

Project Instructions - Hemlock Sapling Potting

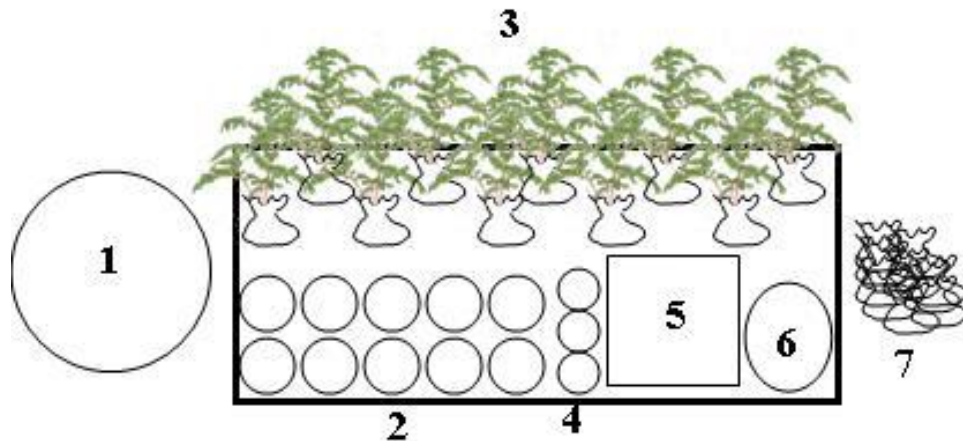
This document is for the project leader of a charitable project approved by the SGH Board to pot rescued saplings that will be used for future planting, donated to schools or other nonprofits, or offered for adoption.

Project planning

1. Based on the number of saplings to be potted, SGH will estimate and acquire the necessary supplies for planting – such as soil amendments, HWA treatment product, and mulch. See *Checklist*.
2. If the potting is done as a continuation of a rescue project, all or some of the rescue volunteers may stay to do the potting. Otherwise, SGH will take the lead in engaging 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 pot 40 saplings in an hour. When volunteers sign up, we will confirm their participation and send a copy of the *Project Details*.

Project preparation

1. Prepare copies of the *Release / Waiver of Liability* sign-in form and volunteer instructions for planting.
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. Have project materials, tools, and supplies on site prior to potting project. Be sure tools are in good working condition and marked with owner's name.
4. Prepare the planting mix by combining 2/3 native soil and 1/3 mixed soil amendments. Also prepare containers of 3 soil additives and gallons of initial watering mix. See *Checklist*. Have more materials on hand as needed. It's also a good idea to prepare pots half-filled with the planting mix before bagged saplings arrive.
5. The most efficient arrangement for a work station is as shown below.



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| 1. Large tub of planting mix w/shovel | 5. Container of planting mix w/trowel |
| 2. Half-filled pots | 6. Initial watering mix |
| 3. Freshly dug saplings | 7. Plastic bags for transporting potted saplings |
| 4. Containers of Soil Moist, Espoma HollyTone & Ironite | |



Orientation for volunteers

1. **Welcome volunteers** as they arrive. Ask each participant to sign the *Release / Waiver of Liability* form and fill out and wear a name tag so folks can get to know each other.
2. **Make sure each participant is properly attired** -- Dressed for the weather and terrain with long pants and long sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes/boots with socks, work gloves. Provide work gloves for anyone who doesn't have them.
3. **Explain project significance** to natural and human communities (*adjust depending on audience*):
 - **Aesthetically**, hemlocks contribute greatly to the enjoyment of those who live, work, and play among them, as well as the many people who come to north Georgia for tourism and recreation.
 - **Ecologically**, hemlocks help maintain the health and biodiversity of our forests and provide food and habitat for a diverse population of birds and other animals, shade for native plants, and cool temperatures for trout streams.
 - **Environmentally**, hemlocks are vital for protecting the quality of our waterways and watersheds, preventing soil erosion on mountain slopes and around waterways, and maintaining our air quality.
 - **Economically**, healthy mature trees such as hemlocks support jobs and local tax revenues associated with tourism and recreation and supporting the value of private properties and the community as a whole.
 - **And on a personal note**, hemlocks are the favorite tree of so many people who grew up visiting the woods, taking their children and grandchildren to the woods for memorable family outings, and teaching lessons of respect and personal responsibility, wise use of resources, and environmental stewardship.
 - **But they are under attack** by an invasive insect, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), and most will die unless action is taken to prevent it. Even with our efforts to chemically treat as many trees as possible and to support the establishment of biological controls, the overall number of hemlocks in the landscape will be greatly reduced over time.
 - **And that's where we come in.** By preparing these saplings to be used for future planting, donation to schools and other nonprofits, or offered for adoption, as we are doing today, we are helping to ensure there will be a population of healthy hemlocks for future generations.
4. **Explain layout of potting station(s)** and location of extra materials.
5. **Explain composition** of soil mix and initial watering mix.
6. **Assign volunteers to potting stations** in teams of 2 – 3.

Potting Tasks

Give out volunteer instructions for potting. Explain the process and demonstrate with the first sapling. Ask if there are any questions. Then get started.

Preparing pots

1. Fill pot half way with planting mix.
2. Sprinkle ¼ teaspoon Soil Moist granules, ½ teaspoon HollyTone, and ½ teaspoon Ironite on top of soil in pot. Mix these additives into the planting mix in the pot.
3. Place bamboo stake (24" or taller) in middle of pot.

Potting saplings

1. Carefully remove sapling and root ball from bag and place in pot with stem next to stake.
2. Spread roots on top of dirt. Trim roots so they're not touching the edge of the pot (or use a larger pot).
3. Add enough planting mix to just cover roots and press down firmly to remove air pockets. Be sure no roots are sticking up above the soil.
4. Secure the main stem to the stake with velcro tape. For most saplings the tape should be placed about 2/3 of the way up the stem; for taller saplings place one piece at 1/3 of the way up the stem and another piece at the 2/3 point. The tape should be wrapped LOOSELY enough to insert a finger in the loop.
5. Water gently with ½ to 1 qt. initial watering solution per one-gallon container. If this causes roots to become exposed, add more planting mix to just cover them and press down again.
6. Place potted saplings in shade.
7. An hour later, press dirt down gently again.

At end of potting project

1. **Collect SGH tools** and other supplies from volunteers and make sure all are accounted for. Clean tools. Make note of anything that needs repair or replacement.
2. **Forward original** signed *Release / Waiver of Liability* forms to Donna, copy retained by project leader.
3. **Thank volunteers for their good work** and wish them safe travel home.

Transporting potted saplings

1. Before transporting potted saplings, place them in plastic bags or on a tarp to prevent water and chemicals from contaminating vehicle.
2. It is best to transport potted saplings in cargo area inside vehicle. If transporting them in the open bed of a pickup truck, cover them with a tied-down tarp to prevent wind burn.
3. At their destination, place them in a semi-shady location protected from the wind.

Maintaining potted saplings

1. Give ½ to 1 gallon of plain water per one-gallon container twice a week for first month, then weekly during weeks when there is no rain.
2. In spring and fall, re-apply 1 tsp Espoma HollyTone and 1 tsp Ironite as needed to maintain plant vigor.
3. In spring and summer, prune any dead or damaged branches just outside the nearest joint. Do not prune in fall or winter.
4. If maintaining the saplings through the winter, put mulch around the containers to protect roots from freezing.
5. When saplings are adopted or donated, provide the recipient a copy of the SGH planting and care instructions entitled *Caring for Your Hemlock Sapling*. It can be downloaded from the Resources page of our web site.