

Tree Shelters— What They Offer You

Have you ever been driving down the road and seen a field full of white, brown, green, or blue tubes and thought “What’s that?” Many times this is a sign of a recently planted field of trees where the owner has decided to make a long term investment in not only trees but also in shelters to protect those trees.

Just like any living thing, trees are vulnerable the first few years of their lives. Unlike many things that we care about, you can’t just uproot a tree and keep it in the house or garage for the first few weeks or months of its life and expect good results. With that being said there are a few things we can do to protect trees planted out in the field. Watering is something that can be very important, especially when we have summers like we have had this year, but there are many other things that can greatly affect tree growth, too.

A young tree has a fairly shallow root system and leaves that are fairly low to the ground. This puts them in competition with grasses, which can outgrow planted trees, especially in the first season. This is a place where tree shelters can be very helpful. The tree shelters act like mini greenhouses, providing an environment with increased air temperatures, humidity and carbon dioxide levels. This in turn encourages growth and many times can increase growth considerably. In research done by the United States Forest Service, trees planted in shelters grew an average of 4.1 feet while trees not planted in shelters grew an average of 2.4 feet in the first year. This additional growth provides huge opportunities for a tree to escape competition, increasing survival rates.

Another common issue in tree plantings is damage done to the seedlings by animals. These can vary from small mice and shrews to large animals such as deer. Tree shelters provide protection against animal damage from the ground up as the tubes either sit on the ground or can be pressed slightly into the ground. The height of the shelter determines how much protection is granted. Five feet is the minimum height to protect against deer grazing on the young saplings.



We offer for sale Plantra SunFlex Grow Tube systems. These include the shelter, which is available in heights of three, four and five feet, as well as a fiberglass stake, ties and bird netting. The shelters come in flat pack which makes them easy to store and are a lightweight plastic allowing them to easily be moved around the field to be placed in position. Last year was the first year we have offered the fiberglass stakes and we will be offering them again. These stakes, unlike the wood ones we have offered in the past, allow the trees to sway in the wind. The movement of young trees in the wind is an important part of the development of a strong trunk. The movement leads the tree to create reaction wood which provides a higher strength than other parts of the tree. The fiberglass stake has a very long lifespan, removing the old concerns of the stake rotting off and then bending the tree over and crippling it. The flex also allows the stake to be much more forgiving if bumped with a tractor, truck, mower or other equipment.

The district is taking pre-orders for tree shelters this year during the tree seedling sale. All shelters must be pre-ordered and paid for by Friday, March 9, 2018 to insure delivery date by mid-April. Tree shelters will be available for pick up at the same time as seedlings. For more information on our tree sale and tree shelters, contact Robert Boehle at 740-454-2027.

We encourage pre-ordering the shelters, as there may not be any available otherwise.

<h2>Tree Shelter Order Form</h2> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____ Cell: _____</p>	<p>Three Foot Tree Shelter</p> <p>\$6.00 X _____ = \$ _____</p>	<p>Please make checks payable to: MSWCD</p> <p>Sales tax included in _____</p>
	<p>Four Foot Tree Shelter</p> <p>\$8.00 X _____ = \$ _____</p>	
	<p>Five Foot Tree Shelter</p> <p>\$9.00 X _____ = \$ _____</p>	
	<p>Total Amount Due = \$ _____</p>	