

Built-In Pressure Washer Eliminates Noise, Hassle

If you're tired of dragging around a heavy, noisy pressure washer, you might like this "quick-connect" built-in cleaning system from Easiwash Cleaning Systems, Clear Lake, Iowa. It was on display at the recent Iowa Power Farming Show in Des Moines.

The industrial pressure washing system operates on 240-volt power using a quiet 5 hp. electric motor. The main unit is centrally located in an out-of-the-way spot, with remote "quick-connect" plates installed on walls anywhere you want them. High pressure hose and control cables are routed to the wall plate, with a push button control box installed above it.

To use, the operator wheels a hose cart with 150 ft. of hose to the remote location and connects the hose to the plate. The system can be used both outside and inside.

"It lets you clean with cold or warm

water and soap with the touch of a button," says Dave Solberg, director of operations. "There's no engine to start and no smelly exhaust. We've installed thousands of systems for businesses over the years, and are just now entering the farm market.

"You can control the pressure and spray pattern with a variety of tips and accessories. High pressure tips can be used to wash the deck, sidewalk, or driveway; medium pressure tips to wash vehicles; and low pressure to wash delicate tile/grout surfaces or textured surfaces."

He says most of their systems installed almost 20 years ago are still operating today, often for 2 to 3 hours per day. "Dairy farmers like our centralized system because the main unit is located out of the way, with no worries about stray voltage or loud noises scaring your cattle," says Solberg. "The



Built-in cleaning system's main unit is centrally located in an out-of-the-way spot, with remote "quick-connect" plates installed on walls anywhere you want.

motor runs at less than 85 db, which is quieter than most dishwashers."

He adds that the system can be customized according to your needs.

The Easiwash base unit with mounting brackets sells for \$3,495; the hose reel and cart with 150 ft. of hose and a gun wand sells

for \$775.

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Electric Grapple For Subcompact Tractors

"Our new electric-operated grapple is designed for subcompact tractors up to 32 hp. that don't have auxiliary hydraulics. It's an economical alternative to buying a standard grapple and then adding hydraulics to the tractor," says Mike Kloster, Worksaver, Inc., Litchfield, Ill.

The 49-in. wide grapple is operated by a 12-volt linear actuator with an 8-in. stroke, and comes with a wiring harness that connects to the tractor's 12-volt battery. The movement of the actuator is controlled with an easy-to-use rocker switch, which can be mounted to the tractor's loader joystick handle.

Two models are available: a universal version that fits most small subcompact tractors equipped with a universal skid loader quick-attach, and a "hook and pin" model for Deere subcompact tractors including the company's 200CX, 220R, D120, H120, and H130 models.

"Our electric grapple has slightly more than 1,000 lbs. of clamping force, whereas a comparable hydraulic grapple exerts 1,800 to 2,000 lbs. of force. However, it has more than enough clamping force to pick up tree trimmings, bushes, and small logs," says Kloster. "The electric grapple's opening and closing speed is very comparable to a hydraulic model. The linear actuator features a high performance motor and ball screw to move the upper clamp."

The electric grapple sells for less than \$2,000. "That's reasonable when you consider that it costs \$1,500 to \$1,800 just to add remote hydraulic outlets to a subcompact tractor," says Kloster.

The grapple comes with the linear actuator installed. "You just connect the weatherproof wiring harness to the battery and secure it along the loader arms, and mount the rocker switch to the joystick," says Kloster. "A



Electric grapple for subcompact tractors is operated by a 12-volt linear actuator.

parking stand that stores on the grapple makes hook-up an easy job."

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Bug Blower Saved His Trees

When mites threatened his walnut orchards, Daniel Unruh fought back with a modified leaf blower. He used it to blast predator mites into his trees to attack the problem mites.

"I didn't want to use chemical controls and kill off other beneficials," says Unruh. "I looked for a low-cost alternative," says Unruh.

Rincon-Vitova Insectaries told him that 15,000 californicus mites per acre would do the job. The only question was how to get them into place.

"I thought about using a pollen dispenser like they use in almond orchards, but I didn't like the many turns in the plumbing," says Unruh. "I had a backpack leaf blower and came up with an idea for setting it up."

He made a base frame of 1-in. sq. steel tubing and 2-in. flat bars with steel uprights to attach the backpack blower and the bug gun components.

Unruh used 4-in. diameter ABS pipe to make the barrel of his bug gun and attached it to an upright at a 45-degree angle to the base. A 4-in. ABS Y-fitting connects it to the blower air tube.

A second section of 4-in. pipe with a removable cap was mounted above the Y on the same upright. It serves as the holding chamber for the beneficials. It is connected to the Y's remaining outlet with a 2-in. pvc reducer, a length of 2-in. pvc pipe with a thin 2-in. wide slot cut in it, and a 45-degree elbow.

A card in the slot keeps the beneficials in



Modified backpack leaf blower blasts predator mites into walnut trees to attack other problem mites.

the chamber. When the backpack is running, opening the slot allows them to drop down into the elbow and into the air stream. The airflow past the opening creates a Venturi effect that speeds the mites up before they hit the fast moving air.

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Tire Grooving Catches On

The popularity of solid skid steer tires is driving increased interest in a tool that "regrooves" tires, according to Rich Ilg, Nextire, Inc. Ilg reports sales of the Tire Groover (first featured in Vol. 38, No. 6) have increased significantly in recent years.

"More and more people are investing a fair amount of money in solid tires," says Ilg. "Grooving or regrooving can give solid rubber tires about 20 percent more life."

The Tire Groover operates on 110 volts and heats a replaceable horseshoe-shaped razor blade. Depending on how it is pushed across the tire, it creates a groove from 1/16 in. to 1 in. wide and up to 1 in. deep.

Ilg explains that solid tire makers put a wear bar at 33 to 66 percent below the traction depth. This means a tire can run smooth for almost half its life. Grooving returns lost traction.

"Skid steer owners get frustrated with smooth tires and buy new ones. An alternative is to have them regrooved for \$400 to \$500 or they can buy our grooving gun for \$525," says Ilg.

A second alternative is to rent a gun with blades for around \$175. However, Ilg notes that renters often end up buying one the second time they need it.

"They end up using it for their tires and doing some for their buddies," he says. "We do sell some simply for custom work or for use on neighboring farms."

Ilg notes that the Tire Groover can also be



Nextire grooving gun heats a horseshoe-shaped razor blade that creates grooves in tires up to 1 in. wide and 1 in. deep.



used with pneumatic tires. He points out that tractor pullers have long used grooving guns to shape tires for added traction.

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