

Sweating Guide

Certain species such as bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) have a tendency to remain dormant, especially when soils are wet and cool. Trees and shrubs that remain dormant for most or all of the first growing season will probably die before the next growing season. In order to overcome bud dormancy, a technique called "sweating" is used to initiate bud break.

Sweating trees is a simple process that can be accomplished using the packing materials shipped with the trees and duct tape. One to two weeks before planting, remove the seedlings from the cooler. Line the cardboard shipping boxes with a large plastic bag. Place broken (opened) bundles of trees loosely in the plastic-lined box and wet thoroughly. Fold and tape the plastic together to create an airtight seal. Store the wrapped trees at room temperature, away from direct sunlight, for 1 to 2 weeks, checking periodically to ensure they do not dry out. Condensation should form on the inside of the plastic within hours, indicating a tight seal and that the sweating process is working.

When properly sweated, the buds of these species will have swollen and, in some cases, broken open. Use extra precautions when planting sweated stock, especially if leaves are beginning to emerge, because they are very sensitive to desiccation during handling and immediately after planting.