

# User Guide for WA State Conservation Districts

updated July 2024

The purpose of this guide is to help familiarize Conservation Districts employees with the WACD Plant Materials Center. This guide will address bareroot plants, live stakes, gravel bed plants, and the additional services that we offer such as brokering and contract growing. The guide will also explain our ordering, cancellation, storage, and handling of plant material.

## **HISTORY OF THE PLANT MATERIALS CENTER**

The WACD Plant Materials Center is owned and operated by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. The association is a 501(c) 6 non-profit corporation. The mission of the WACD Plant Materials Center is to grow high quality conservation plants, materials, and service for the benefit of natural resources and conservation projects.

WACD began operating the PMC in 1993. At the time the facility was owned by the NRCS. The NRCS wanted the mission to continue and transferred the title but could only transfer it to a public entity which meant that it could not be transferred to WACD. It could be transferred to a Conservation District to hold in trust for all the Conservation Districts and lease it to WACD. Skagit CD volunteered to hold the title and in 1998 a 99-year lease was worked out for \$1.00 per year.

Our 60-acre conservation-grade nursery, located in Skagit County, produces over 1.5 million bareroot plants and live stakes each year with over 80 different species. The bareroot plants are propagated from source-identified seed collections from reputable sources throughout the Pacific Northwest. Single and multi-year growing contracts are also available.

## **BAREROOT PLANTS**

Bareroot plant information is also located on our website: [What are Bare Root Plants.](#)

### **What are bareroot plants?**

- Bareroot plants are dormant (not actively growing) perennial plants that are dug up and stored in cold storage without any soil around their roots.

### **When are bareroot plants available?**

- Bareroot plants are harvested and shipped when they are dormant at the end of December through April.

### **What are the stock types of bareroot plants?**

- **1-0** is a one-year-old bareroot plant seeded directly into the field, grown for one growing season, and is not transplanted.
- **2-0** is a two-year-old bareroot plant seeded directly into the field, grown for two growing seasons, and is not transplanted.

- **2-1** is a two-year-old bareroot plant seeded directly into the field, grown for two growing seasons, and transplanted for one additional growing season.
- **P-1** is a plug grown in the greenhouse for one season and then transplanted into the field and grown for one growing season.

#### **What sizes are the bareroot plants?**

- The Plant Materials Center sells conservation grade plants. Conservation grade plants can vary considerably in size and form which is beneficial to promoting species genetics and diversity. Depending on the stock type, and species, our plants are sold as 3-6", 6-12", 6-18", 12" +, and 18" +.

### **LIVE STAKES**

Live stake information is also located on our website: [What are Live Stakes.](#)

#### **What are live stakes?**

- Live stakes are cuttings from shrubs and/or small trees. When harvested and installed correctly in the right conditions they can develop roots and grow. The Plant Material Center carries Cottonwood, Red Osier Dogwood, and a variety of Eastern and Western Washington willow species.

#### **Where can you use live stakes?**

- Live stakes can be used for wetlands, flood plains, marine bluffs stream banks, lake shores, landslides, road slopes and storm water detention ponds. Live stakes are perfect for bioengineering techniques for stabilizing soil within crib walls, brush mattresses, soil lifts, retaining walls, fascines, rip rap and gabions.

#### **When are live stakes available?**

- Live stakes are available mid-October through April for harvest and shipping.

#### **What sizes of livestakes are typically available?**

- The standard live stake length is 3 feet. Depending on the species, longer length live stakes may be available. Live stakes are harvested after one-year of growth from our cutting blocks. The diameter can vary each year per species, but they typically range from 1/4" to 3/4" +. Live stakes are sold as conservation grade and are not sorted for specific caliper diameter.

### **GRAVEL BED PLANTS**

View information regarding [Gravel Bed Plants](#) on our website.

#### **What are gravel bed plants?**

- Gravel bed plants are bareroot plants that are heeled in over the summer in an irrigated bed of pea gravel. This method builds upon the Missouri Gravel Bed system pioneered at the University of Missouri's Center for Agroforestry. This method extends the bare root planting window, increases scheduling flexibility, reduces costs compared to containerized stock, and retains all the benefits of bare root planting stock.

- Gravel bed plants arrive fully leafed-out with a fibrous root system, and they are slightly larger than dormant plants. Gravel Bed Plants are recommended for fall planting, are available for harvest, and shipping mid – October through November.

## **BROKERING**

### **What is brokering?**

- Brokering is a service the PMC offers for items we do not carry or are sold out. You are welcome to inquire, and we will try and locate the species you need. If found, we will let you know the stock type, size, and prices per plant available. If you would like the item(s), we take care of the ordering, coordination, handling, and inbound shipping to the PMC for you. Vendors often offer price breaks for a large volume of plants ordered. We may be locating the same species for other inquiries which could save you time and money. Brokered items may not be cancelled once they are ordered.
- We also contract with a greenhouse grower to grow plugs for the Conservation Districts plant sales and/or projects. The greenhouse grower needs the total quantities by the end of April to propagate and grow plugs for delivery the following February. For example, if you need your plugs in Spring of 2025, then you need to submit your plug order by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Without a contract, we are unable to guarantee additional plugs. The greenhouse typically offers the following species for contract growing: Deer Fern, Evergreen Huckleberry, Kinnikinnick, Lady Fern, Madrone, Maidenhair Fern, Rhododendron, Salal, and Sword Fern.

## **CONTRACT GROWING**

### **What is contract growing?**

- The Plant Materials Center offers single and multi-year contracts to grow the plants you need.
- The lead time for a growing contract depends on the species and stock types requested. Species that we grow and sell as a 1-0, require one to two years notice. Species that we grow and sell as a 2-0 or P-1, require two to three years notice. Contract Growing ensures that the plants or trees that you need are available when you need them at a guaranteed price.
- Feel free to inquire with your desired species and quantities.

## **ORDERING**

### **When do you order?**

- We accept orders year around for any harvest season including multi-year orders. The best option for securing plants is to get your order in as early as possible. Districts are encouraged to roll over their plant sale orders year after year.
- When our fiscal year starts in July, contract orders are entered first. Next, we enter all Conservation District's orders that were received prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> in the order they were received. Orders received after July 1<sup>st</sup> are entered in the order in which they are received.

### **How do I order and what plants are available?**

- The [current availability with order form](#) includes instructions and is located on the website. This form is updated weekly or as needed. The availability changes often so it is important to use the most recent order form when ordering. We offer price discounts based on the quantity of plants ordered per species.
- We can get estimated numbers by August when the plants are grown. Exact numbers are known when each species is harvested (typically January – March). If actual harvest numbers are less than the estimated quantity, we cancel those orders which are received last. You are welcome and encouraged to submit your “wish lists” before we have the availability with estimated numbers established.

### **CANCELLING OR REDUCING ORDERS**

#### **Can I cancel my order?**

- If you need to cancel or reduce your order, it must be submitted to us in writing prior to December 1<sup>st</sup>. After December 1<sup>st</sup>, you will be charged a 25% restocking fee (this is common in the industry). Brokered stock may not be cancelled.

### **PAYMENT**

#### **How do I pay for my plants?**

- A deposit is required to reserve your order. Once your order is entered, you will receive a 25% deposit invoice. It is your responsibility to let us know if you are unable to pay a deposit. In the event of shortages, orders without a deposit may be cancelled or reduced.
- Sales tax will be charged on all orders unless we have a current Washington State Reseller’s permit on file. Shipping costs will be invoiced after the order is shipped.
- We accept Visa, Master Card, checks and/or ACH transfers. Payment is required within 30 days of invoice.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Our current [Terms and Conditions](#) are located on our website.

### **RECEIVING ORDERS**

View the full [Pick-up & Shipping](#) information on our website.

#### **How do I get my plants?**

- Orders may either be picked up at the nursery in Bow or shipped. We start shipping towards the end of December and ship through April. Shipping is available Monday through Wednesday. We require a minimum of two weeks, and we are limited to the number of shipments and pick-ups per day. Scheduling is first come first served so it is important that you schedule as soon as possible to receive the desired date.
- Based on the order volume, we use either UPS or Oak Harbor Freight. Shipping costs are based on weight, volume, and destination. We are unable to give you the exact cost until after the order is shipped. If you need to estimate shipping costs, we recommend using

20% of the total order. This is only an estimate and there are many variables that could affect the cost.

**STORAGE/HANDLING**

| <b>DO...</b>   | <b>DON'T...</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Do</b> Plant within two days out of cold storage.   | <b>Do not</b> keep them in direct sunlight or a warm location.  |
| <b>Do</b> store them in cold storage at 34-38 degrees Fahrenheit.                                    | <b>Do not</b> open bags to "let the plants breath."   |
| <b>Do</b> keep the roots moist and the bags closed.  | <b>Do not</b> allow them to freeze.   |
| <b>Do</b> heel them in soil or sawdust until they can be planted (if cold storage is not available). | <b>Do not</b> store the bags in a pile. They can build up heat in a pile. Circulation around the bags is necessary. |

**HOW TO PLANT**

We have a [Bareroot Planting Guide](#) that is located on our website.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR SELECT SPECIES**

- Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Low Oregon Grape (*Mahonia nervosa*), Elderberries (*Sambucus* spp.), Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*) are a few species that do not do well with long term cold storage.
- Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*) / Low Oregon Grape (*Mahonia nervosa*) – The leaves need to be removed before the first growing season for plants that have been harvested as bareroot. Removing the leaves will allow the next plant buds to set in the spring. This will only need to be done once after planting.
- Pacific Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*) – Susceptible to Anthracnose *Discula destructiva*, a non-native destructive fungus. It was introduced to the United States in the late 1970s and decimated the native population of *Cornus nuttallii*. As a result, seeds for this species can be hard to procure and plants are difficult to grow.
- Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*) – *Pinus monticola* can be susceptible to White Pine Blister rust that is caused by *Cronartium ribicola*, a non-native introduced fungus. Native *Ribes* species can be a host to this fungus. Blister rust resistance seed sources like the PMC offers are a great way to ensure survivability of Western White Pine.
- Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) – The British Columbia seed source shows some resistance to White Pine Weevil (*Pissodes strobi*).
- Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) – *Calocedrus decurrens* is a host to rust that can affect many plants in the Rose family, such as but not limited to, serviceberries, hawthorns, apple, and pear trees.

\*\*\*The information contained in this document is to serve as a general guide and may not contain all circumstances. Please reach out with any questions you may have. \*\*\*