

Rubber-Tired Weed Puller Now Works Better Than Ever

"I've been designing equipment for nearly 40 years and I'm still amazed that every time I think improvements on a concept have been nearly exhausted, a new advancement presents itself. That's what happened to the Weedpuller late in the 2014 season," says Dan Borquin, inventor and manufacturer of the innovative rubber-tired Weedpuller machine.

"The season was all but over when we built a prototype to fill a farmer's special needs. And whamo! We were presented with a new exciting version of the Weedpuller. By reducing the size of the roller, and increasing the size of the opposing tire, we were able to change the pulling action of the Weedpuller substantially. Instead of the weed passing through the rollers mostly straight, the rollers pull on the weed with a zig-zag motion. It's a little hard to explain, but just visualize trying to pull a rope straight through the roller/tie combination. Then imagine trying to pull a rope through not only the tire faces, but also around the tire edges.

"Obviously, we have to get more field time to understand the full ramifications. But we are excited about this new design.

"We will keep the patented roller/wheel combination. And we will keep the posi-pull notched disc set.

"We will also be offering retro-fit updates of roller/wheel combinations on existing machines.

"There are a number of Weedpullers in the country that were temporarily retired, as the farmers went through the glyphosate-ready phase of farming.

"Now, with the glyphosate weed resistance calamity, they're pulling those old Weedpullers out, fixing them up, and going back to work.

"Our slogan is, 'Not every farmer needs a Weedpuller, but every farmer needs to know about it.'"

The retrofit option will only be offered during the pre-season.



Update kit uses notched metal discs that bolt on in pairs on back of rubber wheels. One disc is flat and the other one is curved and faces backward.

The curved disc is bigger than the rubber wheel, so the two discs overlap each other by half an inch. Machine's rubber wheels and rollers grab the weed, and then the weed gets caught in the notches between the 2 discs and pops out of the ground.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bourquin's Farm Mkt. & Trading Co., Inc., 1603 County RdAA, Colby, Kan. 67701 (ph 785 462-3300; dan@organicweedpuller.com; www.OrganicWeedPuller.com).

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New Way To Propagate Fruit Trees

An Alabama inventor has come up with a new twist on the old technique of air layering. Hong Park says his Air Propagator makes propagating fruit trees, shrubs and vines a faster and easier job, especially citrus and rose families.

Air layering is a method of reproducing plants by inducing roots to form on the plant stem without cutting off the stem from the parent plant. It's an excellent way to replicate an existing plant with less disturbance of the parent plant. Air layering can produce larger plants which readily mature much faster than growing them from seeds or cuttings.

The process works like this: remove a ring of bark from the stem and enclose the exposed stem with a moist potting soil or peat moss, then keep the stem moist until enough roots are formed.

Air layering with the Air Propagator clones trees, vines, and shrubs within 30 to 120 days while conventional methods can take as long as 2 to 3 years to bring them to maturity.

Some examples of suitable plants for air-layering include fruit trees (especially citrus), grape vines, blackberries, climbing roses, etc. Other suitable plants include azaleas, maple trees, and nut trees.

The Air Propagator is a plastic ball that

comes in two halves, which are filled with the rooting medium and placed around the branch and secured with self-locking feature. As an option you can buy a unit with one half made of clear plastic, which allows you to see the root growth process without disturbing the root system. The unit comes in a small, medium, and large size and can be purchased individually or in a kit or bulk. The kit contains the Air Propagator shells, rooting medium, rooting hormone, zip ties and instructions.

"As the owner of Brad's Backyard Nursery in Ridgeville Corners, Ohio, I've successfully used the system," says Brad Miller. "It's super simple and easy to use, and it takes a lot of labor and time out of the propagating process. I've successfully used the idea on peach and pear trees as well as Goji vines. This summer I'm using the Air Propagator on 20 different varieties of fruit and nut trees in my mini orchard."

How-to videos are available on the company's website. A set of 3 medium Air Propagators sells for \$5.95 (growing media and root stimulator extra).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hong Park, Parkway Greenhouse, 13605 Memorial Parkway S.W., Huntsville, Ala. 35803 (ph 256 650-4644; cell 256 694-2169; www.

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Air-layering involves removing a ring of bark from the plant stem, and then enclosing the exposed area with moist potting soil until roots form for transplant.



The Air Propagator is a plastic ball with 2 halves which are filled with the rooting medium, placed around the stem. One side can be transparent.



Several Air Propagators are shown here on a large Fig tree. The process brings trees, vines and shrubs to maturity much faster than conventional methods.