

PROCESSING SMALL TREE ORDERS

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In a forest nursery designed for volume production of seedlings, the small parcel post order often presents a problem in processing. To relieve this situation, the Webster Forest Nursery has adopted the following procedure using Tufflex fabric C-33 as a moist packing medium, and polyethylene-lined kraft bags of various sizes as wrappers. Tufflex fabric C-33, a product of Wood Conversion Company, St. Paul, Minn., weighs 33 pounds per thousand square feet and is composed of sulfite fiber, colored cotton thread waste, and a resin binder. The shipping bag is a multiwalled bag of 50# weight kraft paper and has a 10# weight lining of polyethylene on the inner wall. We use an assortment of these bags ranging in size from a 6- by 28-inch tube type to a 12-by 24- by 30-inch open mouth type.

Tufflex is first dipped in a pan of water; the excess water is squeezed out so it does not drip from the material. Roots of the planting stock are wrapped with moist Tufflex, and the seedlings are dropped into a -kraft paper bag which is stapled closed (fig. 1) or, as in the case of large bags (12 by 24 by 30 inches), is held closed by two bands of steel strapping 3/8 by 0.010 inch. This results in a very light package that is clean and dry.

Using this material, we have made up some open end bales; the result has been a substantial reduction in volume and weight (figs. 2 and 3). However, there is still a question as to whether sufficient contact exists between the seedling roots and the moist medium. Further testing will provide the answer. All reports from recipients of stock thus packaged have been enthusiastic.

Our nursery personnel find that seedlings can be packaged much faster and easier by using this system than with previously used methods. Address labels and postage can be pasted directly to the paper bags. Our customers say that seedlings arrive in excellent condition. Common carriers approve. Our local post office is pleased with the method. In the few instances where we ship by bus, the totally enclosed dry packages receive more favorable comment than do open-end bales. While this may not be the ultimate in packaging procedures for forest seedlings, it has certainly added to the versatility of our operation.

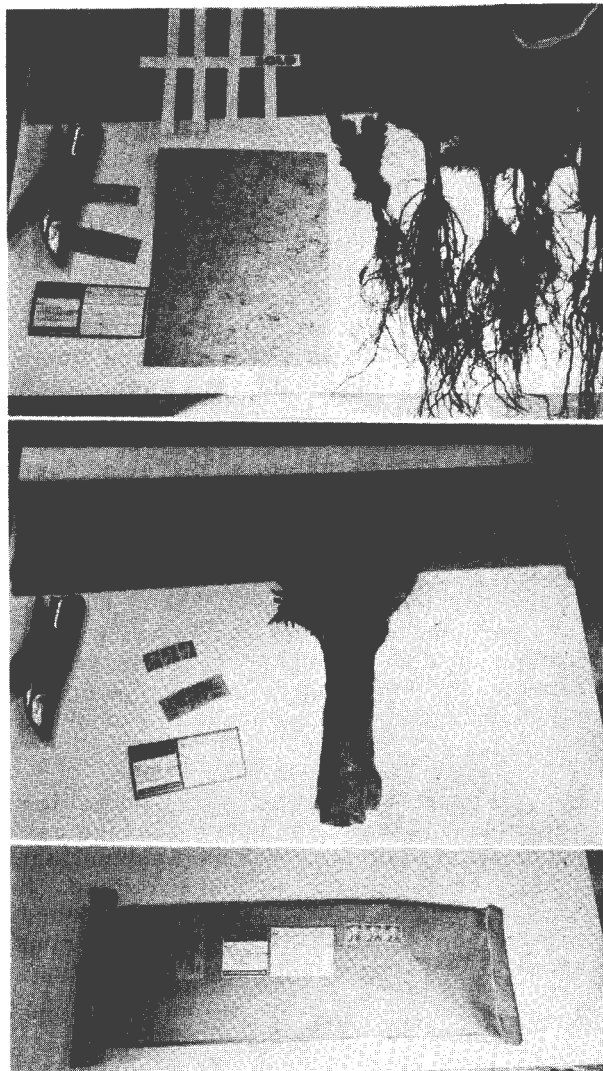


Figure 1.--Material assembled for packaging; seedlings labeled and roots wrapped in Tufflex fabric C-33; completed package ready for parcel post.

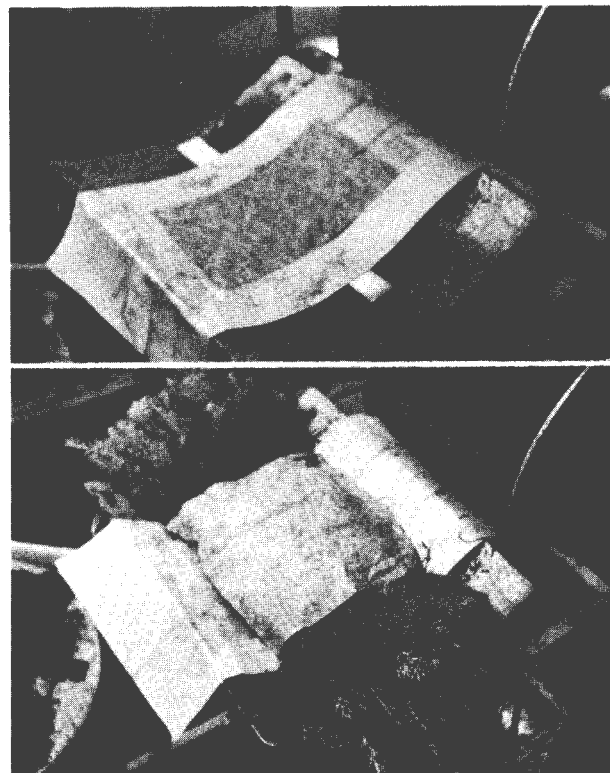


Figure 3.--Comparison of 1M 2-0 Douglas-fir seedlings baled in shingle tow (a) and 1M 2-0 Douglas-fir seedlings baled in Tufflex fabric C-33 (b).

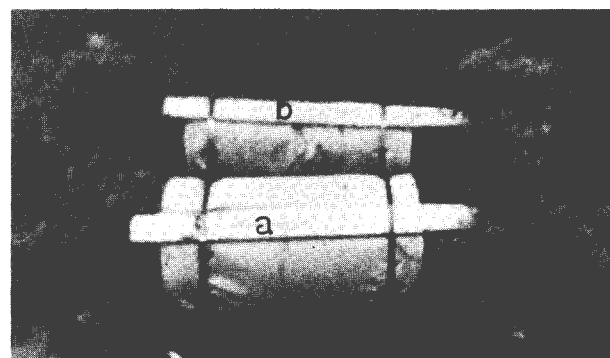


Figure 2.--Baling with Tufflex fabric C-33 as packing medium.