Site Prep: Bedding

Bedding

- Soil is tilled and consolidated into a mounded strip called a bed. Beds may range in height from a few inches to nearly 2-feet depending on the soil, moisture and topography of the site.
- Bedding is a proven site prep method on wet-natured soils. The increased elevation of the raised bed improves the site conditions, thereby promoting more success in the survival of the seedlings and enhanced root growth after planting (see bottom-left photo of a wet-natured site that has been bedded).
- Bedding can be effective on upland soil sites that are not wet-natured (see middle photo).
- The ground surface must be sufficiently free of woody debris, standing trees and other obstacles so the bedding plow can be pulled in a consistent and uniform manner. Bedding plows are pulled by large tractors or bulldozers. Multiple passes with the bedding plow may be needed on difficult sites.
- Beds will need time for the loosened soil to settle before planting trees atop them. Settling will minimize air pockets that could dry out seedling roots, especially if a lot of woody debris is in the beds. However the beds should not remain exposed for a long period of time, because this extra time will allow weeds, grass and undesirable plants to take over the bed.

The tract above had a site prep treatment that included KG + pile + bedding. The tract shown at left is a wet-natured site that has been bedded. Bedding may be beneficial on dry or wet sites.