

# **EkoCover® - RECOMMENDED LAYING AND PINNING PROCEDURES**

When first laid, EkoCover mulch mat is quite rigid. In applications where the product is not being covered by decorative mulch such as bark or river stones for example, there is a risk, particularly in high wind areas of the product suffering damage unless it is securely pinned to the ground. Very exposed areas may require EkoCover jute reinforced mat, to ensure long term stability and durability. Within a relatively short period EkoCover absorbs moisture, becomes malleable, contours to the soil surface and bonds to it over time. At that point the risk of wind damage to the mat is minimal however in the early stages of the product life, pinning and securing is very important. The following instructions are therefore critical in obtaining the maximum benefit from EkoCover.

## **I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **a) Weather**

It is recommended that standard EkoCover is not laid during high winds or heavy rain although EkoCoverRF is sufficiently durable for laying in most weather conditions. The ground beneath the mat needs to be firm enough to work on and care is taken if laying the standard mulch mat in wet conditions, as it is prone to easy damage when saturated.

### **b) Ground Preparation**

Prior to laying EkoCover, either in continuous roll form or weed squares, the ground must be prepared as for all other plastic or fabric mulches – free of large weeds, long grasses, rocks and other detritus. The EkoCover needs to be laid as close to the soil surface as possible to optimize the product attributes. It is recommended EkoCover is laid over any (drip) irrigation lines.

### **c) Land Contour**

Ensure the EkoCover mat is not stretched across land contours (even small contours) and then pinned. Just allow the mat to lie naturally prior to pinning. The mat, when it becomes wet, will endeavour to contour itself to the soil surface. EkoCover may be subject to a small amount of shrinkage, therefore stretching it could cause breakage.

### **d) EcoPin Spacing**

The EcoPin has been designed to provide a secure pinning method into most soil types. Pinning the mat securely is critical to its productive life and this is best achieved by ensuring the EcoPin spacing is no greater than 50cm (19in) maximum along all edges. In high wind prone areas 30cm (12in) spacing or possibly even less is preferred, unless EkoCoverRF is being used, in which case standard pinning distances may apply. Pinning the mat centres in the case of a 2m wide strip is usually adequate every 1m (38in).

### **e) Pinning Method**

Securing the EcoPins through a folded edge or overlap - by no less than 12cm (5in) - so that the purchase is through a double layer of EkoCover is helpful. When laying, it is not necessary to drive the EcoPin hard into the ground creasing the EkoCover, as a snug fit of the mat to the soil surface is all that is required. EcoPins are best hammered into the ground with a rubber mallet. Certainly use more EcoPins in the early life of the mat rather than fewer. EcoPins can possibly be reused at a later date by removing from the mat once biodegradation of the mulch is well advanced.

### **f) EcoPin + PVA + Tape**

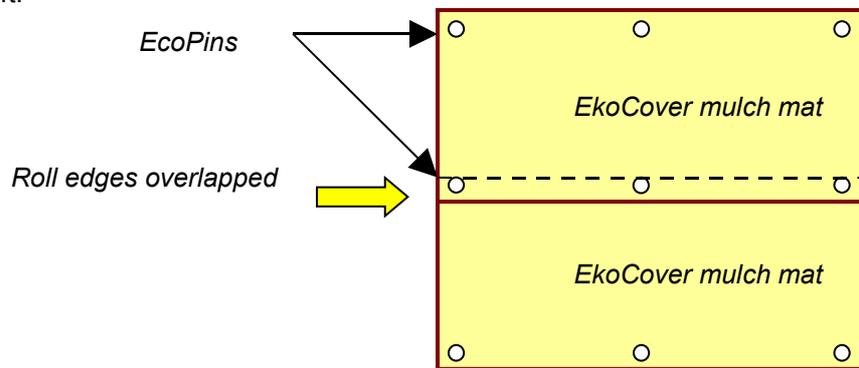
A PVA liquid adhesive can also be sprayed on overlapped joins to provide good contact, or a paper tape along the join can be used in addition to the EcoPins. For high wind prone areas, EkoCoverRF may be necessary.

### **g) Mulch Mat Damage**

Should the mat become damaged during installation, or by machinery post installation, patching is very easy. EkoCover can be cut to any size / shape and inserted as a patch over the top or underneath any damage. Ensure the patch is pinned, taped or glued securely in place.

## II. CORRECT PINNING AND PLACEMENT

Correct EcoPin placement providing maximum purchase through the EkoCover and minimising potential wind lift.



### a) EkoCover roll form - ROW OF EXISTING PLANTINGS

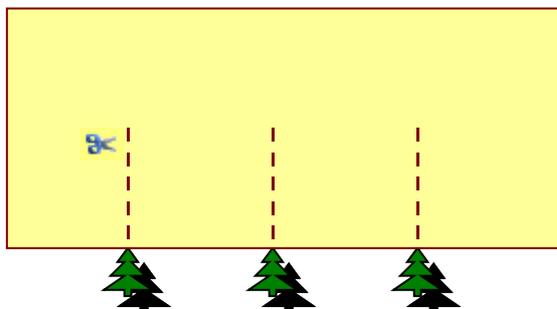
There are two methods of laying EkoCover continuously along an existing plant row.

- **1 continuous piece of EkoCover - for early plantings with slender stems**

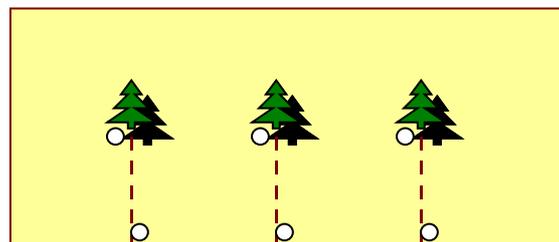
STEP 1 - EkoCover is laid adjacent to the row as a continuous length then slit straight with a sharp blade to approximately half the width of the mat. Each slit is centred to a plant stem.

STEP 2 - EkoCover is then pulled through the slits to meet the plant stem so that half of the mat width now lies on either side of the plant. It is then pinned appropriately ensuring all edges are secured against wind movement. Pinning is also required at the base of each plant stem to prevent weed growth. The slit edges should be overlapped prior to pinning.

STEP 1



STEP 2

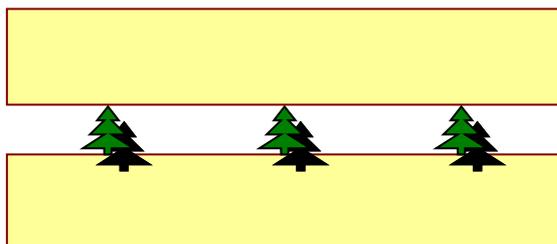


- **2 pieces of EkoCover - for larger stems and more mature plantings**

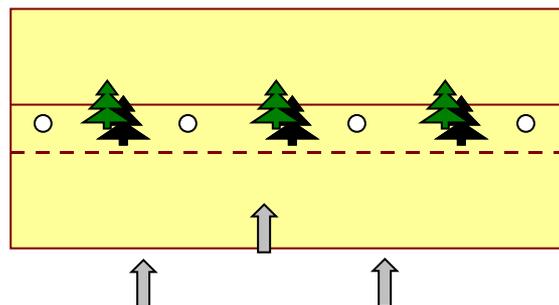
STEP 1 - EkoCover is laid down either side of the row, each side half the required finished width. Pull the mats toward each other so that they overlap. The area around each stem may require a small slit in both mats to allow the overlap depending on stem size.

STEP 2 - Ensure all edges are securely pinned for any wind movement. The overlap should allow for the direction of the prevailing wind.

STEP 1



STEP 2

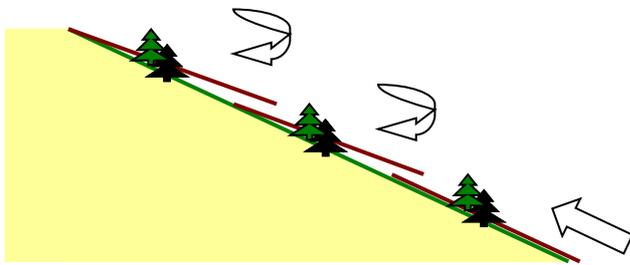


## b) EkoCover roll form - BANKS, SLOPES, LARGE FLAT AREAS

There are several considerations to take into account when planting large areas on flat or sloping ground.

For example:

- If the area to be planted has existing plants / trees / shrubs, consider using appropriately sized weed squares to surround the existing plant stems in the first instance, then lay EkoCover in roll form across and along the edges of the weed squares, endeavour to keep the rolls as intact as possible, pinning over the edges of the weed squares. This will prevent the rolls having to be cut to fit and make laying a great deal easier. Correct pinning is essential particularly along all leading edges and overlaps. Weed squares may be laid on their own to prevent weed growth.
- Where planting on a slope it is preferable to lay the EkoCover horizontally rather than vertically, that is, along the face of the bank rather than running strips down the slope. Horizontal laying will usually present fewer edges to the wind and the best method is to commence laying from the top overlap (tuck under and pin) as the mat is laid down the slope as illustrated in diagram below. On particularly steep areas, providing the EkoCover is dry, it is perfectly acceptable to lay a ladder on the mat to plant and pin.



*For best results on difficult sites, EkoCoverRF is strongly recommended. EkoCoverRF can also be laid during adverse weather, being very robust.*

Horizontal laying is possible for slopes up to about 25 degrees, beyond that it is difficult to lay the mat out and pin as you work down the slope, therefore vertical laying is quite acceptable providing all leading edges are properly secured. \*

\* This can be achieved by:

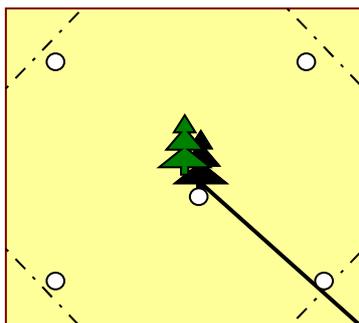
1. Very close pinning (parallel to the edges) through the two layers, at a pin spacing of no greater than 30cm (12in).
2. Secure by using a sprayed application of PVA adhesive or sticky paper tape along the overlaps.

## c) WEED SQUARES

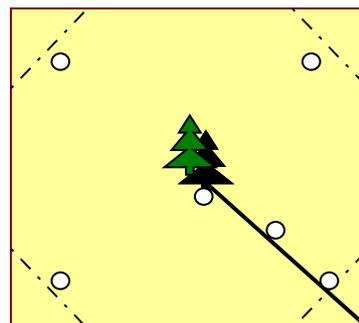
Fold corners (dotted line) prior to pinning to provide a double purchase. The slit in the weed square will allow weed growth unless it is slightly overlapped and properly pinned. The EcoPins can often be recovered from the ground and reused once the mat biodegradation is well advanced.

- For small mats – 5 EcoPins is usually adequate with 2 EcoPins along the slit once the edges are overlapped.
- For mats larger than 65cm x 65cm (26in x 26in) a minimum of 6 EcoPins required, 3 EcoPins along the slit once the edges overlapped.

Small mats



Larger mats

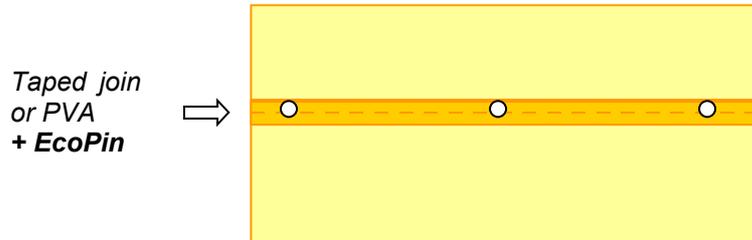




#### **d) OTHER PINNING / SECURING METHODS**

Where the soil substrate is too hard for EcoPins to penetrate, providing the EkoCover is to be covered with a top layer (Riverstone, bark etc) to hold the mat in place, the roll edges and joins can be taped as illustrated with a paper adhesive tape.

Alternatively, a PVA adhesive spray may be used to secure the overlapped edges prior to pinning.



### **III. CORRECT CUTTING METHODS – creating the planting hole in EkoCover Mulch Mat**

The ideal planting hole should be as small as practicable to allow the digging of the hole and planting the plant.

1. A 'X' cut is made into the mulch mat, the flaps of the cut are tucked under the mat and the ground area 'exposed'.
2. After planting the plant it is important to fold the flaps back around the stem of the plant to protect it from weed growth.
3. In the end the loose mulch topping is to be added, or the mat has to be pinned

Tools suitable for cutting the 'X' shaped planting hole into mulch mat:

- Scissors
- Long bladed knife (box cutter, old steak knife)
- Sharp spade

Some of the tools may be used if the EkoCover is wet (sharp spade, box cutter) but care must be taken as result depends on the condition of the soil under the mulch mat.

### **ATTENTION**

**Please ensure the contracting staff responsible for the installation of EkoCover are fully informed of our recommended laying and pinning procedures.**

**If any doubt seek advice and assistance from EkoCover staff.**

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