

PACKING ADVANCES AND COSTS  
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There isn't much new in our packaging. We are still using the jelly roll wrap with excelsior waste as a moisture retaining material. Tests in New York and Ontario have demonstrated that excelsior waste, while not holding very much water, is as good as sphagnum moss when measured by survival of outplantings. While saving money, we have created a public relations problem because our buyers expect to find the root area as moist as when packed in sphagnum. Tests show that the most important factor influencing survival, after shipment, is temperature, not moisture. To re-inform our buyers and insure better stock survival, we are printing our paper with a "Keep Cool - Keep Dark" caution. We started this on our polyethylene-lined kraft paper bag shipments because on that experimental package a short exposure to full sunlight killed the seedlings. We have found no way to use this bag package because of the danger of exposing during shipping and storage.

Cost of materials runs about \$0.30/M (2bundles of 500 each). The use of sphagnum instead of excelsior waste would add about \$0.10, or 1/3 to the cost per thousand.

Progress in improving packaging and shipping methods has been somewhat slower than progress in cultural methods. New York has a fairly satisfactory package, but we need to do a better job of teaching the importance of temperature control to our buyers. More research to find better packaging and shipping methods is needed.