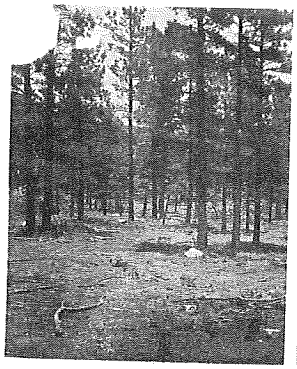
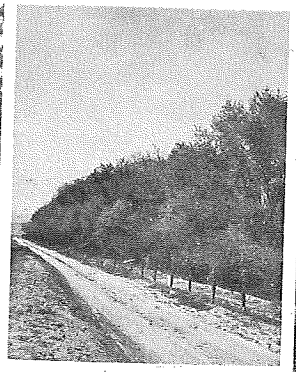
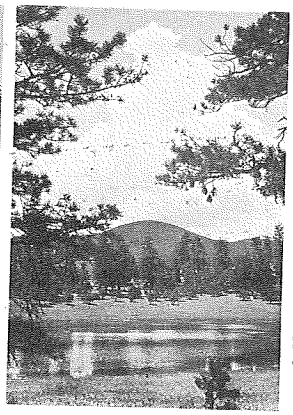
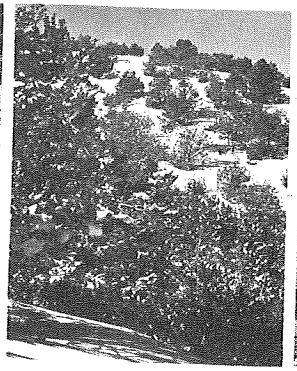
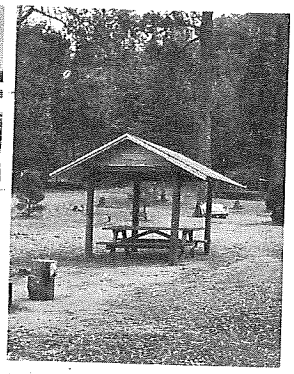
# Technical Notes Woodland Conservation

FOREST MANAGEMENT WINDBREAKS WATERSHEDS FOREST RECREATION

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEW MEXICO SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

WOODLAND TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 14

May 18, 1967

SUBJECT: DIGGING BALLED STOCK

All evergreens are best moved with a ball of soil that keeps a central core of the sensitive roots intact and reduces the transplanting shock. The size of the ball varies with the size of the plant, as shown in the table.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM BALL DIMENSIONS FOR DIFFERENT SIZES OF SHRUBS AND TREES

| Height of Plant Feet | Diameter of Ball Inches | Depth of Ball Inches |
|---|---|---|
| 1½-2 | 11 | 9 |
| 2-3 | 12 | 10 |
| 3-4 | 14 | 11 |
| 4-5 | 16 | 12 |
| 5-6 | 18 | 14 |
| 6-7 | 20 | 15 |
| 7-8 | 22 | 16 |
| 8-9 | 24 | 17 |
| 9-10 | 26 | 18 |
| 10-12 | 29 | 19 |
| 12-14 | 32 | 22 |
| 14-16 | 36 | 24 |

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To dig balled stock:

1. Mark a circle on the ground around the tree, making the radius of the circle somewhat larger than the width of the ball.

2. Dig a vertical trench just outside the marked circle, going down below the zone of abundant fibrous roots. The depth of the ball varies with the size of the tree, as in the table.

3. Cut any lateral roots flush with the inside face of the trench. To avoid jarring the loose soil, use prunning shears or a saw instead of an axe for the larger roots.

4. Pare off all the surplus soil with the back of the spade toward the ball. Trim the sides to slope inward so that the diameter at the bottom of the ball is a few inches less than that at the top, and the surface of the ball is smooth.

5. If the ball is not more than 18 inches in diameter and the soil is compact, adhering firmly, simply undercut the ball and tip it over on a square of burlap. Then lift the ball from the hole. Next, draw burlap tight around the ball and pin it in place with nails.

If the soil is loose or the ball diameter exceeds 18 inches, reinforce the pinning with heavy cord, net fencing, or light rope drawn around the ball. The pinning and roping should be completed in the hold before lifting. Digging is easier and balls hold together better if the soil is fresh. Take advantage of periods immediately following rains to move trees.

Open-grown specimens are hardier and easier to dig than stock in dense woods.

Whenever possible, move trees on calm, cloudy days to reduce root drying and transpiration loss.

Best seasons are late fall, winter, or early spring, then the trees are not growing vigorously.