

How to Rock Tree Farm Roads for Half-Price

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Many Tree Farms have access roads to a cabin, picnic area, lake, etc., which must be rocked to drive on year around. Muddy roads, ruts, and stuck vehicles are a thing of the past in my woods, and I achieved that for half-price. Considering the price per load of rock, money can be spent really fast, if you are not careful.

Here is how to save a bundle. When you order rock from the quarry, tell them you want a “plug” put in the truck before it is loaded so the rock will come out in two streams down each tire track on your road. Remember, you need the rock where you drive, not in the center of the road. I have had quarries place small barrels, pieces of conduit, or large pieces of firewood in front of the tailgate to make the system work. Perhaps the best and safest way to successful rock spreading is to cut a small 6- to 8-inch diameter tree into a piece about 30 to 32 inches long, take it to the quarry and explain what you want.

What to do if the truck arrives at the Tree Farm and does not have the “log”, barrel, pipe, etc., in place? Never fear, there is a way to solve the problem. Have the truck driver set the chains on the tailgate as normal. Leave the bed flat and have him drive forward quickly for about 20 yards at the beginning of your road. This will allow a small amount of rock next to the tailgate to be spread in a tailgate wide sheet on your road (normal spreading). Next climb up on the back of the truck and drop the cut “log” in place next to the center of the tailgate. When the driver raises the truck bed to spread, the rock will now come out in the desired two track-wide streams—perfect to drive on. Some rock bounces into the center of the road, but the majority is in the tracks where you want it.

If the road has never had rock, use 3-inch rock for a base. Once this is worked in, over a month or so of driving, use 1 1/2-inch rock as a topping. Eventually this, too, will be pushed into the ground; thus, top-dress roads every few years to keep in perfect condition.

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