

Do-It-Yourself Hoop Benders

Through his business, Build My Own Greenhouse, Loy Robinson sells hoop benders that he designs and manufactures. Along with snap clamps and a variety of other products, customers can purchase parts or entire kits to build tunnels, greenhouses, portable chicken coops, and whatever creative structure they can think of.

The Mineola, Texas, business owner explains that it all started when he wanted to build a greenhouse for his herb business. He created a tool to bend electrical conduit to shape the frame. By customers' requests he started building and selling greenhouses and was featured on the Discovery Channel in the late 1990's. When shipping entire greenhouse kits became too expensive, Robinson started selling his hoop bending tool.

"The bender is so simple to use, and customers can buy the conduit and poly covering locally," he explains.

Because he didn't patent his design, other companies now make and sell the bender. But Robinson notes it's been good for his business because he can offer very competitive pricing.

The Build My Own Greenhouse website includes several videos showing how to bend and assemble various units. Since they are fixed radius bending tools, several models are available to create various widths (3, 4 and 6-ft. low tunnel) with different EMT conduit sizes (1/2, 3/4 and 1-in. dia.).

The concept of low tunnels became especially popular when garden writer Eliot Coleman learned about Robinson's hoop bender and praised it for its simplicity, efficiency and affordability.

"The hoops can go straight in the ground," Robinson says. Or, they can be made into 10-ft. long portable sections with easy-to-assemble connector kits he offers.

Hoop benders for low tunnels start at \$29.99 for 3, 4 and 6-ft. wide tunnels. Bending tools are also available to make high tunnels 8 to 24 ft. wide. Additional kits can be purchased that include snap clamp connectors and coverings.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Build My Own Greenhouse.com, 245 CR 2651, Mineola, Texas 75773 (ph 903 497-1158; www.buildmyowngreenhouse.com; info@hoopbenders.net).



Making hoops for grow tunnels is fast and easy with the hoop benders that Loy Robinson designs and manufactures.



Customers can purchase parts or entire kits to build grow tunnels, greenhouses, portable chicken coops, and so forth.



Jess Putnam uses this disc blade roller to roll the edges on disc blades. He says the process adds years to disc blade life.

Rollable Disc Blades Last Longer

Jess Putnam adds years to disc blade life by rolling edges for his customers. He says cold-rolled edges last longer and cut through trash better than non-rollable blades.

"Rolling pulls the metal to a fine cutting edge, restoring the dish and making the blade larger with no metal loss," explains Putnam, a third generation disc blade roller. "The rolled edge will typically last twice as long as a non-rollable blade that has been ground to an edge."

Putnam is based out of Nebraska, but has customers from Iowa to Texas and west to Colorado. He notes that rolling blades is growing less common and even farmers with blade rollers will often prefer to have it done professionally.

"I've had customers offer to sell me their rollers," says Putnam, who prefers his own. "A factory-built roller will take 2 days to do what I can do with mine in 3 hrs. Pretty much everything on mine is custom made, other than the head."

Unfortunately, not every disc blade is rollable, warns Putnam. He points out that most disc manufacturers make both rollable and non-rollable blades and seldom pushes rollable ones in areas without a lot of stones. In addition, most blades made from 2003 until more recently are too brittle to roll.

"Prior to 2003 they used high carbon steel in disc blades, but then they switched to using boron," says Putnam. "It was a cleaner process, but they had less flex and started cracking around the spools. In recent years, most manufacturers have added other material to make the steel more pliable and

rollable."

In 2004 Putnam became a dealer for disc blades, seeking out manufacturers who still made a high quality, rollable blade. Most of the 1,500 to 2,000 blades he keeps on hand are manufactured in Canada with a few special orders from Brazil. They range from 22 to 24-in. dia. with a variety of hole sizes.

"Compared to other brands, I think these blades are made of a superior steel under higher quality control standards and tend to wear longer," says Putnam, who also installs blades. "Having rolled various brands, these are among the best."

FARM SHOW readers interested in having their disc blades rolled (in the states he serves or nearby states) should contact Putnam. If interested in buying rollable, high quality disc blades, he asks that they check the backside of existing blades for part number and brand stamps.

"Usually that is all we need to identify replacement blades," says Putnam. "If someone outside my area is interested in starting to roll disc blades, I'd be willing to consult with them."

Putnam charges \$6 to \$8 per blade, depending on size and thickness of the blade. He estimates he can do a 30-ft. disc in around 3 hrs., depending on make or model and the need to remove wheels to access center disc blades.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Putnam Disc Blades, 1210 S. Rd., Minden, Neb. 68959 (ph 308 325-4608; toll free 866 297-5130; pdbinc@risebroadband.net; www.discroller.com).



Made of metal tubing, Phillip Ackley's line painter mounts on a 2-in. hitch receiver and is powered by a trailer plug-in.

Nifty Marker Paints Lines Fast

It may not be precise enough to make the final lines on highways, but Phillip Ackley's patent pending line painter has plenty of useful applications.

The road construction worker always felt unsafe painting lines by hand and came up with the idea to use a vehicle.

"Anything that has a 12-volt battery can run this," Ackley says.

Made of metal tubing, the marker slips into a 2-in. receiver and is powered by a trailer plug-in. The marker uses spray paint cans with marking paint that dries in about 30 seconds. It sprays solid lines or skip lines using a delayed wiper switch.

"One can of paint will mark 7,000 ft.," Ackley says. "I call it the 'Phlip' painter because it can paint on either side."

By sighting down a spot on his truck's front fender, he can mark a straight and accurate enough line to mark roads during construction. But the marker will also work on a 4-wheeler or tractor to mark baseball fields, parking spaces or other lines needed for events. It can also be used for marking pipelines or fence lines, Ackley adds.

Ackley would like to hear from manufacturers interested in buying rights to build and sell the marker. He may also make them himself after he retires in 2019. Contact him for more information.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Phillip Ackley, 120 Azelta Rd., Westfield, Penn. 16950 (ph 814 628-2643; ackleyphillip@yahoo.com).

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