

QUICK-START-TREES™ PLANTING AND CARE GUIDE



Sierra Gold Nurseries Quick-Start-Trees™ are perhaps the most advanced growing system available in woody plants. A significant nursery innovation, they shorten the timeline to propagate a finished budded tree. They can be ready in four months instead of two years. It is the perfect option for growers wanting to make last-minute decisions on cultivar/rootstock combinations. Utilizing this system takes some adjusting of your farming techniques and expectations to make it perform to its highest potential.

ELLEPOT® GROWING SYSTEM

Quick-Start-Trees are based on the Ellepot® growing system, which uses a biodegradable membrane engineered to let roots easily grow through it and quickly break down in orchard soil. More than 2 billion plants are grown and planted in the Ellepot system across the globe annually.

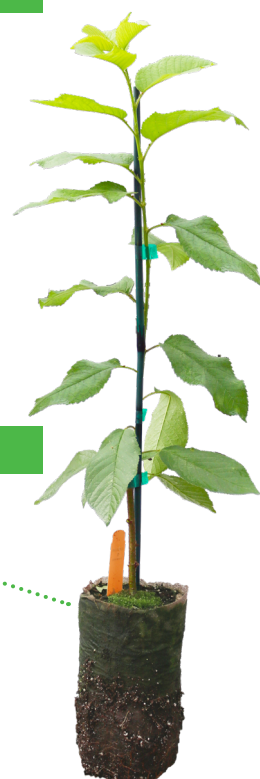
The containers holding your young tree are supposed to look natural – a little rough and uneven. Each Ellepot is slightly different in shape and size upon delivery. The membrane is surprisingly strong; they are designed to not fall apart during planting. However, you should expect to see several things that are inherent to the system. Harmless mosses sometimes grow on the surface of the Ellepot membrane and potting mix in the greenhouse; these will immediately die upon being exposed to your orchard conditions. Also, the biodegradable membrane may look a little ragged or have a small rip. These are normal and part of what it means to use a growing system that is geared around efficiency and sound horticultural principles.

EXTRA CARE REQUIRED

Quick-Start-Trees are smaller (18"-24" tall + the container). They are packaged to sustain the harsh conditions of shipping and planting, but are not as tough as traditional dormant bare root trees. A little extra care is needed to ensure no damage is done to the tree when unloading or planting. Always handle the Ellepot and NOT the trunk of the tree, as damage to the bud union and root system could occur.

SPRINGTIME ADVANTAGES

Quick-Start-Trees perform well as a green growing plant in spring because of the biodegradable membrane that holds the soilless media together while letting the roots of the plant burst through the membrane and into the native soil by the hundreds. This will happen in the first week if proper care of the plant occurs.



**Sierra Gold
Nurseries**

DELIVERY DAY

Prepare a secure area where trees can be unloaded off the truck. Trees will arrive loaded on wooden delivery pallets (three layers, 256 trees per layer, 768 trees per pallet, 16 trees per bag). When the truck arrives, have a small crew available to help unload. Pallets should be forklifted off the truck for easier unloading of trees. Bags are best handled at corners. Immediately water trees in bags.

FERTILIZER

While Sierra Gold cannot provide specific fertilizer recommendations, it is important that you start feeding your Quick-Start-Trees immediately upon planting. These are actively growing plants with functioning leaves and roots. Without optimal nutrition, your plants won't grow as quickly as they could. Unlike a brand new bareroot tree, which has stored carbohydrates and can grow without fertilizer for the first month or six weeks, Quick-Start-Trees require a constant feeding program for the first two months to perform at their best. Please consult your local fertilizer expert for a specific nutritional plan. Fertilizing through your drip the same day you plant is not too early.

WATERING THE PLANTS

Sierra Gold will water the trees thoroughly just before they are loaded on the truck, so they should show up in great condition. But every delivery is different, so check the moisture of the Ellepot as soon as the product is unloaded. Monitor the moisture in the plants often before planting. If the potting mix gets a little dry, water with a hose and watering wand, sprinkler or other device. It is critical that the plants are at maximum moisture just prior to planting. Water the plants as they go out in batches for planting.

IRRIGATING AND MOISTURE

We strongly recommend irrigating the day of planting to settle the soil and get the roots growing out into the field. Don't worry, you won't overirrigate them the first day.

Checking the potting mix for moisture after planting (the "finger test") is essential. The first two weeks after planting, check randomly selected trees and different sections of the



orchard. Dig down a few inches and see if the potting mix is moist in the middle of the Ellepot. Remember, most of the roots are still in the potting mix the first two weeks.

Do not check field soil the first two weeks; rather, check the potting mix itself, as indicated above. We find the best way to keep any potting mix moist is with short but frequent irrigations of your drip, microjets, sprinklers, etc.

In some soils, just running drip every day can be too much and oversaturate the trees, inhibiting root growth. Monitor the potting mix and irrigate when your common sense says that the potting mix is starting to dry down just a little bit.

POST-PLANTING

Generally, after a few weeks, hundreds of roots are growing in the soil and you can irrigate, fertilize and farm the trees like any young tree. Quick-Start-Trees aren't suffering from transplant shock or five months in cold storage or huge woody tops and almost no roots in the soil, so after the initial establishment stage, they become easier to manage. They will grow fast and in balance; a plant like that is the easiest to know how to irrigate and feed.

HERBICIDES

With young nursery trees, herbicide damage from preemergents and systemic materials is a concern. Most growers choose to grow Quick-Start-Trees either in a paper tree protector or plastic grow tube that acts as a mini-greenhouse and spray protector. Nevertheless, like most other nurseries, we suggest NOT using systemic herbicides like Roundup near the trees the first year in the orchard.

DON'T SNAP OFF THE TIPS

Sierra Gold provides a small bamboo stake as protection, but it is important to be aware of keeping the terminal bud intact during the planting process, and especially when placing a protective sleeve of any type over the tree. These trees are tough, and one broken terminal every thousand trees won't be noticeable. Make sure crews are taking time not to bend over and snap off every tip of every tree.

SUPPORT YOUR TREE

If you are utilizing a trellis system and will continue to let the terminal of your tree grow, the rapidly-growing trunk will need support. If your trellis is not yet in place, please immediately place a larger bamboo stake next to the tree to support it. If creating a multi-leader tree, this will not be necessary. Sierra Gold can supply stout bamboo stakes for this purpose upon request.

July 2026



**Sierra Gold
Nurseries**

sgtrees.com • 800-243-4653
Instagram: sierra_gold_nurseries
Yuba City, CA