



Shallow planting is a major cause of seedling mortality. Bareroot seedlings should be planted at least 2 inches above the root collar, i.e., 2 inches deeper than grown in the nursery. For container Loblolly and/or Slash Pine, our recommendation is to plant the root ball at or slightly below ground level to get the roots down to moist soil and for stability. The recommended planting depth for container Longleaf in open agriculture fields, scalped fields, and wet sites is where the root ball is slightly above ground level to ensure the bud does not get covered. Cut over hand-planted areas should have the root ball at ground level or slightly above.

Unless the bud is covered with soil, it is virtually impossible to plant a bareroot seedling too deep. Be sure to properly align the seedling in the hole as close to vertical as possible. An angle of 20 degrees or less is preferred. The planting hole must be closed both at the top and the bottom to ensure the optimal contact of the soil and roots. You can check the planting by pulling on the top of the seedling. It should feel tight in the ground. When seedlings are planted deeply, "J" and "L" rooted seedlings are not a problem. Never allow root pruning.



Here Dr. Paul Jeffreys shows you what a well-planted seedling looks like – the right way.

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Don't Cut the Roots!



Don't Cut the Roots!

ArborGen Reforestation Advisor Dr. Paul Jeffreys explains that customers should never prune the roots of their seedlings before planting. Our nursery managers spend a lot of time managing the seedling growth in the nursery bed prior to lifting. One process that is used is called undercutting. This process prunes the roots while the seedlings are still in the nursery bed and allows the cut surface to heal, which prevents pathogens from entering the seedlings that could kill them.

[Learn More](#)

Valuable Planting Tips

When possible, be on-site while seedlings are being planted to avoid these common, devastating mistakes.



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Client Results



OP Elite at 18 years
Brunswick County, VA



17 year old stand
Lincolnton, GA

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