

PACKAGING LARGE PLANTING STOCK

by

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In certain areas of Western Washington, particularly in better growing sites, we have found the need for large planting stock, and by large, we are referring to 1-2 and 2-2 Coast form - Douglas-fir which will attain a stem caliper of up to 1" in diameter at ground line, 3 to 4' in height and correspondingly heavy root system. This tree presented a challenge in order to package it in units that could be readily handled by the field personnel planting it. We have arrived at the method of purchasing the standard multi-walled paper bag in various sizes. The largest size that we are currently using is 60" wide with a 1" gusset and 30" in depth. These large trees are packed singly in the usual fashion of placing 100 trees to a bag. The bag is sealed in the normal stapling manner and sent out to the field. The field prefers this bag because with 100 trees they can open it and just drag it through the woods behind them, and unless the going is especially hazardous, the bag will last until the 100 trees are planted.

While handling of this large stock poses quite a logistical problem, we have taken it in stride and have accepted the fact that we will be doing many different types of this material handling; and in order to put the best tree to the plantation, we are willing to adapt any innovation that will be of benefit to the planter.

An experiment was made with the wire-bound box and the first time I shipped it to the field, I had a request that it come back, and after several weeks I sent out a tracer for it and the answer I got back was, "We took the coffin out and buried it"--not too sure but I think they had a warming fire.

We have tried cardboard boxes of various types and invariably we go into either too much weight, too much cost or too much bulk and the bag seems to give us an adequate answer. They are relatively inexpensive and easily stored. We now carry six different sizes as stock items in our inventory.

It is my opinion that more emphasis should be placed on devising a means of packaging and sorting in the nursery field so that we would eliminate rehandling this large stock rather than the normal packaging methods.