"Zipper" Puts Protective Tubes Around Young Trees

Glenn Rehmert wanted to use pieces of plastic corrugated drain tile to protect his young nursery trees from deer but handling the rigid tile was hard on his hands. "And sometimes putting the tubes on did more damage to the tree than what the deer would do," says his son Dan.

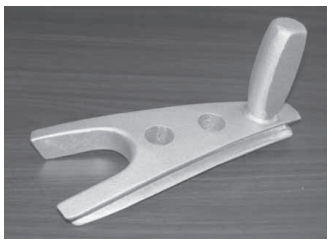
That's why Glenn created the Tree Guard Zipper. It's a 1 1/2-lb. triangular piece of aluminum alloy with a handle that gently slides the 3 or 4-in. dia. corrugated tubes onto tree trunks.

To use the tool, just insert its narrow end into the slit at the bottom of the tube. The wide end spreads the tube apart, making it easier to slide the tube around the tree trunk. It removes the tree guard just as easily.

Marcia Miquelon, University of Wisconsin-Madison, outreach specialist for the Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits project says her group is promoting the Tree Guard Zipper through a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety. "The whole idea is that if a tool saves time and improves profits, nursery managers will be more likely to invest in safer tools," she says.

MacKenzie Nursery Supply sells The Tree Zipper for $38.25 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, MacKenzie Nursery Supply Inc., 3891 Shepard Rd., P.O. Box 322, Perry, Ohio 44081 (ph 800 777-5030; www.mnsinc.cc).



Tree Guard "Zipper" is a 1 1/2-lb. triangular piece of aluminum alloy with a handle.

Wide end of tool spreads tube apart, making it easier to slide tube around tree trunk.

"High Reach" Loader Works Like A Telehandler

"Our new high reach front-end loader reaches higher and straighter than any other loader on the market. It gives you the versatility and dependability of a conventional front-end loader with the height of a compact telehandler," says Oscar Frey, HLA Loader Attachments, Listowel, Ontario.

A parallel linkage provides up to 15 ft. of stacking and dumping height, which the company says is equivalent to most compact telescoping loaders. Key to the design is a close-coupled hinge on front, which provides 1 1/2 ft. of extra lifting height compared to other loader brands. The hinge serves as a pivot, so that as the loader goes up the arms straighten out. On the way down, the arms bend to go down over the tractor's front wheels.

Lift capacity at full height is 3,800 lbs.

"It works great for stacking bales in sheds. You can often stack another row of bales higher. A steel guard on top of the loader allows you to lift two bales at a time, one on top of the other. The extra reach also works great for loading trucks, because you can reach all the way across to the other side of the truck.

"Last fall at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show near Woodstock, Ontario, we demonstrated the loader by using it to stack a row of big square bales. People were impressed that we were able to pile an extra bale on top of the row, compared to what conventional loaders can do."

The loader has a quick tach arrangement that makes it easy to switch back and forth between pallet forks or a bucket. An optional soft ride attachment for the loader is available. It uses accumulator springs with the tractor's hydraulic system to reduce loader bounce.

Three loader models are available depending on tractor horsepower. One model is for tractors with 50 to 80 hp; one for 80 to 120 hp; and one for 120 hp and up. The loader for tractors with 80 to 120 hp sells for about $10,000 without any options.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, HLA Loader Attachments, Oscar Frey, RR no. 3, Listowel, Ontario, Canada N4W 3G6 (ph 888 856-6613 or 519 291-4162; fax 519 291-6166; oscar@horstwelding.com; www.freyindustries.com).

Loader's parallel linkage provides up to 15 ft. of stacking and dumping height, which the company says is equivalent to most compact telescoping loaders.

Gary Parsch built this "Gator" from a 16 hp White lawn tractor. He calls it "The Beast".

Made-It-Myself Gator

"It was my first project after retiring from teaching high school shop for 30 years," says Gary Parsch, Hope, Mich., about the lawn tractor he turned into a "gator".

He bought a 16 hp White lawn tractor for $50 from a former student. It wouldn't start and the mower deck was shot. "It just needed some tender loving care," he says.

Parsch stripped off the mower deck and sheet metal parts and used the rear rack from a 4-wheeler to support the steering wheel. He moved the gas tank and battery and added linkage, allowing easy access to the hydrostatic transmission lever. Parsch also switched the foot brake into a hand lever. "It can be locked in case I want to get off the machine while it's running."

He made a 42 by 36-in. wooden cargo box that's 12 in. deep. The tailgate is hinged on the bottom like a pickup bed and the sides come off for use as a flatbed hauler. The box can also be manually tipped up to about 80 degrees.

Parsch says the hardest part was getting the steering right because with his weight on the front wheels, it needed to be geared down to work smoothly.

"I used the front and back sprocket and chain from a dirt bike to gear it down," he says. "I mounted each sprocket on two of the old mower blade bearing housings so it works smoothly.

"When I made it at first, my wife said it was Frankenstein because I was creating it from spare parts. Then, it just ended up being called 'The Beast.'

"My intention was for her to drive it because it had an electric start - but she really didn't want anything to do with it," he says, laughing.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gary Parsch, 5276 N. Dublin Rd., Hope, Mich. 48628 (ph 989 689-5719).

Low Cost Maple Sap Collection

Collecting maple sap to make syrup can require a sizeable investment up front for equipment. Jesse Dean DiChiaranti lowered the cost considerably by coming up with his own low-cost sap-collecting jugs.

"There's nothing like making your own maple syrup," explains DiChiaranti. "It's fun, and if you choose to, you can make a profit with very little start-up investment."

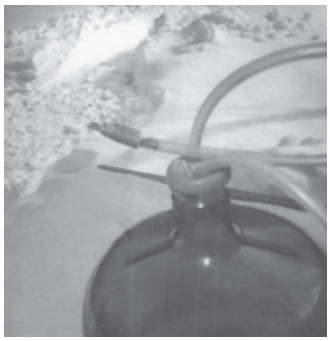
Instead of miles of plastic tubing draining sap back to collection tanks or metal pails hanging from individual taps, DiChiaranti recycles 5-gal. water cooler jugs. He inserts two short sections of plastic tubing into covers on the jugs. The other ends of the tubes are attached to homemade taps, which he inserts into holes drilled in the trees.

"I use 2-in. lengths of 3/4-in. dowel stick and copper tubing to make my taps," he explains. "I drill a hole in the dowel length to match the size of the copper tubing I am going to use, which in turn has to fit the plastic tubing."

DiChiaranti shapes one end of the dowel stick like a bullet tip, leaving the other end cut flat. He then inserts a 3-in. length of copper tubing into the dowel stick with a short tip extending out of the bullet end. This tip is cut at an angle to help insert it into the hole in the tree.

"The plastic tube fits snugly onto the copper tubing, flush against the dowel stick to prevent any leakage," says DiChiaranti. "Likewise, the copper tube has to fit tight in the dowel with no play."

When the jugs are ready, DiChiaranti sets them up near maple trees. He drills a hole at an upward angle into the south side of the tree and inserts the tap. University of Vermont Extension advises drilling a single tap hole 1 1/2 to 2 in. deep in trees 10 to 15 in. in diameter and two holes in trees more than 15 in. in diameter.



DiChiaranti modifies 5-gal. water cooler jugs to make his own low-cost sap-collecting jugs.

"It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make a single gallon of syrup," says DiChiaranti. "One tree can yield from one to three gal. per day. "

He advises using a bungee cord to secure the empty jug to the tree in windy areas. Otherwise the closed container system pretty well takes care of itself. One of the keys to quality syrup production is clean equipment, stresses DiChiaranti.

"Use water with a little bleach to clean equipment before and after each use," he says. "Detergent can leave a film or residue which can contaminate your syrup."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jesse Dean DiChiaranti, P.O. Box 51, Sterling, Penn. 18463 (ph 570 676-4008).