



## PLANTING TUBESTOCK

The aim of this set of notes is to provide practical instructions for planting tubestock seedlings in revegetation projects. For help with organising plants, site preparation, plant protection and maintenance see: *notes for the tree planter* No's 1,2,4,5.

Hurrah the rains have come !

- \* Weed control, cultivation and fencing are all completed,
- \* You have organised your plants 8 – 12 months ago and you know which species go where on your site,
- \* Your plants have been hardened-off, transported safely and are stored correctly.

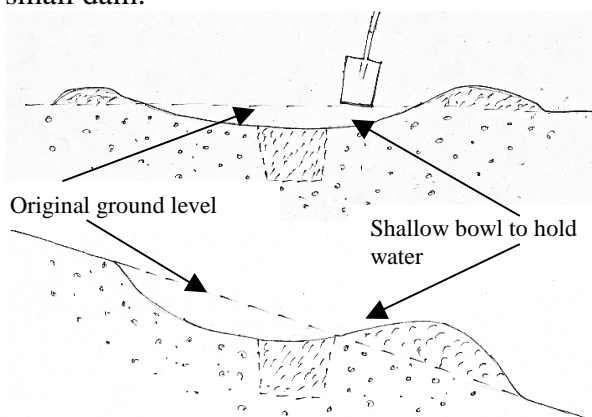
You are ready for planting !

Take a tree perspective of time, say 100 years, slow down and do it properly so your juvenile seedling can grow into a healthy teen and then go on to happily outlive all of us.

Some **Tools:** - a sharp mattock (for scraping and digging), or a sharp hoe for scraping and a sharp spade for digging.

**Water** your plants a few hours before planting. Make sure they are wet through.

**Scrape** a shallow bowl (50cm diameter x 5cm deep) where you want to plant your seedling. Make sure to place the scrapings on the downhill side of your bowl to build a small dam.



**Dig a good hole** in the center of the bowl (spade depth by width is good). Break-up any clumps before placing the excavated soil right next to the hole for backfilling.

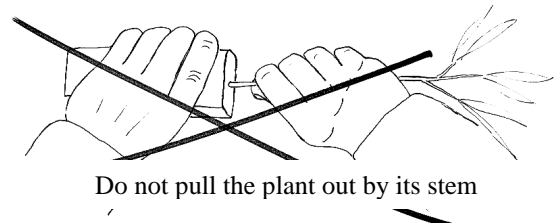
If you are dealing with heavy clay soil:

- \* make sure not to 'glaze' the sides of the hole;
- \* you may need to find some friable soil for backfilling;
- \* that has been ripped recently make your hole beside the rip-line to prevent planting over big air pockets

If you are planting in a mulched area make sure to keep the mulch out of your planting hole; If you are using fertiliser, mix it with your backfill soil or place a slow release tablet 30cm away from the root system

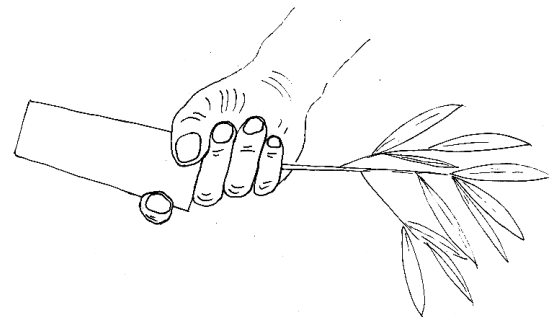
**Water** the planting hole if conditions are dry.

**How to take the plant out of the pot:**



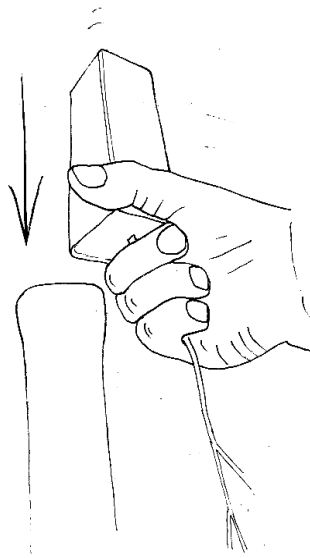
Do not pull the plant out by its stem

Take off your gloves you need to feel what you are doing when you are planting seedlings.



1. Turn the tube on its side, place your index finger and thumb around the tube and your remaining fingers around the stem of the plant

2. Turn it upside down and tap the rim of the tube on a solid object (the mattock handle or the upturned toe of your boot) to jar the rootball out of the tube. A light squeeze of the sides of the tube first may help.



3. The root-ball will slide out of the tube and rest in your hand.

Look at the root-ball:

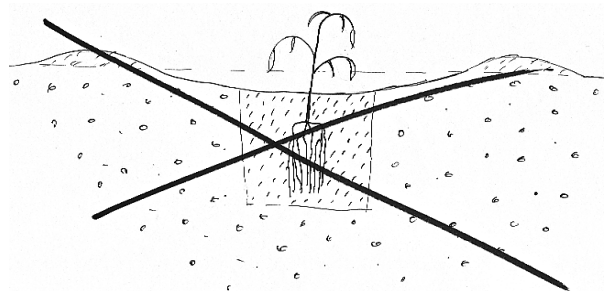
- \* Note that ridges inside the tube have prevented the roots from circling around in the pot but have caused them to grow down to the open bottom where they are pruned by the air – initiating new roots to grow from within the root-ball.
- \* There is no point in teasing roots out of a perfectly good root system.
- \* If your seedling is a bit root bound or has roots spiraling around the rootball – make a couple of cuts down the sides with a sharp knife to prune the offending roots.
- \* Prune the shoot of your seedling to balance the root to shoot ratio.

**Plant** the seedling in the center of the hole so that the top of the root-ball ends up 1-2 cm below finished ground level. Make sure all roots are pointing down.

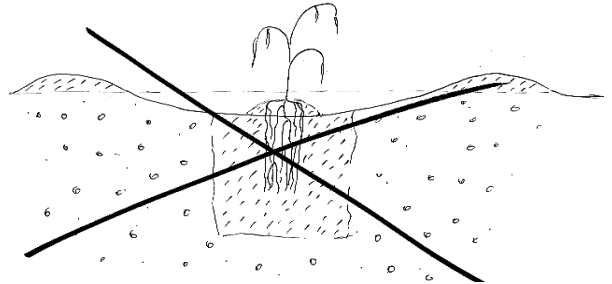
**Backfill** with the loose material dug from your hole, pressing it down with your fingers as you go to eliminate any air pockets and to achieve good root-soil contact. The soil around the root-ball should be firm but not compacted.

**Watering-in:** with a watering can or a water-breaker at the end of a hose give each plant a few liters depending on soil moisture. If planting in dry weather make sure to water immediately after each plant is planted.

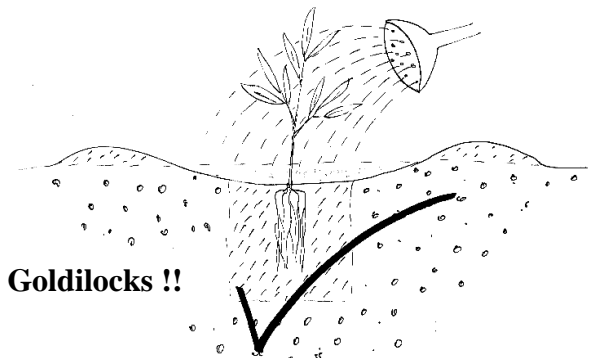
## The finished product:



**Too low** – root-ball buried too deep – stem may be affected by collar rot, heavy mulching right up to the stem can cause the same problem.



**Too high** – root-ball above finished ground level – unstable in the wind and prone to drying out



**Goldilocks !!**

- \* Seedling in center of a **shallow depression** which can hold some water,
- \* **Top of Root-ball just below finished ground level**
- \* Planted in a **good size hole**
- \* Firmly backfilled with friable soil for good **root-soil contact**
- \* **Watered-in**

Next:

- \* **Tree guard**
- \* **Mulch**
- \* **Maintenance**

*happy planting!*