



# TreeLines

September 2022 – 1st Edition

## How Much Should My Seedlings Grow the First Year?

Have you ever wondered, “Did my seedlings reach their expected potential in the first growing season?” If so, you’re not alone.

With advanced genetics like MCP® hybrids growing in deployment each year, early growth results are a standard expectation.

Regardless of the genetics planted; however, there are several factors that influence first-year seedling development.

To a large degree, site preparation and spring weed control dictate how well a seedling performs in year one.

Maximizing available water and soil nutrition is crucial to new seedling establishment through control of woody and weed competition.

You could plant the most genetically advanced seedling on the market, yet genetic gain is diminished if the allocation of site resources is limited.

The same may hold true for poorly drained sites where bedding may be a necessity.

When a seedling is planted, it takes approximately four to six weeks for new root initiation. Seedlings planted in December, therefore have more root growth than those planted in February and are usually larger at the end of year one. Planting later than February will usually result in less than ideal growth as roots try to grow in more challenging circumstances.



MCP Elite – First Growing Season: Burke Co., GA.

Climatic factors such as rainfall and temperature play a significant role as well. Years with adequate rainfall typically optimize seedling growth, while droughts, as we experienced this past May and June 2022, may hinder first-year performance.

Prolonged freezing conditions can also cause freeze injury (not always mortality) to seedlings, inhibiting first year growth.

Finally, managing expectations for the first season is crucial. While it’s true ideal establishment scenarios discussed above can produce exciting growth results with MCP in year one, the immediate goal is survival.

First-year growth is important, but remember seedlings are coupling themselves to a new environment and setting physiological processes that will be more important for subsequent years’ growth. In this case, the growth trajectory is already busy being set to maximize your growth and sawtimber potential for your ArborGen MCP forest.

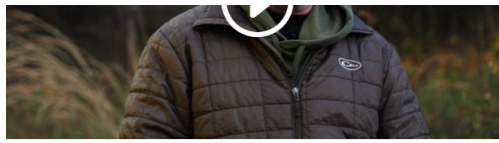
**Your experienced ArborGen Reforestation Advisor (RA) can help you understand the difference between seedling performance in the first few years.**

[Find Your Reforestation Advisor](#)

## What can you expect in the first few years of growth of MCP®?



Hear Perry Clements, Forestry Consultant for Rozier & Associates, share his experience with MCP and what you can expect over the first few years of growth.



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