Hand Planting

Where Applicable:

This practice is used primarily on cutover tracts and occasional openland planting jobs that are inaccessible due to the property being too wet, brushy, steep, or small to justify machine planting.

Description:

Hand planting is a method of reforesting a tract of land where the planter walks over the property planting trees with a tool such as a dibble bar, hoedad or planting shovel. The planter carries trees in bags strapped to his or her hips and plants on a spacing predetermined by the landowner or his agent according to the desired objectives. A good planter can plant 1000 to 2000 seedlings per day depending on soil conditions and amount of debris or brush present on the tract.

Benefits:

This practice is beneficial on tracts where little or no site prep has been done as well as tracts that are rough, small, or inaccessible to machine planters. No matter how clean a site is, if it is too wet, machine planting is not an option. The landowner must look ahead and anticipate the effects of weather and the conditions of the tract at the proposed time of planting. This method is generally less expensive than wild-land planting but on average has poorer survival due to planting consistency problems and increased seedling handling and exposure times.

Other Recommendations:

Planting rows should be aligned with the contour of the land to prevent possible erosion hazards during future harvesting operations. Open land or wild land machine planting usually has better survival than hand planting and should be considered if conditions permit. Sites harvested within 6 months of planting should be planted with pounce treated seedlings to minimize mortality due to pales weevils. Leaf cutting ants, if present, should be treated with Volcano® four or more weeks prior to the planting operation. It is recommended that the landowner have a planting contract with the vendor to protect both parties in the event that problems arise. Landowners or their agent should make every effort to be present on site while the planting operation is being conducted to address concerns with planting quality and seedling handling. Dipping the roots in terra-sorb prior to planting will decrease the stress on seedlings due to exposure. Landowners should also check to make sure that the planting vendor can furnish the appropriate documentation for proof of Department of Labor Registration, Worker’s Comp or other Insurance, etc.

Cost:

Approximately $48-$75/acre depending on tract size, vegetative cover, availability of vendors, etc. Extra charges may apply for vendor pickup and delivery of the seedlings, planting pounce treated seedlings, dipping the roots in terra-sorb prior to planting, other special requests by the landowner, etc.