

How to put wire cloth cages on your young trees

Why Cages?

We put wire cloth cages on young trees to deter rodents and other animals from eating your tasty trees. After a couple years the bark grows thicker and the chances of rodents of eating the bark off and killing all of the top growth diminishes. From many years of experience, we have found the best and lowest cost way to protect your trees for a couple of years. Then you can reuse the hardware cloth cages again on new trees just planted.

Materials – included in Z's Nutty's cultivar kits.

If you didn't buy the kit, you will need hardware cloth, five nylon zip ties and two 3 foot tall stakes. We like 1/4" Hardware cloth over 1/2" hardware cloth as the chances of a more or mouse getting in to eat your tree is way less. Generally, 2' foot high is good to protect from rodents and if you have deer issues you may want up to 4' foot tall hardware cloth cages. We use 2' foot tall generally as we have deer exclusion fence for our orchards. For stakes we will often use 3-foot-tall bamboo stakes. We like fiberglass stakes most people do not want to spend the extra money.

To assemble.

Safety is always a concern. Hardware cloth has very sharp edges and it is galvanized so it can easily scrape the toughest of skin. We urge everyone to wear protective gloves, safety glasses, long sleeves and pants prior to handling and assembling hardware cloth cages.

If you didn't buy a precut one from Z's Nutty Ridge, cut a length of 18" to 20" of hardware cloth for one year old trees. We like to use five of 6" or 8" long nylon zip ties per cage. Once you have the hardware cut to length, we form a circle and the 18" length will form about a 6" inch circle. The cloth naturally will want to form a circle as it was just cut from the roll you purchased. We align the top and bottom edges of the hardware cloth and overlap the edges by two or three squares. We then put a nylon zip tie in the middle of the two-foot-high cage to lock in the cloth overlap and keep the cage aligned.

We then add two more nylon zip ties about 3 to 5 inches from the top and bottom of the hardware cloth seam but leave the two nylon zip ties very loose as you will also slide the stake through those same nylon zip ties. Then on the opposite side of the cage add two more zip ties about 3 to 5 inches from the top and bottom and leave the nylon zip ties very loose to slide the stake you are using through the zip tie hoops.

Slide your cage over you newly planted tree and center the tree to the cage so the tree doesn't rub the sides of the cage. Then lightly push and twist the cage back and forth so around one inch of the cage is below the soil surface. Pound in the two stakes once you have slipped the stakes through the zip ties. Pull the zip ties tight and it should last two or three years before you can reuse the hardware cloth cage.



For more information, please see our blog page at: znutty.com

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