

 UI Extension Forestry Information Series

Checklist for Tree Planters

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Tree planting is a good way to bring a sparse stand up to full stocking, increase species diversity, or achieve many other forest stewardship goals. However, landowners often fail to take action until a week or two before they want to plant. If you want to plant trees, start planning at least a year in advance (more if you want to have seedlings custom grown). Here is a checklist to help you get started:

- Order seedlings.* Have you ordered your seedlings yet? If you know your site will be ready in the spring, order seedlings the preceeding fall. Many times landowners learn too late that the seedlings they want are already sold out. Ordering early is the best way to insure you get the number, size, and species of seedlings you need.
- Animal damage prevention?* Gophers, deer, mice, and other animals often find tree seedlings to be a very attractive source of food. Have your neighbors had problems with these animals? Are you going to plant hardwoods? If so, order tree shelters or plan some other means to prevent damage to your planted trees.
- Competition?* Competition from grass, brush, or other plants can severely diminish the growth of new seedlings. There are several options to deal with this competition, ranging from mulch to herbicides. In some cases, you may have to start controlling competing vegetation in the growing season before planting, and delay planting tree seedlings for another year.
- Labor.* If you have planted tree seedlings before, you know – tree planting is hard work! Do you have the time and energy to plant more than a few hundred seedlings? If not, consider setting

up a contract with a tree planting crew. Some conservation districts work with reputable planting crews. You could also work with a consulting forester to choose and supervise a planting crew. Finally, you could find a crew yourself and work with them directly. In any event, make sure you have a very specific contract which spells out your expectations clearly.

The following publications will help you explore these and other tree planting issues in more detail. They are available through your local University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System Office.

- CIS 528 *Plant your container-grown seedlings right* (UI)
- EC 1192 *Contracts for woodland owners and Christmas tree growers* (OSU)
- MISC 18 A *guide to seedling selection* (UI)

This information first appeared in Woodland NOTES, Vol. 6, No. 2.

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