HARVESTING A BETTER ROOT SYSTEM
Knit Fabric Containers

Traditional field harvesting of specimen trees by tree spade or B&B crews results in large open wounds to the root system. If not grown to liner stage in RootMakers®, the poor root system and lack of branching at the root/stem junction may mean that 90% of the root system is left behind.

The in-ground "grow bag" has evolved to a green knit fabric with precise, uniform holes. Small roots extend through the fabric but are unable to expand, causing a constriction which leads to root branching and an accumulation of energy.

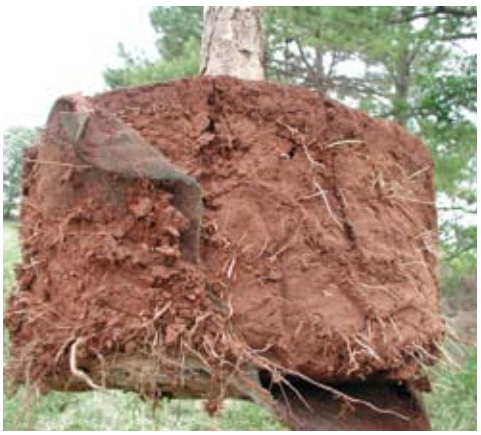
Installation of **Knit Fabric** containers is accomplished with an auger of same or larger size. A depth control gauge allows for uniform 12 inch depth. It is important to level the bottom to prevent a "bowl" effect. The container is then set in the hole and held open with a plastic expandable sleeve. Fill container with the same field soil. At least one inch of **Knit Fabric** container should remain above soil line to prevent root escape over the top. The system works better when care is taken to keep the sides of the fabric container straight when packing backfilled soil.

Although somewhat labor intensive installation, harvesting is almost a treat. For smaller sizes (8" to 14") one person can spade around the outside of the container to sever small roots, rock the tree back and forth, and lift the tree out of the ground. For larger fabric container sizes (18", 24"), "popping out" with forks of a front end loader or skid steer works well. Trees also can be harvested with a double-loop of a nylon strap, when plants are dormant and field conditions are moist. Weight and shipping costs are greatly reduced, yet the root system is superior.

"We have used knit fabric bags since 1982 and will not plant trees in the field without them."
Connor Shaw,
Possibility Place Nursery

Water management is less complicated in the field and the root system is protected from temperature extremes. When a tree in the **Knit Fabric** container is harvested, the fabric is removed and, once planted, is provided the benefit of having a great majority of the root system not only intact, but well branched and equipped to establish into the surrounding soil horizontally rather than just downward.

(Adapted from Dr. Whitcomb's article.)
Please visit www.rootmaker.com for a list of nurseries using this system.



Above, specimen tree just harvested, knit fabric partially removed, then washed to show root system within the soil ball.

Below, left is washed oak root system from knit fabric container; right, root results two years after transplanting.