



Tim Kelly used three 14 1/2-ft. long, 3-ft. dia. sections of steel oil pipeline to build this field roller.

## Field Roller Made From Oil Pipeline

It's no secret that machinery costs have skyrocketed in the past few years, even for the simplest equipment like field rollers. Dassel, Minn., farmer Tim Kelly says the cost of a new roller was "way too expensive for my blood," so he built his own.

Kelly's roller incorporates three 14 1/2-ft. long sections of 90,000-lb. tensile strength steel oil pipeline. The pipe is 36-in. in dia. He had a local machine shop fabricate ends for each roller using 1/2-in. thick plate steel. The ends are welded 2 in. inside the roller pipe and reinforced with steel gussets.

Each roller is connected to a 2 by 6-in. reinforced surround frame with 10-ton 8'-hole wheel hubs. Hubs connect to the rollers with a reinforced 2-in. shaft and heavy-duty bearings on each end piece.

"These rollers are built to last and are virtually impossible to dent or damage," says Kelly. "That's important because we go up and down hills, over uneven terrain, over small rocks and through waterways."

The cart that hauls and pulls the rollers is made from two used multi-weeder frames welded one on top of the other. It rides on 4 wheels. Behind the main hitch frame is a 5-ft. deep by 10-ft. wide sub frame. All three roller frames attach to the subframe. The lift mechanism, made of reinforced 5-in. sq. tubing, connects to the main frame, the sub frame and the center roller.

Kelly uses two 3 1/2-in. cylinders from an old loader to lift the implement for road transport. As the center roller lifts up, the side rollers tilt onto 4 wheels. When the tractor



The cart that transplants the rollers is made from 2 used multi-weeder frames, welded one on top of the other.

pulls the roller forward, connecting blocks on each side roller disengage so the rollers rotate in an arc straight behind the center roller.

"The folding and unfolding works just like the multi-weeder, so everything is done from the tractor," Kelly says. "To unfold it for field work, I just back up until the side rollers are even to the main frame, and they lock in place."

The 3-section, 45-ft. wide roller weighs about 10 tons, so it's heavier than commercial-built models. Kelly added a few reinforcements after the first hundred acres in the field, but since then the machine has worked without any problems.

"We've been over 2,000 acres in the past couple years and it has done a great job on any field terrain without any problems,"



Side rollers pull straight behind raised center roller for transport.

Kelly says. "Better yet, the cost for building this was less than half of buying a new one."

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## Italian Seeds Offer Real Heirloom Varieties

Franchi Sementi, Italy's oldest seed company, has been in business since 1783. The family-owned seed company traces the heritages of many of their seeds back that far and longer, says Daniel Nagengast, exclusive North American distributor for Franchi Sementi.

"We carry more than 400 different varieties, all of which have been grown for generations and selected for maximum flavor," says Nagengast. "These are almost all open-pollinated, regional varieties. You can grow them out and save the seeds. They produce very flavorful vegetables."

Nagengast estimates that about 30 percent of his regular customers are of Italian heritage themselves. He counts home gardeners, market gardeners, and even a few professional chefs as customers. Some of them tell about their family growing the same variety of a vegetable for generations.

"A lot of our customers are very knowledgeable about particular varieties," says Nagengast. "In Italy, growing vegetables and cooking are part of the same activity."

He credits the company's high germination standards and grow-out policy on every batch of seed for the brand's reputation for productivity. However, he suggests that flavor is the real reason Franchi Sementi seeds are so popular. Other reasons include the unusual shapes, colors and varieties.

"We carry cucumber melons and cauliflower that would be considered broccoli in this country," says Nagengast. "We carry 25 different varieties of broccoli raab alone, 15 different radicchios, and 14 to 15 different head lettuces with red fringe. We have five different kinds of fennel. They look similar, but if you know fennel, you can discern the difference."

Nagengast had one customer buy 50 lbs. of arugula seed, but most of his customers order 2, 3 or 4 gram packages. He says



Franchi Sementi, Italy's oldest seed company, carries more than 400 different time-tested varieties of vegetable seeds.

Franchi Sementi offers more than 25 different packaging options.

"We are working hard to provide bulk seed for vegetable growers who appreciate a varietal edge," says Nagengast. "We will be doing those mostly on a pre-order basis."

While the Italian seed company has no web presence or catalog sales, Seeds from Italy offers both. This year they will also be entering the retail store market with seed racks.

"We are going to work with independent nurseries, farm stores and garden centers," says Nagengast.

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Ladder stands on narrow platform at top of 7-ft. wide wooden brace.

## Simple Brace Holds Roof Ladder Steady

FARM SHOW subscriber Pat Olive came up with a simple solution to secure a ladder on the roof, using a brace made out of scrap lumber.

When he needed to repair leaks and fix popped nails on his shed roofs, he made a simple ladder brace. The top is a narrow platform made of two 2 by 6 boards. It's attached to two long 2 by 4's cross-braced with 1 by 4's.

"One concern was that the top part might lift up away from the roof," Olive says. "This

was solved by attaching a light check chain near the top of each 2 by 4. The free ends of the chains are temporarily screwed to the side of the shed thus preventing any upward movement of the brace."

Olive used 7-ft. long 2 by 6's that he had on hand, which allows him to work on 12 ft. of the roof at a time.

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