

4-H Forestry Project No.1 Tree Planting

Tree planting is one of the most common activities associated with forestry. Anyone can plant trees, but not everyone plants them successfully. Tree planting is easy, but seedlings must be handled and planted correctly if the trees are to live and grow properly.

Tree planting is very important for forestry in Mississippi and the South. Millions of trees, which are produced at private nurseries in the state, are planted in Mississippi annually.

Seedlings are taken from nurseries and planted during the winter months while they are dormant. During winter, seedlings are not actively growing and can better withstand the “shock” of being transplanted from the ideal soil at the nursery to a less favorable site that you choose.

It is essential to have a clear objective before beginning a tree-planting project. Specifically, trees can be planted for windbreaks, erosion control, timber production, wildlife habitat improvement, as a memorial to loved ones, or as part of a community activity.

In Mississippi, Arbor Day and Tree Planting Week begin on the second Friday in February. These festivities are observed by planting memorial trees around schools and homes, along streets and highways, and on farms. Check with local officials about a Tree Planting Week celebration in your county. If no observance is planned, try to get one started.

These are just some of the many reasons for planting trees. Your purpose will affect the kind of trees you choose to plant, where you place them, and how you go about the task.

Project References

Please note that the Extension publications listed below are available on line at extension.msstate.edu.

- MSU Extension Publication 160, *Tree Planting Is Easy*
- MSU Extension Publication 146, *Know Your Trees*
- MSU Extension Publication 1776, *Planting Southern Pines: A Guide to Species Selection and Planting Techniques*
- MSU Extension Publication 3565, *Thinning Hardwood Plantations*
- MSU Extension Publication 4026, *Yard Tree Placement and Risk Assessment*
- MSU Extension Forestry Management Technical Note 4E, *Seedlings Available from In-state and Regional Nurseries*, available from your [local MSU Extension office](#).

Project Materials

- At least 50 (preferably 100) tree seedlings (pine or hardwood—pine seedlings are easier to get.)
- A planting bar (also called a “dibble bar”) to use in planting your seedlings.
- A 2-gallon bucket or canvas bag to hold your seedlings and prevent the roots from drying out

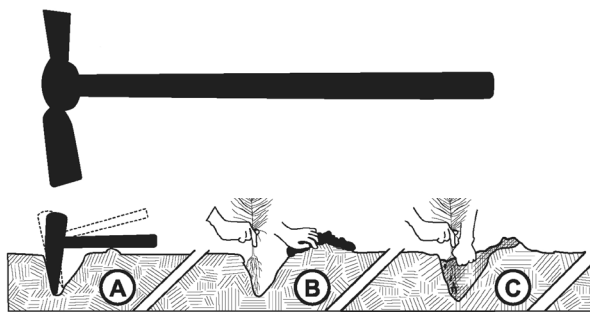
Sources of Help and Information

You should be able to get plenty of help and good information from several sources.

- MSU Extension county agents, [MSU Extension Service county offices](#)
- Registered foresters, [Mississippi Board of Registration for Foresters](#)
- Area forester, Mississippi Forestry Commission, [Find Your Forester—MFC](#)
- District conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [USDA Service Center Locator](#)
- Project forester or district ranger, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [Mississippi's National Forests](#)

Planting Techniques

Mattock or Grub Hoe

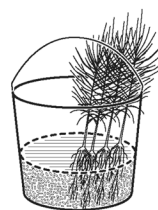


A. Insert mattock, lift handle, and pull. B. Place seedling along straight side to correct depth. C. Fill in and pack soil to the bottom of roots. D. Finish filling in soil and firm with heel.

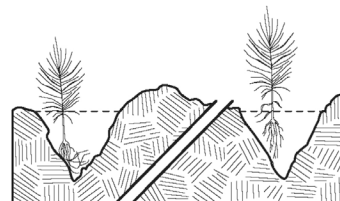
Planting Bar or Dibble



A. Insert dibble at about a 45-degree angle and push straight up. B. Remove dibble and place seedling at the correct depth (same as or half-inch deeper than at nursery). C. Insert dibble 2 inches toward planter from seedling and pull handle toward planter, firming soil at bottom of roots. D. Push handle forward from planter, firming soil at top of roots. E. Insert dibble 2 inches from last hole. F. Push forward and then backward to fill hole. G. Fill in last hole by stamping with heel.



Keep roots covered with mud, moss, or water when handling in the field.



The first is planted too deeply with the roots bent; the second is planted too shallowly with some roots exposed.

Instructions

1. Contact a local forester to help find tree seedlings and a planting bar. Seedlings will be available from December through March.
2. Partner with other 4-H'ers to share the cost of seedlings, which are often sold in bundles of 1,000 from nurseries.
3. Locate a suitable planting site. The site may be on your family's land. If you have trouble locating a planting site, get help from a local forester or Extension agent. Be sure you have permission from the landowner if the land does not belong to your family. Plant the seedlings at least 50 feet from overhead utility lines and 20 feet from buildings. Call 811 to locate underground utilities.
4. Determine an appropriate planting spacing and number of trees per acre (TPA) based on the project objectives. Example spacing for pines can be 8 feet by 10 feet (544 TPA), 9 feet by 9 feet (537 TPA), 8 feet by 11 feet (495 TPA), or 8 feet by 12 feet (453 TPA). Example spacing for oaks can be 10 feet by 10 feet (435 TPA), 10 feet by 12 feet (363 TPA), or 12 feet by 12 feet (302 TPA). A forester can help make this determination and assist in measuring the planting spacing.
5. Plant your trees soon after you receive them and take care to keep the roots moist.
6. If you borrowed a planting bar, clean it and return it to the owner immediately after you finish planting.
7. If possible, get a forester to check your tree planting project and sign your record sheet when your project has been satisfactorily completed. Include the record sheet in your current record book.
8. Have your adult 4-H leader check your project and sign your record sheet. Save the signed project record sheet and other materials for future reference as you participate in other 4-H projects.

4-H Forestry Project Record No. 1 Tree Planting

Your full name _____

Grade in school _____ No. years in 4-H _____ Date of birth _____

Your parent/guardian's name _____

Your address _____ County _____

Name of club _____ Adult leader's name _____

What species of tree did you plant? (Examples: loblolly pine, slash pine, cottonwood, yellow poplar, baldcypress, etc.)

Describe the type of site on which you planted your trees. (Examples: abandoned farmland, abandoned pasture, cutover timberland, eroded gullies, road or stream banks, old log landing, etc.)

Describe in detail the location of the area where you planted the trees. (Example: On Mr. John Smith's farm near the Pineville Community, 4 miles west of Smithville, Mississippi, in Smith County.)

Who owns the land where you planted your trees? _____

How many seedlings did you plant? _____

What tool did you use to plant your trees? _____

Where did you get the tool that you used to plant the trees? _____

When did you plant the trees? (days, month, year) _____

What spacing did you use between trees and between rows (feet by feet)? _____

What purposes do you expect these trees to serve as they grow and develop?

List the different companies, organizations, or agencies you contacted as you worked on this project.

Did your county or community observe Tree Planting Week and Arbor Day this year?	yes	no
If so, were you involved in the Tree Planting Week observance?	yes	no

Check the activities you were involved in during Tree Planting Week.

- planted trees
- helped local officials distribute seedlings to the public
- made and displayed a poster promoting Tree Planting Week
- gave a visual presentation about trees or Tree Planting Week
- did other activities (explain)

Write any suggestions you have on how this project could be improved.

As a forester (or forest technician), I have checked the tree planting project and found it to be accomplished in accordance with accepted forest management practices.

Forester or Forest Technician	Title and/or Organization
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As an adult 4-H leader, I have checked this tree planting project and found it to be satisfactorily completed.

4-H Leader

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