

Planting Shrubs & Trees From 10 cu. in. Plugs

A few nurseries offer woody species in 10 cubic-inch plugs, which offer the restorationist many advantages over bareroot plants and conventional containers. They are cheaper than most container plants, priced competitively with bareroot plants, yet they are available for shipping and planting at any time of year.

Healthier roots

The plugs are grown in containers with internal, vertical ribs and open bottoms, suspended in racks that hold the pots slightly above ground. The vertical ribs make the outer roots grow straight down. The open bottoms with no lip cause the roots at the base to air-prune themselves, instead of circling the bottom of the pot. This encourages development of the fine feeder roots, so crucial for successful plant establishment. The pots are 1/2" deeper than traditional #1 containers, so the plants actually have longer roots than plants grown in 1-gallon pots.



Detail of bottom with air-pruned root



Alder plug next to 1-gallon pot

Year-round availability

Unlike bareroot plants, plugs are available and can be planted any time of year, not just in the winter/early spring bareroot season. This is particularly helpful for projects with unreliable or changeable timelines, sites that are flooded during the rainy season, and projects such as salmon habitat enhancements that must be installed in the summer, due to permit requirements.

Easier to transport

We remove the plugs from their containers for shipping and pack them in compact, plasticwrapped bundles of 25, which are simple to ship and easy to haul around on the site. They can be shipped via UPS. These qualities make plugs well-suited to planting in remote sites and areas with difficult access.

Faster to plant

Installation crews love planting plugs because they are quick and easy to handle. Place a bundle of plants on the ground, unroll it like a bedroll, make a hole with a dibble, drop in a plug, stomp down the earth next to the hole and you're done. Using a planting dibble, our plugs install roughly 3–5 times faster than a 1-gallon plant and leave no pot waste to clean up. Dibbles the exact size and ship of the plug may be purchased from the pot manufacturer. Many of our customers who try these never go back to traditional containers.

Creates less ground disturbance

Plugs are particularly well-suited to steep slope planting because the planting hole needed for a plug is barely larger than the pilot hole needed for a live stake, so they can be installed with minimal disturbance to the slope. Using plugs can expand your slope stabilization plant species choices substantially.



Bundles of 25 10-cu. in. plugs boxed and ready to ship

Environmentally friendly

Using plugs creates less waste. Because the plugs are removed from their pots for shipping, the pots remain at the nursery where they can be reused time after time. Removing the pots at the nursery reduces trash on the installation sites. Reusing the pots reduces the nursery's consumption of plastic pots, and reduces the environmental impacts of shipping new pots.