

## **Post Rock Answers**

**By Cassie Homan February 18, 2022**

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### **Conservation Tree Program**

If you are stuck inside dreaming of spring, consider ordering trees or shrubs from the Kansas Forest Service. The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and sizes vary from 8 to 18 inches, depending on species. The plants come in two types of seedlings; bareroot and container-grown. Container grown provide a higher survival rate and quicker establishment. Bareroot seedlings will also establish well, they come with their roots packed in moist sawdust and wrapped in a plastic bag. You can place an order now through April 29. Order early to ensure that you receive the exact tree species you want.

Orders are shipped beginning in mid-March. Approved uses for these plants include windbreaks, wood lots, wildlife habitat, timber plantations and educational and riparian (streambank) plantings. Since these trees are grown for conservation purposes they may not be used for landscape or ornamental plantings or grown for resale.

All items are sold in units. Each single species unit consists of 25 plants. For example, a unit of Eastern red cedar has 25 trees per unit. Though a single species unit is most commonly purchased, four special bundles are also available including a songbird bundle, quail bundle, pheasant bundle and wildlife mast bundle.

Tree planting accessories are also available including marking flags, root protective slurry, rabbit protective tubes, weed barrier fabric and tree tubes. If there have been problems with deer browsing on your young trees, the tree tubes are a must.

To get your new plants started off right remember that watering is very important. Water thoroughly before planting, at planting time, and again the following day to thoroughly settle the soil and eliminate large air pockets. Water new trees frequently during the first month. Unless it rains, water container-grown or balled and burlapped trees one to two times a week during the first month after planting. Proper watering throughout the first growing season often means the difference between success and failure. After the first month, a weekly soaking to apply approximately 10 gallons of water should be sufficient to support spring- or summer-planted trees and large shrubs on most sites. On sandy soil, split the 10-gallon application into two 5-

gallon applications three to four days apart. Smaller trees and shrubs may require less water, but the quantity should be sufficient to thoroughly moisten the entire rootball.

It's also a great idea to mulch new plantings. This will control soil temperature and ward off weeds. For newly planted trees mulch in a circle 3-6 feet around the trunk, for existing trees mulch at least 1 foot around the trunk. We recommend using a 2-4-inch layer of a high quality, organic mulch. Use a rake to pull mulch 6 inches from the tree trunk to provide proper air circulation, and prevent diseases. When planting new trees don't worry about pruning or fertilizing. Those steps will come later, as the tree grows.

To pick up a Kansas Forest Service order form stop by your local Extension Office or visit, [kansasforests.org](http://kansasforests.org) these trees are a great way to add some green life to your property and now is the perfect time to start planning.

*Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Cassie may be contacted at [choman@ksu.edu](mailto:choman@ksu.edu) or by calling Beloit (738-3597).*