

HOW TO TURN A REGULAR POT INTO A **RootMaker**

“More important than how a tree looks in a container, is how it grows out on its own.”

We have grown accustomed to seeing trees offered in black plastic containers. Unfortunately, we also have grown accustomed to seeing the resulting limited, circling roots.

Conventional, smooth-walled plastic pots allow roots to wrap around the inside container wall, yet most nurseries do nothing about it. Poor root orientation and structure leads to poor root establishment and anchorage when transplanted.

One attempt to correct this problem is to “slice” the tangle of roots and tease the root system wad apart. However, this creates shock and open wounds that may lead to problems with pathogens.

A healthier, more practical approach is the Pot Licker[®]. Utilizing state-of-the-art lamination technology (USA Patent #7,810,275 and 8,033,048)), the Pot Licker[®] has a white laminated coating on the outside and a mat of dense fibers



on the inside. By simply inserting the laminated sidewall liner inside a smooth walled conventional plastic pot, the problems of conventional pots are licked. The Pot Licker[®] material has been successful in trapping root tips of all species tested to date.

The Pot Licker[®] works like this:

1. Insert custom cut piece of laminated fabric inside smooth conventional pot, black fabric side in and the white side against the pot wall.

2. With aggressively rooted species such as elms and oaks, a circular disk of this special fabric should be placed in the bottom of the container before inserting the sidewall. For many other species, in my studies in Oklahoma, the bottom disk is not needed, unless the plants are to remain in the container for more than one growing season.

3. Fill container with growth medium.

4. Plant the liner in the mix.

5. Roots grow out and contact the sidewall. The roots cannot grow through the Pot Licker[®] or circle as with other sleeves because the root tips become trapped.

6. When the tip of a root is trapped and can no longer extend, it branches in a manner as if it had been cut or air-pruned.

7. As root tips continue to be trapped and branch, an extremely fibrous root system is created throughout the container volume, without the use of chemicals which can lead to toxicity issues.

8. At time of planting into next size container or into the landscape, simply grasp the Pot Licker[®] material and peel.

9. Root tips are ready to extend into the surrounding mix or soil and accelerate plant establishment and growth.

10. Pot Lickers[®] are reusable.

(Adapted from Dr. Whitcomb's article.)
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