

# Project Instructions - Hemlock Sapling/Seedling Rescue

This document is for the project leader of a charitable project approved by the SGH Board to rescue saplings or seedlings to be used for future planting, donated to schools or other nonprofits, or offered for adoption.

## Project planning

1. Secure property owner / manager's permission to dig.
2. Engage an adequate number of volunteers from our own membership, Master Gardeners, students seeking service credit hours, and other organizations. Typically a group of 6 volunteers can dig 40 saplings or 60 seedlings in an hour. When volunteers sign up, we will confirm their participation and send a copy of the *Project Details*.

## Project Preparation

1. Always have property owner's or land manager's permission to dig.
2. Be sure tools are in good repair and labeled by owner.
3. Have all materials and supplies on site and staged before beginning the project.
4. Volunteers should work in teams of two or three and carry a cell phone in case of emergency.

## Personal Safety & Environmental Protection

1. Verify that participants are wearing required PPE, including nitrile gloves if handling chemicals and eye protection if working in the woods.
2. Arrange to get fresh water from a hose or faucet if possible. If water will be taken from a stream, bring one or more clean containers to use for dipping. Chemical jugs must never be dipped into a waterway.
3. At end of project, tools/equipment that have come in contact with chemicals may be washed with a hose (if available) where the run-off can soak into the soil, preferably under a hemlock tree. Otherwise, they should be bagged and taken home for cleaning. Chemical residue should never be washed down a drain or allowed to enter a waterway.

## Rescue Tasks

### Choosing trees to rescue

- Seedling Size: 6 to 12 inches
- Sapling Size: 12 to 36 inches tall, preferably in the 18 to 30 inch range
- Condition: healthy, no adelgids visible, free of *Rosellinia* needle blight and tip blight
- Shape: straight and well branched, preferably single stems rather than clusters

### Digging and bagging trees

1. Dig root ball about as wide as drip line and 4 to 8 inches deep, depending on the size of the tree.
2. Keeping root ball intact, place it in plastic grocery bag. Several small trees can be bagged together.
3. Tie handles of bag one time (not a square knot) around base of stem(s) and place bag in shade.
4. Also dig a tubful of extra native soil to be combined with mixed soil amendments to make the planting mix.

### Repairing digging site

1. Re-contour and press down the dirt where the native soil and little trees are removed so as not to leave unsightly or hazardous holes.
2. Replace needle duff and leaf debris to restore site to its original appearance.



### **Bringing bagged trees and native soil to potting station**

1. It is best to minimize the time between removing the tree from its original growing site and repotting it so as to prevent the roots from drying out.
2. Once an hour or whenever the cart is full (whichever comes first), bring bagged trees and native soil to the potting station and place them in the shade. If the little trees will not be potted immediately, moisten the root balls.