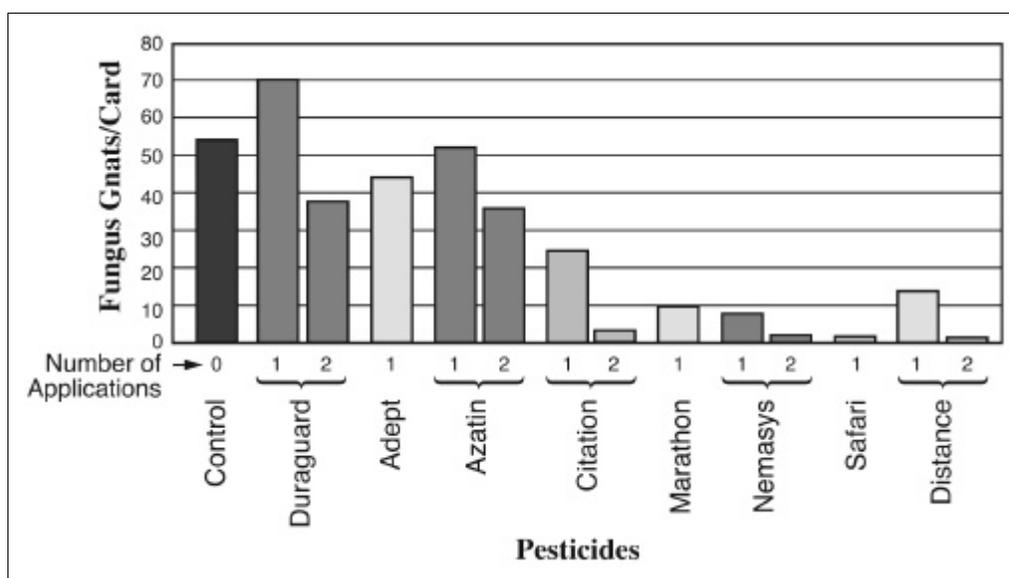


Figure 5—A recent comparison of commercial pesticides and organic controls showed that some products were much more effective than others and that multiple applications are necessary (modified from Fisher and others 2006).

insecticides: more adult fungus gnats emerged and insecticides were less effective in a medium containing composted bark (Lindquist.1996). The type of seed coverings is extremely important. Moss and algae thrive on wet, fertile growing medium surfaces which are an open invitation to fungus gnats. On the other hand, seed coverings such as grit, perlite, and coarse sawdust create a dry surface layer that is not attractive to these common greenhouse pests.

Summary

Fungus gnat larvae are common in greenhouse environments and can do considerable damage to germinating seeds, cuttings, and young seedlings. They are attracted to moss and algae and thrive in wet, humid conditions and prevention is much easier than control. Therefore, growers should regularly sanitize their facilities between crops, clean greenhouse surface and floors regularly, and irrigate only when needed. Yellow sticky cards and potato disks work well for monitoring. For existing populations, several new effective insecticides and organic controls are available.

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New Stock Types and Species from Stooling Beds

by Thomas D. Landis and Tara Luna

Stooling beds are hedge-like rows of mother plants that are established in bareroot nurseries or in vacant fields adjacent to container nurseries. They have been a traditional way of propagating poplars, cottonwoods, and willows in forest and conservation nurseries for well over a century (Figure 1). The term “stool beds” or “stooling beds” is unique to forestry; in horticulture, they are known as “stock hedges” (Macdonald 1986). Regardless, the concept is the same - to establish a ready source of cuttings of known genetic quality for propagation or other purposes.

Stooling beds take advantage of the ability of many broadleaved woody plants to sprout profusely from the base after being cut-off just above the root crown. This happens because the plants are still in the juvenile state which means that they have a higher tendency to sprout and produces roots. Once stooling beds are established, annual cutting ensures that juvenility can be prolonged indefinitely.

Advantages of Stooling Beds

Stooling beds allow the efficient collection of dormant hardwood cuttings during the winter when it may be difficult or impossible to make field collections. Because they are located at nurseries, the beds can be irrigated and cultured; processing and storing the cuttings is also much more efficient and cost-effective. Stooling beds have several advantages over wild collected cuttings:

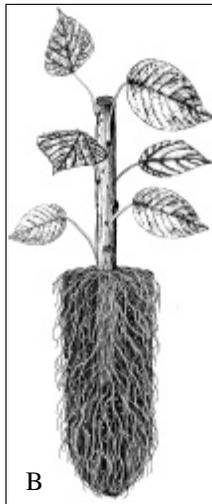


Figure 1—Stooling beds, like this one of black cottonwood (A), are a traditional way of producing rooted cuttings in bareroot and container nurseries (B).

1. Maintaining genetic and sexual diversity. It is much easier to correctly identify different species and ecotypes from labeled stooling beds compared to wild collections. For example, willows often grow together along streams and can be difficult to identify during the winter dormant season. Stooling beds offer the ability to bulk-up unique species or ecotypes quickly and easily.

Many government nurseries have established stooling beds of the species and ecotypes that are adapted to their local area and thus can be a potential source of cutting material for private growers or restorationists. In addition, private native plant nurseries are also establishing stooling beds of desirable species for their local areas and several are specializing in riparian and wetland species. For specific restoration projects, however, the odds of a nursery having existing stooling beds of the proper species and local ecotype is problematic. Therefore, collecting cuttings and establishing stooling beds should be done early in the planning process so that a good supply of cuttings will be available when needed.

For dioecious species like willows and cottonwoods, there is also the issue of proper representation of male and female plants. If a balanced mixture of male and female plants are not collected at the start, the resultant stooling beds will not produce both male and female cuttings. So, when working with dioecious plants, the sexual identify of potential mother plants must be made ahead of time. This is easiest when plants are flowering. Depending on species, willow catkins may appear before, during, or after new leaves appear in spring.

Identifying anthers in male catkins and pistils in females with a hand lens is relatively easy, especially with a little practice. During the winter dormant season, it is possible to identify the sex of dormant cottonwoods by dissecting floral buds although this is more difficult with willows. Detailed instructions on how to “sex” willows and cottonwoods can be found in Landis and others (2003).

2. Producing healthy and vigorous cuttings.

Cuttings from stooling beds are usually healthier and more vigorous than those from wildland collections. Willows are host to many insect and fungal pests such as galls and cankers (Figure 2) that lower the quality of wild-collected cuttings. For example, on a riparian restoration project in Idaho, cuttings were collect from heavily browsed willows on the project site and then planted in nursery beds to produce rooted cuttings. However, the yield of shippable plants was low and these

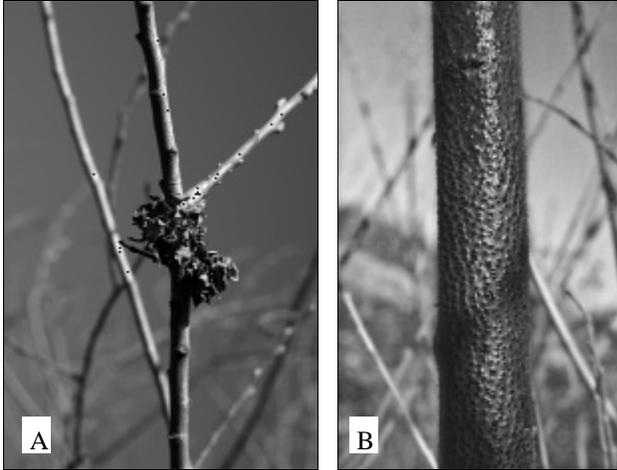


Figure 2—Stooling beds can be cultured to prevent the occurrence of insect galls (A) and fungus cankers, such as *Cytospora* (B)

wild-collected cuttings rooted poorly (> 50%) when outplanted. These failures increased production costs and threatened the project’s replanting schedule. So, about 150 rooted cuttings from the first nursery crop were used to start a stooling bed. The following year, harvesting just half of the stooling bed yielded more than 6,000 healthy cuttings. Cuttings from the stooling beds rooted at over 99%, thereby lowering establishment costs and keeping the project on-schedule (Dumroese and others 1998).

So, to summarize, a well-planned stooling bed will produce health, vigorous cuttings of the proper plant species. A known mixture of male and female plants to ensure that the resulting plant materials will be able to produce viable seeds soon after outplanting, and achieve the ultimate goal of a diverse, sustainable plant community.

Types of Plant Materials from Stooling Beds

Nurseries can harvest several different plant materials from stooling beds. They can use propagation cuttings to start their own bareroot or container plants, or can sell other types of plant materials to clients for use on restoration sites (Figure 3). These plant materials can be collected during winter or very early spring that are usually “slow times” at many nurseries.

Hardwood cuttings for nursery propagation.

Historically, the main purpose of stooling beds was to provide a ready and reliable source of propagation cuttings (Figure 3) for use at the nursery. Cuttings were collected during the winter dormant season, processed, stored, and then stuck into bareroot beds or containers to

produce rooted cuttings (Mathers 2003). These stock types take only one growing season.

Hardwood cuttings for restorations sites.

Stooling beds can also be sources of several types of nonrooted cuttings:

Live stakes - Live stakes are so-named because, in addition to providing stability on restoration sites, they are expected to root and sprout after installation. Because they will be pounded into the ground, live stakes are cut from relatively straight sections of second or third year wood. Live stakes are typically 18 to 24 in (46 to 61 cm) in length and at from 1 to 3 in (2.5 to 7.6 cm) in diameter (Figure 3). However, because dimensions will vary with each application, specifications should be negotiated with individual customers. Depending on the plant species, it can take 2 to 4 years for a stooling bed to produce large enough branches for live stakes. Some of the smaller willow species will never grow large enough.

Branched cuttings - Fascines, vertical bundles, and other bioengineering structures (Hoag and Landis 2001) require a large number of dormant, nonrooted, branched, hardwood cuttings (Figure 3). Usually, these are gathered on-site but, for restoration projects that will require a large amount of plant material over several years, cuttings of a variety of species can be brought back to a nursery to start stooling beds. Stooling beds

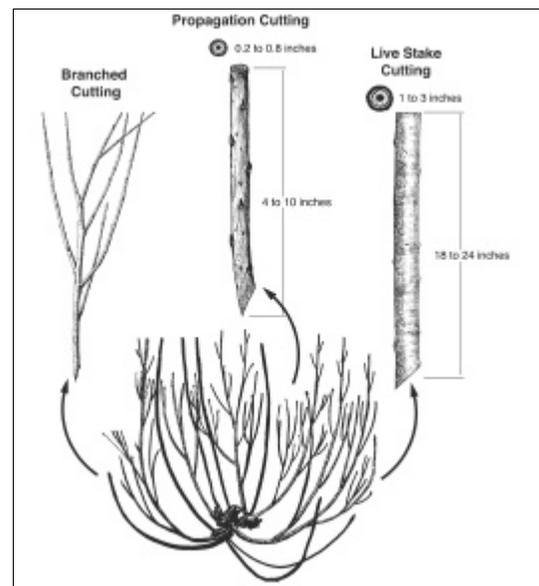


Figure 3—Several types of hardwood cuttings can be obtained from stooling beds, including cuttings for propagation at the nursery or live stakes and branches cuttings for restoration projects. Note that large plant materials require extra time to produce.

may take 2 or more years to produce significant numbers of harvestable cuttings.

Pole cuttings - Pole cuttings (Figure 4) are large diameter main stems that have all side branches and the top 30 to 60 cm (1 to 2 ft) removed. They have primarily been used in riparian restoration projects where normal-sized cuttings fail, such as riparian systems where high water velocities can rip cuttings out before they have a chance to establish. Poles should also have applications in roadside revegetation and other restoration projects where stability is a main concern. Because of the large size of the plant material necessary for pole cuttings, nursery stooling beds are ideal. Cottonwoods have been the main species used for poles but the larger tree-sized willows such as Goodding's willow (*S. gooddingii*) also have potential.

Dreesen and Harrington (1997) were able to produce large Fremont cottonwood poles from stooling beds at the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center in New Mexico in as little as 3 years. They also tested other southwestern riparian species in pole plantings, and found that New Mexico olive (*Forestiera neomexicana*), seepwillow (*Baccharis glutinosa*), and false indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) had potential.

Stooling beds can remain productive for many years, depending on species, ecotype, and nursery cultural practices, especially pest management. For cottonwood, stooling beds typically remain productive for 4 to 8 years after which vigor and productivity start to decline; however, other nurseries have maintained stooling beds of willow and cottonwood for 12 to 15 years without decreases in vigor. Cytospora canker, caused by fungi of the genus *Cytospora* spp. (Figure 2B) is a particularly serious pest of all Salicaceae and, because it is transmitted and thrives in wounded stem tissue, can ruin a productive stooling bed. The productivity and longevity of a stooling bed is a direct function of the amount of care given them.

Plant Species Suitable for Stooling Beds

As mentioned, most stooling beds have been of poplars, cottonwoods, and willows. However, it should not be assumed that all species of the willow family are good candidates for stooling beds. Some species have growth characteristics which reduces their potential. For example, trials at the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Ft Collins have shown that narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and coyote willow (*Salix exigua*) do not "stool" well and must be propagated by other methods (Grubb 2007).

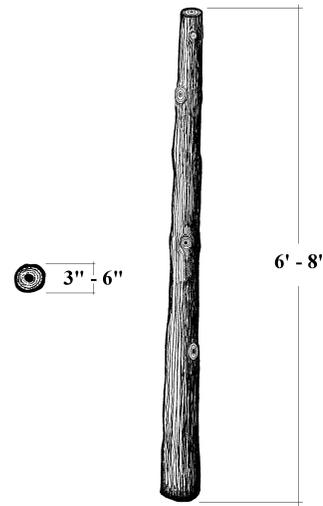


Figure 4—Pole cuttings of cottonwood and larger willows can also be produced in stooling beds, and have application in restoration outplanting where stability is a concern.

On the other hand, there is great potential for using other woody species that have the propensity to sprout and form roots easily. For example, redstem dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) is commonly grown in stooling blocks and used as a source of cuttings for restoration sites. Outplanting success is higher than with native collections on site and have ranged from 50 to 90% (Hoag 2007). In North Dakota, black twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*) is being investigated (Morgenson 2007).

Clearly, native species that root easily from hardwood cuttings have the potential to be grown in stooling beds to generate cuttings. This is especially true for those species whose seed have inherent deep seed dormancy characteristics, such as snowberry, honeysuckle, elderberry, and some species of currants. Other species such as mock orange and ninebark (*Physocarpus* spp.), that often have consistent low seed viability, may also be produced more economically by stooling beds.

The Plant Materials Centers of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service have done a good job of identifying the potential of a wide variety of woody native plants that would be suitable for stooling beds (Table 1). For example, Crowder and Darris (1999) do an excellent job of discussing which plants are suitable in the Pacific Northwest and then provide a wealth of information on the installation and culture of stooling beds.

Table 1—Native woody plants of the Pacific Northwest with potential for propagation in stooling beds				
Plant Species		Rooting Ability	Growth Rate	Field Success (1=Poor, 5=Good)
Scientific Name	Common Name			
<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	Coyote brush	Fair to good	Moderate	3
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red-osier dogwood	Good	Fast	3
<i>Oemleria cerastiformis</i>	Indian plum	Poor to Good	Moderate	1
<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>	Pacific ninebark	Good to Very Good	Moderate to Fast	4
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	Lewis mockorange	Fair	Moderate	1
<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>	Black cottonwood	Fair to Very Good	Very Fast	3
<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	Woods' rose	Poor to Fair	Moderate to Fast	1
<i>Salix amygdaloides</i>	Peachleaf willow	Excellent	Very Fast	5
<i>Salix exigua</i>	Coyote willow	Very Good	Fast	4
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	Arroyo willow	Excellent	Very Fast	5
<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	Scouler's willow	Good to Very Good	Very Fast	4
<i>Spiraea douglasii</i>	Douglas spirea	Very Good	Fast	4
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry	Very Good	Fast	4
* = modified from Crowder and Darris (1999)				

Darris (2002) performed extensive greenhouse and field trials to test the potential of several woody plants for live stake applications. Common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), Pacific ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*) and black twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*) have all proved effective as live stakes for soil bioengineering in the Pacific Northwest. Notably, several have proven superior to willow on some sites such as salmonberry in wet, shaded environments and snowberry on drier, exposed locations.

Summary

Stooling beds have been producing cuttings of willows, cottonwood, and poplars for many years but also have the potential for supplying other plant materials for restoration projects. Because of their proven application, nursery managers should work with their customers to establish stooling beds of woody plant species.

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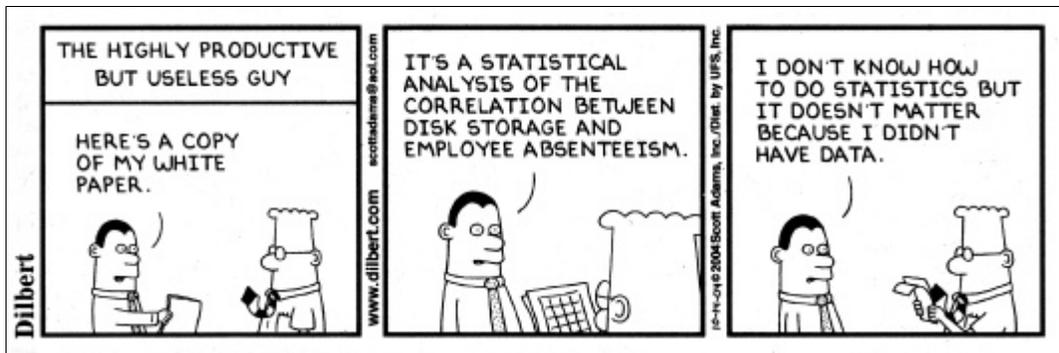
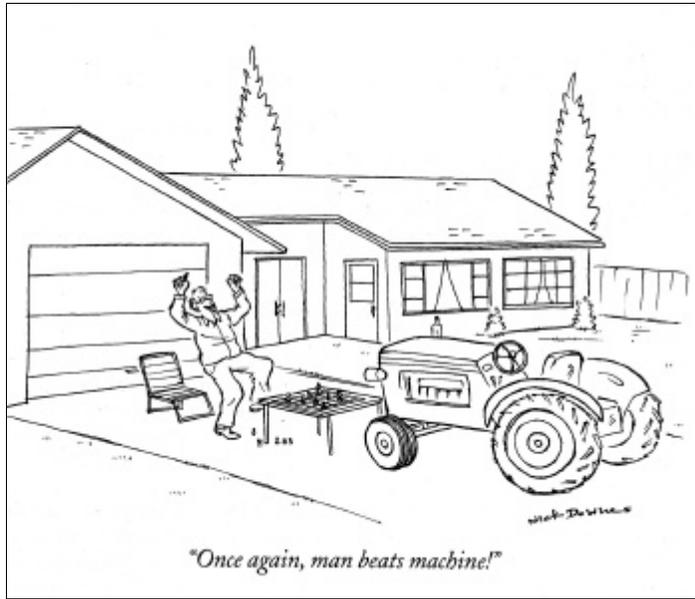
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Horticultural Humor





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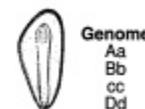
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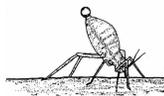
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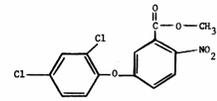
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