

4 Life at the Water's Edge

Plant Cuttings to Stabilize Your Stream!

four in a series of six fact sheets on stream management

Stream banks with little woody vegetation in the riparian zone are not as effective in the erosion battle. One of the easiest and most inexpensive methods of stabilizing stream banks is the use of live, but dormant, unrooted cuttings (no buds, leaves, or visible roots).

The following shrub species develop a dense, fibrous root system that helps hold soil in place.

"Ruby" Redosier Dogwood

Cornus stolonifera

Grey Stem Dogwood

Cornus racemosa

Silky Dogwood

Cornus amomum

Green Twig/Round-leaved Dogwood

Cornus rugosa

Sandbar Willow

Salix interior

"Bankers" Dwarf Willow

Salix x cottetii

"Streamco" Purpleosier Willow

Salix purpurea

Buttonbush

Cephalanthus occidentalis

After 3 years, these plants can be used as a source of cuttings for additional stream bank planting projects!



Avoid planting large, heavy tree species directly on the stream bank. They can eventually get so heavy that they cave in the stream bank, blocking stream flow and contributing to local flooding problems. If you already have an erosion problem and large trees are in danger of caving in the stream bank, consider cutting down the tree. ALWAYS leave the existing stump in the stream bank and dispose of the tree remains properly (that means not in the stream channel or the floodplain!).

Frequently Asked Questions

What do these shrub species look like?

Dormant shrub cuttings are usually between 1-3 feet in length and about 1/2 inch in diameter.

How much do they cost?

Cuttings can often cost as little as 15-cents each!

Where do I get them?

Many of these shrubs are available through mail-order suppliers, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry.

How big will they get?

Shrubs like these will have trunks 1.5-2 inches in diameter, and will reach a height of 6-18 feet.

What do they need to stay healthy?

Ample light and moisture.

When do I plant them?

In our area, the best time to plant dormant, un-rooting cuttings is either in late fall or early spring.



How do I plant them?

1. Create pilot holes on the stream bank using re-bar and a fence post driver. Spacing should be 6-12 inches apart. The depth of the pilot hole will depend on the length of the cuttings. Allow 6 inches of the cuttings to remain above the ground.
2. Insert a cutting into the pilot hole, backfill with soil, and pack the soil tightly. Always insert the cutting with the buds pointing up toward the sky!
3. Water as necessary, until well established.
4. Avoid planting them in the active stream channel where they'll be washed away.

While vegetated riparian areas go a long way to controlling flooding and erosion, your erosion problem may require a more "engineered" solution. If your stream banks are eroding and a structure is threatened, contact your SWCD or Chagrin River Watershed Partners.



Backyard

Habitat

Improvement

Ideas

Native Plants for Wildlife

Our native wildlife populations, including birds, butterflies and insects, have evolved using native plants as their primary food and nectar sources. Plant a variety of native plants that provide shelter and food sources throughout the year. Some suggestions include:

Trees: Apple, Black cherry, Crabapple, Hawthorn, Hickory, Oak, Balsam fir, Eastern white pine

Shrubs: Dogwood, Holly, Pyracantha, Serviceberry, Spicebush, Sumac, Viburnum, Willow

Vines: American bittersweet, Virginia creeper, Wild grape



Nectar plants for hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees:

Aster, Azalea, Bee balm, Black-eyed susan, Cardinal flower, Clover, Columbine, Lobelia, Lupine, Milkweed, Perennial phlox, Purple coneflower

Acting today to maintain the Chagrin River Watershed

Life at the Water's Edge
Plant Cuttings to Stabilize Your Stream!
four in a series of six fact sheets on stream management

