



Thinning out blossoms on fruit trees can result in larger fruit with better quality. Mechanical “blossom thinner” makes the job possible on a large scale.

## Mechanical Blossom Thinner Boosts Fruit Tree Yields

Fruit growers have known for years that removing some of the blossoms from their trees can result in larger fruit with optimum quality. But doing the job by hand is nearly impossible. This new “mechanical blossom thinner” does the job automatically.

The blossom thinner 3-pt. mounts on front of a tractor and operates off tractor hydraulics. It consists of a 10-ft. high metal arm fitted with numerous 2-ft. long, injection-molded plastic strings evenly spaced along a vertical spindle. The operator simply drives down one side of the row of fruit trees, allowing the rotating plastic strings to knock off some of the blossoms. A handheld control unit is used to monitor the spindle rpm’s.

“It works on almost any kind of fruit tree including peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, cherries and apples,” says North American distributor Matt Peters of Bartlett, Inc., Beamsville, Ont.

“The science of removing flowers isn’t new. This machine just makes it a lot more efficient. It’s especially useful for early varieties that don’t get big fruit. A lot of our sales go to peach growers where no chemical blossom thinner is available.

“The idea was developed by a German company. We’re a partner with them and make the equipment using their design and components. We make two models. The PT model is a vertical machine, while the Darwin



Machine uses 2-ft. long plastic strings evenly spaced along a rotating vertical spindle. As operator drives alongside trees, rotating strings knock off blossoms.

model can be rotated to either a vertical or horizontal position, allowing you to thin blossoms off the top of the tree as well. We’re working on a machine equipped with sensors to monitor the rate of blossom thinning, and one that will allow us to offer a 3-pt. unit for the back of the tractor.”

The PT model sells for about \$11,000 and the Darwin model for about \$16,000.

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## “Stand Up” Hoods Protect Face From Small Insects

The same quality and design in headgear for beekeepers is now available to protect gardeners and outdoor folks from midges and no-see-ums. The Handy-Hood from B.J. Sherriff of Cornwall, England, is available through Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies.

“I’ve had calls over the years from people who work outside or drive tractor and want face protection,” says Nancy Stewart, owner of the California company.

She notes that the design is similar to the beekeeping hood with stiff boning in the cotton to keep the mask away from the face. The mesh on the Handy Hood has a hexagon shape and has soft screening for good visibility.

The white hoods come in one size and sell for \$56.95. The cotton polyester fabric is sturdy, but lightweight enough so it’s not too hot to wear.

B.J. Sherriff is the original designer of the beekeepers hood, Stewart notes, and their hand cut products have a reputation for being top quality.

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Flexible ribs on Handy-Hood holds bug screen away from face..

Street, Sacramento, Calif. 95818 (ph 916 451-2337; www.sacramentobeekeeping.com).



Loader-mounted snow rake extends 20 ft. out from bucket to clear a 4-ft. wide area.

## Giant Tractor-Mounted Snow Rake

“It’ll clean off a roof in short order and requires no lifting, chopping or pulling,” says Maclyn Hemp, Florence, S. Dak., about his loader-mounted roof cleaner that works like a giant hand rake to pull excess snow down off roofs before it can cause damage.

Made entirely of welded-together lightweight tubing and sheet metal, the rake extends 20 ft. out from the bucket and clears a 4-ft. wide area. It’s equipped with a 3-ft. wide frame that attaches to the loader bucket using a pair of chains and binder. A 1-ft. chain is welded to the front of the snow rake’s frame and attaches to another chain that Hemp wraps around the bucket. A chain binder keeps the two chains tight.

A 1 1/2-in. dia. pipe is welded to the bottom of the rake to keep it from catching on tiles and screws and pulling off shingles.

“I came up with the idea because I’m 78 years old and I got tired of pulling snow off with an aluminum rake. A blacksmith friend of mine built it at a cost of \$650,” says Hemp. “I use it on three different tractors which are all equipped with Duall loaders with 7-ft. wide buckets. I also use it on my Deere skid loader, but it’s an older model and doesn’t raise as high as I’d like. I think it would work perfect on high lift telehandler loaders that go up to 40 ft. high. If I made another one I’d make it lighter, with less bracing.”

Hemp says he made the rake only 4 ft. wide “because I wanted to use it on our house which has a lot of narrow roof areas. If I want



Rake’s 3-ft. wide frame attaches to loader bucket using a pair of chains and binder.



A friend built Hemp’s snow rake for \$650.

I can lay two 20-ft. planks down across the frame and use the rake as a scaffold,” he adds.

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## Russian Filter Cleans Up Milk

A new, in-line filtration system from Russia cleans up milk before it hits the bulk tank. The UVMILK filter traps 98 percent of foreign particles and 30 to 50 percent of bacteria and somatic cells. However, it doesn’t stop milk fat or protein.

The UVMILK filter was introduced to the North American market at the recent World Dairy Expo. Company representatives indicated they are looking for North American dealers.

A spokesperson said the UVMILK filtration system can improve milk grade, prevent growth of acidity and extend raw milk life. They added that a filter sized to handle 10,000 lbs. of milk a day costs a little more than \$4 a day, yet could result in substantial quality premiums.

The filters are available in a variety of sizes to accommodate a wide range of herd sizes and production levels. They are made from food-grade, certified polypropylene and meet international standards. The filters are designed for a maximum flow rate of 80 gpm at 367 psi.

Once the filter housing is installed, daily maintenance consists of changing the filter. The company warns that overnight bacteria growth can contaminate fresh milk.



In-line filtration system traps 98 percent of foreign particles and up to 50 percent of bacteria and somatic cells.

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