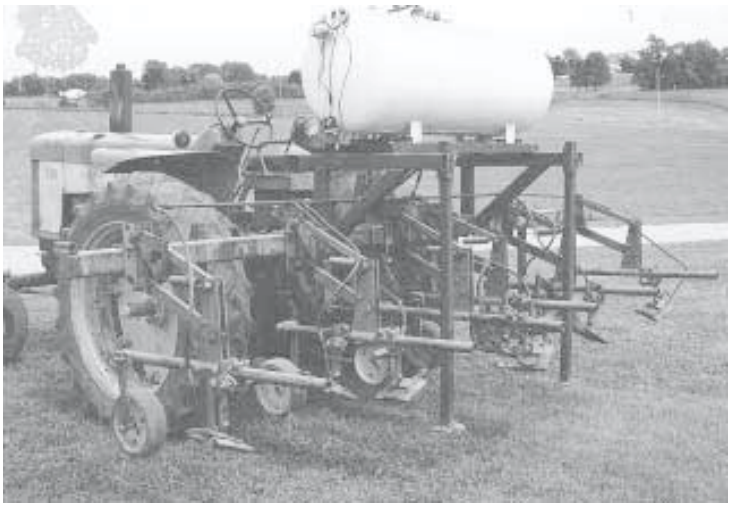


**Dennis Lutteke of Wells, Minn., builds propane burner kits that can be added to existing row crop cultivators.**

# Flame Kit For Cultivator Eliminates Herbicides

Flame cultivators have been around for years in one form or another. Ken Haberman, Janesville, Wisconsin, decided a couple of years ago that they might provide a less expensive way to control weeds than herbicides.

After asking around, he found Dennis Lutteke, Wells, Minnesota, who builds propane burner kits that can be added to existing row crop cultivators.

Haberman bought a kit from Lutteke and put it on his cultivator last year. "The kit contains everything you need - burner units, pipes, everything," he says.

"At first we experimented with it on 12 acres of corn that was 6 to 7 inches tall. We directed the flame at the base of the corn plants, with the burner funnels horizontal to the ground," he says. "We were pleased with the weed control we got from just one pass with this cultivator, and we plan to use it for more acreage next year" he says.

Dennis Lutteke has had several years of experience with flame weed control. He built his own flame cultivator around a 30-ft. vertical-fold 5 by 7-in. toolbar. "I found Oliver cultivator gangs to put on it. These have parallel linkage to keep them level. Then I mounted the burners and, in the center, made a bracket to hold a 250 gal. propane tank."

He starts weed control by aiming two burners at the base of corn plants in each row while the corn is still quite small. For his second pass with the flamer, he slides the burners apart and aims them down at the space between the rows to kill weeds there.

If you fry corn plants a little before the growing point has reached the surface, they'll grow back and yield will be unaffected. But you have to be a little more careful in soybeans. "If you use it before the first trifoliate leaves emerge, it does no more damage than a rotary hoe," Lutteke says. "You can do damage if the first trifoliate has emerged, and if the second trifoliate is out, they may die."

Lutteke says the flamer works best when weeds are small. Grasses, in particular, are fairly resistant once they establish a root system, so he flames corn twice and cultivates his at least twice in addition. He flames his beans only once, but continues cultivating them every 7 to 10 days, just like the corn.

**He starts weed control by aiming two burners at the base of corn plants in each row while the corn is still quite small.**

Lutteke sells kits for building your own flame cultivator for under $200 per row, including burners and gas lines. "You'll also need a gas control. You can buy an electric automotive-type control for about $200, or a hydraulic control, similar to an anhydrous control, for a little more than $300. Both have different advantages and disadvantages. For example, if the tractor is not running, you can't operate the hydraulic control," he says. Both have been tested and approved for gas, so it's just a matter of deciding what you want.

"Most people who buy these are organic farmers or are planning to convert some acreage to organic, so they're not using herbicides in combination with them," Lutteke says.

Last year, he says he used about 7 gal. of propane per acre for each of two passes with the flamer through corn. "At $0.48 per gal, that's less than $7 per acre in propane expenses," he says. "Running the cultivator is a little more expensive than applying herbicides, but we're getting excellent weed control from cultivation and flaming for less than $15 an acre," he figures. "I think cultivating offers some other advantages, too. Besides aerating the soil and working in nutrients, it gets the farmer out there in the field. It's a lot easier to monitor what's going on when you spend time riding through the crop."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kenneth Haberman, N28 Coon Island Road, Janesville, Wis. 65545; or Dennis Lutteke, 56360 200th Street, Wells, Minn. 56097 (ph 507 553-5633).

**Shane Dennis of St. Paul, Minn., put this live trap together himself. It measures 12 in. sq. and is big enough to hold a nice-size raccoon.**

# Make Your Own Live Trap

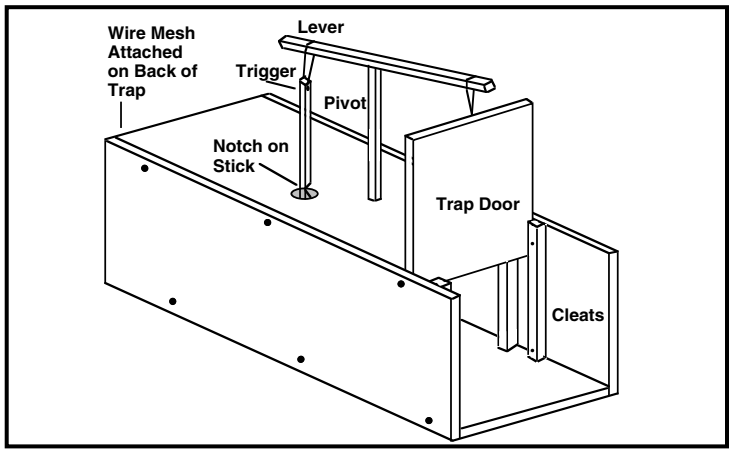
"I've caught a couple woodchucks in it and now I'm working on raccoons. Works great and cost nothing to make," says Shane Dennis, St. Paul, Minn., about the "made it myself" live trap he put together after reading about it in a magazine.

The design of the trap can be made larger or smaller, depending on what you're trying to catch. The trap Dennis built measures 12 in. sq. and is big enough to hold a nice-size raccoon.

The trap consists of a rectangular box made out of 1-in. boards. One end is enclosed with wire mesh. The other end is fitted with a sliding door made from a 1-in. board. The door is tied to a string that runs up to a lever which balances on a post at the center of the trap. The other end of the lever ties to a trigger stick that has a notch cut into the side of it. The trigger fits down through a hole in the top of the trap. The notch catches on the top edge of the trap, holding the door in the open position. Bait is placed inside the trap near the mesh-covered end. When an animal enters the trap to get the bait, it hits the trigger stick, closing the door behind.

Dennis mounted handles on the trap to make it easier to carry with an animal inside. He says he might also line the inside of the trap and the door with metal mesh to keep trapped animals from chewing on the wood.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shane Dennis, 499 Orange Ave W., St. Paul, Minn. 55117 (ph 651 489-7253).




**Trap consists of a rectangular box made out of 1-in. boards. One end is enclosed with wire mesh. The other end is fitted with a sliding door made from a 1-in. board. When animal bumps "trigger", door drops down.**

**Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our web site at www.farmshow.com.**

*Mark Newhall, Editor*

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