

Help Beavers Fix it

Planting to Attract Beavers

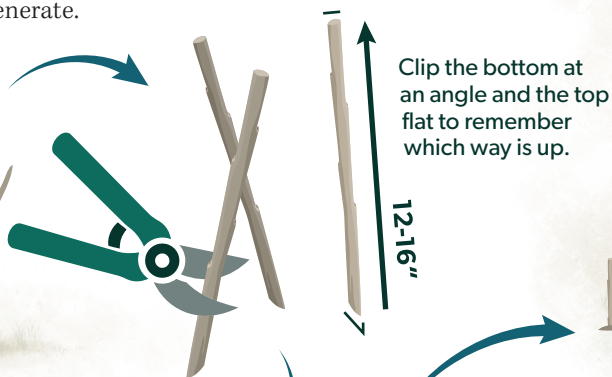
Beavers will not stay in areas that do not have enough food to sustain them. Planting willow stakes is the easiest and most effective way to increase the probability of beavers moving into and staying in an area. Willows are resilient! They have evolved to regenerate quickly, don't mind being cut, and are a favorite of beavers. Red osier dogwood and other similar species can be planted by stake as well but are not as hardy as willow.

1. COLLECT

If buying stakes, only buy native species.

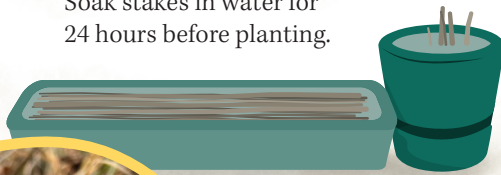
If harvesting locally, clip dormant (in winter) willows that are finger-thick and 12 to 16 inches long.

Do not worry about depleting local willows as they quickly regenerate.



2. SOAK

Soak stakes in water for 24 hours before planting.



3. PLANT

Push stakes deep into soft and wet soil. Trim if more than 3 buds remain above ground.

Plant any time of year but understand that heat increases the risk of dried out stakes.

Density doesn't matter! Plant as many as you can.

Planting to Detract Beavers

Beavers have co-evolved with all native riparian vegetation in the northern hemisphere. Although they have preferences, they will give almost any plant a taste if they are hungry enough. However, beavers generally avoid spirea, elderberry, and most conifer species.



Willows need water! Only plant in soils that stay wet year-round.

Will planting willow stakes work for you?

The greatest threats to a successful willow planting are dry soils and browsing pressure. If your waterway does not have moist soils, you may need to fix some underlying issues with the hydrology before willow will grow (see the infosheet on Low-tech process-based restoration). Willows are resilient to being browsed but can only take so much. Severe browsing pressure or deer rubbing their antlers on the stakes can kill the plants. To prevent this, loosely pile branches and other organic debris on and around the planted stakes (just ensure sunlight can still reach them).

For more information and references visit: projectbeaver.org

