

Planting Bareroot Liners in RootMakers®

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Planting bareroot liners in RootMaker® containers can provide benefits – and assist the plant in recovering from the severe root loss and dehydration, --**provided, the following steps are taken;**

1. **Cut back roots of the bareroot plant** so that there is at least two inches between the old cut-root end and side of the RootMaker® container.
2. **Position the bareroot plant in the cavity of the container** while filling with container growth medium to avoid roots being pressed against the sidewall.
3. If the bareroot plant has the roots matted together, partially fill the RootMaker®, then spread the roots out in the proper position, and then finish filling.
4. Plants propagated in RootMaker® containers then grown in the field and harvested bareroot will have more branch roots at the base of the stem and make the transition back to a container quickly.
5. Some bareroot plants will have only one or two roots. The most economical thing to do with plants with such poor roots is to turn them into compost immediately and not waste valuable time and space.

The basis for cutting the roots back is two fold;

1. In studies with an assortment of species and ranging from small plants to bareroot trees from the west coast with one inch stem diameter or more, the results have consistently been the same ---- there is no consequence or complication from cutting the long and sometimes stringy bare roots back to a manageable size.
2. New roots develop on a plant harvested bareroot almost exclusively at the cut face of the root. If the cut face of the root is pressed against the container sidewall, any new roots produced will almost immediately be air-pruned. On the other hand, if the cut root end is two to four inches back from the sidewall, new roots will grow out, contact the sidewall, be air-pruned and produce secondary root branches back from the point of air-pruning to the old cut root face. This is the 4-inch rule in action. This additional root branching and surface area will substantially hasten recovery of the plant and provide a superior root system for planting into the field or landscape.

For more information on container growth media and other cultural functions see Plant Production in Containers II book or visit www.lacebarkinc.com or www.rootmaker.com.