

Many Uses for Polypropylene Fabric

Mic Armstrong

Meadow Lake Nursery Co., P.O. Box 1302, McMinnville, Oregon 97128 U.S.A.

FROST PROTECTION IN SEEDBEDS

After seeds germinate in the spring, and prior to a killing freeze, we cover sensitive species with 1.5-oz yd² fabric. These days we can cover six seedbeds at a time. The material is supported on galvanized steel rods, bent into a curve, and pushed into the ground on either side of the seedbed. The edges of the cloth are held in place with sufficient soil to prevent wind damage. These row covers are removed in early summer after all danger of frost has passed and the growing season begins.

ROOTING TISSUE-CULTURED PLANTLETS

Some tissue-culture plantlets such as lilacs are rooted at the nursery. Unrooted microplants are received from the lab in tubs of agar. These "cuttings" are removed from the tub, basal ends are lightly dipped in Hormodin # 1, then planted in plug trays filled with Sunshine Mix #5. The plug trays are placed on benches over moistened capillary matting, then lightly covered with 0.5-oz yd² fabric. Fungicides for *Botrytis*, etc., are applied later in the day over the top of the moistened fabric. The acclimation tunnel is covered with plastic and shade. An occasional light mist is all that may be needed for a week or two. When the plants are rooted, the fabric is removed and, over time, the plugs are weaned from the acclimation tent.

SEED PRETREATMENT BAGS

Certain seeds need germination inhibitors "flushed out" with a long, aerated water soak. One way to do this is to toss them in a pond. Seeds are weighed out in seedbed quantities, then wrapped and tied in a piece of 0.5-oz yd² fabric. A plastic gunny sack is weighted with a piece of steel, and enough seed for several seedbeds is placed in the bag which is then tied off. A cable tied to a piece of log chain is sent to the bottom. Bags are wired on to the cable, then turned with a pole every couple of days. Protect as needed from varmints. After 3 weeks the beds are seeded, in this case with *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, and mulched with sawdust.