

## Chisel Ripper Digs Deep With Low Hp

Jeff Sberna's Chisel Ripper allows him to dig deeper with his 120-horsepower Oliver 1855.

"We've got a small farm, and we always thought we should get deeper for our drainage issues," says the Bellevue, Ohio, part-time farmer. The most his Oliver tractor could muster was 10 to 11 in. deep.

With experience building other equipment - such as turning a snow blower into a composter - Sberna and his father started with an old Oliver 3-pt. hitch field cultivator, and set it up similar to his final prototype, but was limited by the framework of the cultivator.

"We built it in four weeks," Sberna says of the first tool, built in 2005. "The first time I put it in the ground, it didn't look like much, but I figured I had something. It pulled smooth."

And it dug deep - 13 to 14 in. He sold it to a farmer who is still using it and pleased with how it has improved drainage.

Since then, Sberna revised the prototype twice and worked with Cobb Industrial Fabricators to refine the tool. He found parts with the help of Julie Chamberlain, a salesperson at Bellota Agrisolutions in Spain. Sberna recently started marketing a 12-ft. version of the Chisel Ripper. It features five deep ripping tines in the back, and five coulters in front on 30-in. centers with 10 smaller Vibro (stubble) tines in the middle. The bigger tines dig up to 15-in. deep and the smaller tines dig in 3 to 4-in. and work residue under just enough so that it composts quickly.

"It leaves the soil open real well for corn roots to go deep into the ground," Sberna says. "It's not re-compacting."

The farm's corn yields consistently push the 200 bushel/acre mark, and during a dry spell his corn didn't wilt when other corn in the area did. Digging deep also improved



"My 12-ft. Chisel Ripper leaves the soil open for corn roots to go deep into the ground," says inventor Jeff Sberna.

drainage and reduced problems during wet periods.

Sberna has used the Chisel Ripper on all types of soil on his 130-acre farm from good black soil to clay and gravel. He noticed improved bean yields when he worked gravel soil deep enough to hit hard subsoil.

Having the weight on the tractor with a 3-pt. hitch also helps the tool dig deeper - especially with lower-horsepower tractors. The hydraulically-controlled tillage tool is operated from the tractor seat to change depth as needed.

Sberna sells the 12-ft. Chisel Ripper for \$21,000. He is considering making 8-ft. and 15-ft. models. To see the tillage tool in action, go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for "farmbuilt1".

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Winfred Schmidt grows next year's fertilizer with this year's crop. His crops are on a three-year rotation, with no fertilizer added to any of three crops in the rotation.

## Overseeding Corn Beats Buying Fertilizer

Winfred Schmidt makes more money on corn grown without fertilizer than corn grown with it. His secret is overplanting the corn with vetch. While the yield is less than side-by-side plots with 100, 200 or 300 lbs. of 25-15-5 fertilizer added, profits are greater. His no-fertilizer crops are on a three-year rotation with no fertilizer added to any of three crops in the rotation.

"Wheat is planted with red clover. The next year soybeans are overplanted with vetch," explains Schmidt. "The next spring the vetch is disked in, and corn is planted. When it's 10 in. tall, it's overplanted with more vetch, which produces fertilizer for the following year's wheat."

Schmidt has been maintaining test strips of his plots for 9 years. Each test strip consists of 8 rows of corn, 8 rows of soybeans and 24 ft. of wheat. Fertilizer is broadcast over all three crops in the test strips.

"Corn yields are always the highest in the 300-lb. strip, but profits are higher in the 100 and 200-lb. strips and highest of all in the legume overseeded strip," he says.

No fertilizer applications have been made to the overseeded strips in 9 years. Schmidt

reports not seeing much impact on either wheat or soybean yields between fertilized and non-fertilized strips. All test strips are in the same rotation.

Schmidt says the legume impact shows up in more than just profits. "The ground works up better, and you see more earthworms where legumes have been overseeded," he says.

At 90, Schmidt is determined to continue experimenting with his fields. He calls it fun farming, since he has retired from full time farming. Schmidt is working on the use of salt to control leafy spurge and a way to improve alkali soils.

"I've killed 8-ft. diameter patches of leafy spurge with 38¢ worth of salt," he says. "It isn't enough to hurt pasture or cropland, but it kills the roots of the leafy spurge. I am currently playing with a rate of 8 lbs. of salt and 30 gal. of water with some surfactant. A couple patches had a few plants that came back, but in a third patch, the spurge was completely gone."

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When Thomas Roberts needs cracked corn for his chickens he just runs it through a small wood chipper.

## Wood Chipper Grinds Corn Just Right

Thomas Roberts gets chicken feed for the price of shelled corn. To grind it up for his flock, he just runs it through a small wood chipper.

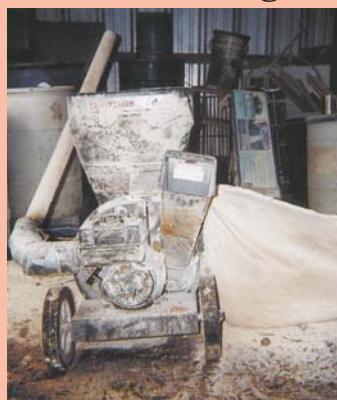
"I can do about 100 lbs. in less than 30 minutes," says Roberts. "The thing that takes the most time is changing the bag."

To grind his corn, Roberts just fires up his combination wood chipper and leaf shredder. He pours corn into the chipper chute that would normally be used for small branches and twigs.

"If I pour it into the leaf shredder part, it kicks back out," explains Roberts. "The wood side has a baffle on it that opens up just enough for the corn being poured in."

Roberts says the system is all he needs for his chickens, ducks, guineas and a few goats. The critters like it, and so does he. He gets double duty from his shredder.

"It didn't need to be altered at all except that I ran a piece of pvc pipe up and away from the air intake to bring in fresh air. It's a pretty dusty operation," he says.



Corn is poured into chipper chute that's normally used for small branches and twigs.

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## "Cable Cart" Takes Wood To Second Floor Deck

Jim Harkness, Laingsburg, Mich., came up with an easy way to get firewood up to his friend's second floor apartment. He built a ramp with a winch-powered cart.

"My friend Peter Bucklin, who just turned 75 and has arthritis, said the part of winter he dreaded most was carrying firewood up the 21 steps to his second floor apartment because they're often covered with snow and ice. I told him I'd build something to haul the wood," says Harkness. "It works great for wood and he uses it for other things, too, such as getting bags of groceries."

The wooden ramp measures 28 in. wide by 25 ft. long and is built from 4 by 6's, with 2 by 4's used for track guides. The base of the ramp has short legs that set on two 18-in. sq. cement patio blocks, while the legs on top of the ramp set on the second floor deck.

The cart is made from plywood and measures 18 in. wide by 28 in. long. Harkness used 2 1/2-in. rollers to mount the cart on the tracks. A 110-volt winch at the top of the ramp is operated by a remote control to raise and lower the cart. The cart has a stainless steel grate at the bottom, allowing debris to fall through.

"Peter really likes it," says Harkness. "It's easy to operate and saves many trips up and down the stairs. It takes about 20 seconds to move the cart up or down the ramp and it can handle about 100 lbs. of wood at a time. A tarp fastened to one side of the cart can be pulled over the load if it's raining or snowing."



Winch-powered cart is used to haul firewood up to deck on second floor apartment. Winch at top of ramp is remote controlled.

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