

Pot-A-Thon Orientation

Purpose: Provide guidance to all MGVs on potting plants for the Perennial Plant Sale fund raising event held annually by SEWMG so that the finished product is of high quality. The plant should look like one that we, ourselves, would want to purchase.

Challenges of potting bare root plants

- They need to show significant growth by mid-May – they need to be happy in their new environment
- They need to be kept watered and protected (frost, rodents, deer, etc.)
- They need to look attractive to the buyer
- They need correct labeling so that buyers get the plant they selected and paid for

SEWMG Approach To Potting

1. MGV's should learn and have fun at Pot-A-Thons (PATs)! We encourage MGV's to rotate through a variety of jobs at the PATs so that each person learns all tasks. If you have potted a sled full of a ground-cover, move to something different (and more fun).
2. We can make accommodations for your needs. There are table leg extensions to make the tables higher. Bring a lawn chair if you need to sit. There's always someone to help with heavy trays.
3. Please bring along your favorite clippers, gloves, and any other tools that make potting easier for you. Put your name on each tool so it doesn't get lost. Note: We do keep a lost/found box in the trailer. Please clean your tools between PATs as we are trying to stem the movement of jumping worms. We will have a way to disinfect your tools at PAT check-in.
4. We use three sizes of pots: small, tall, and gallon sized. We use small pots whenever possible (cheapest, usually are ample for most of our plants). Tall pots are generally used for larger plants like daylilies, rhubarb, hostas. Gallon pots are used for large, bushy plants and shrubs.
5. Potting mix should be moist – not too dry, not too wet.
6. Plants are handled in different ways. Ground-covers are grouped into “bouquets”; Iris and daylilies are generally trimmed to two plants/fans per pot; other plants are grouped so that a generous amount is used for each pot.
7. Generally, the process is to fill the pot about ½ way with potting mix, put in the plant, and pack soil firmly around the plant. Pot should be filled to the bottom of the rim edge, just before the edge flares outward. Packing firmly ensures the potting mix won't be dislodged during watering and transport. Overfilling causes water to run right off.
8. Trim off any dead/dying material. Make it pretty!
9. Make sure each tray of pots is labeled correctly. During potting we use one slat-type marker per TRAY with the plant name. During the labeling process each POT will get a label with full plant information. Each tray holds only one type of plant.
10. Label process is used so that we can tell at a glance that all pots in the tray have been labeled. This is important during the transporting and arranging of trays at the sale. The Quality Control process depends on labels oriented a particular way. Trays hold plants 3 wide and 4 long (12 total). Pot labels should face outward on each long side. Pots at the end of the middle row should face outward. Fill partial trays so that pots are lined along the outside of the tray – easier labeling.
11. Remember, if you don't know or have a question, please ask!