

Protecting Your Valuable Seedlings from Nursery to Planting



Although seedlings from our nurseries are packaged and shipped for maximum survival, the way you care for and handle seedlings can greatly affect your survival outcomes. Use the following guidelines to protect your investment, increase survival rates and get maximum growth.

The results of harmful events are cumulative.

Short exposures may seem unimportant, but several harmful events can add up to a significant loss in survival and growth. As harsher climates begin to prevail, the care and handling of your valuable seedlings becomes even more imperative.

1. When picking seedlings up from the nursery, provide cool, shaded conditions for transport and pick them up in late afternoon if possible. Long distance hauling is best done at night to prevent heat buildup from the sun.
2. Cover seedlings in an open truck or trailer with a tarp but be sure to allow about a foot between tarp and seedlings for ventilation.
3. Boxes should not be stacked to the point of crushing. Bags/bundles should not be stacked in layers more than two deep without spacers (heat builds up even at low temperatures when seedlings are stored in direct sunlight or without air circulation - especially in sealed bags).
4. Minimize seedling exposure to extreme temperatures, sunlight and dry air.
5. When cold storage facilities are not available at the planting site, take only as many seedlings to the field as can be planted in one day's time.
6. Temperatures inside seedling packages can quickly exceed 50° on sunny days, even when air temperatures are moderate, which can quickly reduce seedling quality. Keep seedlings away from the sun.
7. Seedlings not planted in the day should be returned to cold storage if possible – if not, they should be covered with a tarp at sunset to protect against freezing.
8. Make sure roots are visibly moist at all times. However, remember that "sloppy wet" seedlings mold very quickly at warm temperatures.
9. Do not prune seedling roots.

Good Supervision: The key to protecting your valuable investment. Be There. Be Aware.

If you're not on site to supervise, here are a few of the things your seedlings might suffer at the hand of careless contractors:

- Failure to cover seedlings with tarp while transporting
- Stacked too high or too tightly
- Left in sun, wind or dry air
- Failure to keep roots moist or overwatering of roots
- Parked in a shady spot in the morning but left in the sun when the shade moves as the day progresses

Good on-site supervision is the best way to prevent mishandling. Be there and be aware!