

Tree and Shrub Planting with Live Stakes

Conservation Practice Job Sheet

NH-612

Definition:

A “Live Stake” is a dormant cutting of red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) or native willow (*Salix* sp.). The cutting is 3 feet long and is pushed into the soil or inserted into a predrilled hole 2 feet into the ground in April.

Benefits:

- Much cheaper than container stock.
- Easy to plant and handle.
- Dogwood provides wildlife food.
- Pussy Willow (*Salix Discolor*) provides early season nectar for bees.
- Great for stabilizing stream banks
- Provides a substitute for invasive plants
- Can easily be cut from power lines and other plants

Planting Instructions:

- Plant dormant in April or November
- Plant a three foot stake 2 feet into the ground
- Cut branches with several buds and nodes as these will form roots and new branches
- Live stakes are more vigorous if planted in the spring.
- Plant them as soon as possible after cutting them or receiving them in the mail
- Keep stakes moist and cool while storing them
- Larger diameter stakes have more store energy and often sprout more vigorously

- Best if planted in soils with high water tables (hydric soils) or moderately drained soils with heavy loamy, silty or clayey textures.
- Select non-stoney soils such as flood plains for installation.
- Cut one end of the stake to a sharp point to help push it into the ground.
- Pre-drill a planting hole by hammering a piece of rebar into the ground or use an auger



Above: A red-osier dogwood, live stake which has produced leaves from nodes.



Above: collecting live stakes in early April. Cut 3 foot lengths with diameters of about 1 inch. Loppers and clippers are great tools to use.