

# Planting Suggestions for Successful Shoreland Buffer Restorations

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- **Landowners are responsible for maintaining restoration plantings and ensuring their survival.** If shrubs or trees die due to wildlife, weather, neglect, etc., additional replacement plantings will be required.
- **Deciduous trees should be at least 5 feet tall and conifers (evergreens) should be at least 3 feet tall when planted. Shrubs should be at least 1-2 feet tall and/or purchased in at least a 3 gallon pot.** Exceptions can be made if purchasing shrubs and trees in “bare-root” form. Shrubs should be planted 2-5 feet apart. Trees distances vary, read the directions on tags.
- **Planting holes should be dug 3 times wider than the container or root ball** and just deep enough so the top of the root ball is at ground level. The majority of tree/shrub roots grow outwards not downwards.
- **Soil amendments such as compost should be mixed thoroughly with the existing soil on the property.** First, dig the hole and place the removed soil in a pile. Then mix the compost thoroughly with the pile of soil (1/3 compost to 2/3 soil for sandy soils). Do not simply add a soil amendment to the hole you are planting in as this can lead to poor root development. All soil amendments need to be mixed completely into the existing soil to be effective.
- Before planting potted trees and shrubs, **the root ball needs to be loosened.** This can be done by cutting into the root ball vertically from the top to the bottom with a knife and then loosening the root ball with your fingers. If there are roots encircling the plant, they should be pulled apart so the roots extend outward in all directions.
- **Make sure trees and shrubs are not planted too deep.** Keep the root collar at or above the soil surface. The root collar is the highest point on the trunk or stem where a root is attached. If trees and shrubs are planted too deep, they will likely die. See figure.
- **Mulching 3-4 inches deep around trees and shrubs is highly recommended to help retain soil moisture and limit weed growth.** This is especially important for seasonal landowners who are unable to water frequently throughout the growing season. Be sure not to put an excessive amount of mulch around new plants as this will smother them.
- **Shrubs, trees, and groundcovers need to be watered often and thoroughly during the first few growing seasons.** Additional watering in subsequent years is recommended during dry periods when there is inadequate rainfall. Newly planted trees and shrubs need at least 1 inch of rain/water a week. Occasional deep watering that fully saturates the top 12 inches of the soil is ideal for good root development. Frequent and brief watering that only soaks the first few inches of soil can lead to shallow rooting of the tree/shrub which makes it more prone to drought stress in subsequent years. In other words, a couple of long and deep soakings each week are better than a little water each day.
- If a lot of deer are coming into your yard, **it is strongly recommended to fence around trees and shrubs during the first couple growing seasons to reduce any deer damage.** This can be done using metal wire mesh or a similar material. Deer and rabbit repellent are also effective if applied correctly.

