

BAREROOT HANDLING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

RECEIVING & INITIAL HANDLING GUIDELINES

HYDRATION IS THE FIRST AND MOST CRITICAL STEP

Successful bareroot production starts upon arrival. Immediate and proper hydration is essential to maintain root function, support bud development, and ensure successful establishment. Learn more about what to expect with your bareroot order by watching this short bareroot receiving video [HERE](#).

Bareroot material ***must not be allowed to dry out*** during receiving, processing, staging, storage, or planting.

Before Your Shipment Arrives:

A smooth unload and staging process protects your bareroot by guaranteeing access to water and keeping your plants in the best condition. Follow these best practices outlined below and check out this short video that shows how your bareroot order will arrive [HERE](#):

- Have your labor available to unload promptly
- A protected staging area with enough space to hydrate and store plants (warehouse, barn, hoophouse, etc.) safeguards viability.
- Accessible water source such as a watering hose or dunking containers like troughs, tubs, barrels or a nearby pond.

Tip: If you use dunking containers ahead of planting, a 24-48 hour soak is recommended. Moist straw or dust ready to cover the plant roots after watering.

- Moist straw or sawdust ready to cover the plant roots **after watering**.
- Keep roots cool and protected until planting by maintaining temperatures between 45°F to 55°F. Longer term storage requires temperatures between 35°F to 40°F.
- A plan to pot or plant within a few days from receiving is ideal.
 - Delayed planting can happen due to unfavorable weather or lack of resources like potting mix or labor.
 - If planting gets delayed – keep roots moist and protected. For prolonged delays, the best solution is to “heel in” plants into a sawdust bed.

Preparation prevents unnecessary exposure to drying conditions.



Proper Handling Checklist

A hydrated plant promotes a smoother transition from dormancy to active growth. Follow these key principles upon receiving your order:

- Keep roots consistently moist: hydration + humidity = success
- Avoid drying conditions – sun, wind, and heat quickly pull moisture from roots
- Separate any varieties that may require “sweating” which is a more prolonged hydration method on species that are harder to break dormancy on. This helps the plants improve bud break and crop stands.
 - To sweat bareroot material you must place the plants in a warm, humid environment around 60°F to 65°F. This is often achieved by covering the plants with moist packing materials like sawdust or straw and then covered with a plastic tarp
 - To learn which varieties and how long they need to be “sweated”, watch our “Sweating Bareroot” video [HERE](#) or read more about it [HERE](#).
- Pot up or plant promptly - don't delay, try to pot plants within a few days
 - Sometimes, mother nature gives you the opportunity to plan ahead. If you know your window for planting or potting, we encourage you to utilize our cool storage facilities and plan your delivery when you're ready.

Avoid Issues Before They Start

Here are some common missteps can lead to setbacks and how to avoid them:

- **Monitor bud development in storage:** Don't allow tender buds to get too swollen or spindly in storage. Tender, swollen buds can easily desiccate in the wind or sun while severely etiolated plants will perish.
- **Assign responsibility for moisture monitoring:** Not having a dedicated person to monitor moisture levels can potentially lead to bareroot material drying out. Regular watering and moisture checks are necessary. Same applies to properly watering plants after potting or planting.
- **Manage sweating conditions:** Exposing plants to extreme temperature fluctuations can damage the buds as they begin to swell. Prevent this by watching the ambient temperatures. Sweat plants when temperatures are consistent or can protect plants overnight.
- **Check routinely for mold:** Remove affected plants quickly to prevent spread. All mold is not created equal can sometimes occur on bareroot material. Generally, saprophytic mold (the white, fluffy stuff) is harmless and will wash off or burn off in the sun after planting.

Proactive monitoring at each step keeps small issues from turning into big ones.

Reminder: Contact your Sales Representative right away if your order arrives dry or frozen. Prompt communication helps ensure the best possible outcome for you and your order.

