

# Banded pots provide depth without the weight



Brooks Tree Farm sells seedlings for grafters, as well as reclamation and reforestation projects.

**B**rooks Tree Farm produces trees that are sold as grafting understock to the commercial grafting trade in Oregon. The nursery grows primarily conifer seedlings and native shrubs, as well as native deciduous trees, but no shade or flowering trees. Finding the right container for this particular situation was tricky, said Kathy LeCompte, one of the owners of Brooks Tree Farm in Brooks, Ore.

The seedlings are grown in one place for a year and then placed in a pot that will ultimately be grafted and then sent to garden centers throughout the country. For this work, Brooks uses 2 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch square banded Anderson pots.

The tall, narrow dimensions of these containers are one of the reasons they work so well for Brooks.

“I describe it as about the size of a can of spray paint,” LeCompte said. “It’s as deep as a gallon

can, but only about <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> the total volume. So we get all the advantages of a deep root system but it is much easier to plant.”

When what she’s growing needs more width, she bumps up to the 3 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch container. Durability and drainage are two other reasons LeCompte is a fan of these containers.

“Because it is a hard plastic we can wash it and reuse it, and because we grow so many conifers, the open bottom allows for the drainage we need,” she said. “The Eastern white pine is highly sensitive to wet roots, but this deep pot with an open bottom allows us to produce what we need and not have that problem.”

Another large part of Brooks’ business comes from wetland mitigation projects. In the Pacific Northwest, companies are required to maintain streambanks and replace wetlands that are removed through construction projects. So if a company wants to fill in a 10-acre wetland to build an apartment building, it will be required to replace that wetland some other place — and the new wetland is usually required to be exponentially larger than the one it’s replacing. For instance, if a developer took out 10 acres, it might be required to put in 20-30 acres some other place.

That’s big business for growers like Brooks that sell the plants to assist replanting efforts. “There are thousands of acres that get replanted, lots of stream banks and buffers along streams that have to be cared for,” LeCompte said. “Our wetland mitigation project usually uses at least a million plants a year.”

Plants grown in the Anderson banded pots are used for these projects because they are economical — a fact that appeals to grafters as well.

“The efficiency and affordability of the final product are huge for us, because we provide input for other people’s finished product, and price matters to them,” LeCompte said. “This container gives them the plant they want at the price they want. They say they are thrilled with the product, and it’s the pot that is making the product. “Grafters don’t care about cosmetics. All they care about is a good solid root system and a good clean stem that’s ready to go. It’s economical, it’s easy to handle and it’s ready to go.”

**FOR MORE:** [www.brookstreefarm.com](http://www.brookstreefarm.com)

## Specifics:

**Name:**

Brooks Tree Farm

**Location:**

Brooks, Ore.

**Founded:**

1980

**Production:**

250 acres field, plus about 5 acres greenhouse

**Products:**

Primarily conifer seedlings and native shrubs, as well as native deciduous trees

## Did you know?

Many people purchase trees as gifts for weddings and memorials. Brooks has developed a custom box cover that can slide over the banded pot in response to market demand.

## Quotable:

“Grafters don’t care about cosmetics. All they care about is a good solid root system and a good clean stem that’s ready to go.”

-Kathy LeCompte