

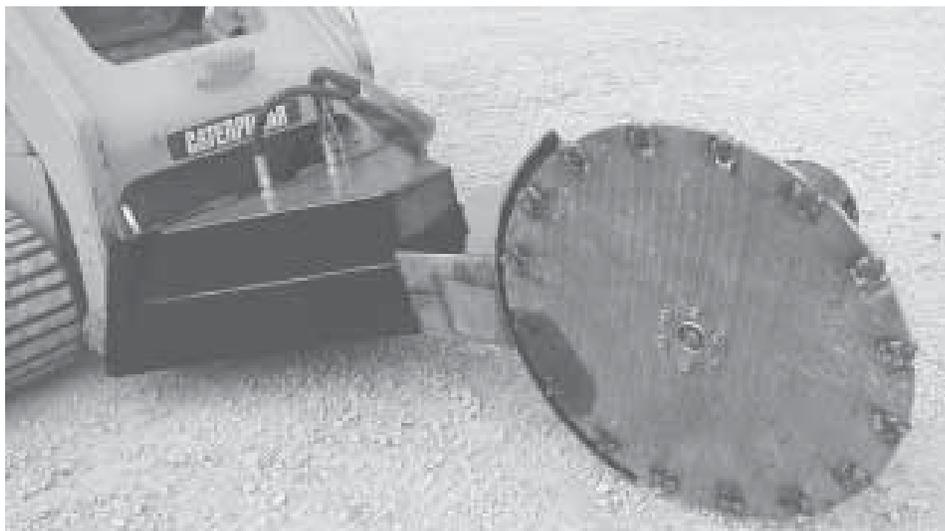
## Rotary Tree And Brush Saw

About nine years ago, Leroy Hicks, owner of Hicks Fabrication, Berryton, Kansas, designed a hydraulically powered rotary tree saw that fits skid steer loaders or on three-point hitches.

He says most other brush and tree cutters work by pushing a triangular serrated cutting blade through the trunk. The blade on Hicks' rotary saw is made from 1/2 in. steel plate, cut into a 28 in. diameter circle. Rather than having teeth cut into the blade, Hicks cut 12 equally spaced notches around the outer edge of the steel plate where he mounted replaceable carbide steel cutting teeth. Because of the way the saw is made, individual teeth can be replaced as needed.

He says the teeth have a long lifetime. "Custom operators who use their saws heavily are replacing them every three or four months, but most people replace them less than once a year," he says.

A hydraulic motor, requiring a minimum flow rate of 15 gal. per minute, turns the blade. The higher the capacity of the hydraulic system, the faster the saw works, up to a



Hydraulically-powered rotary tree saw fits skid loaders or can be 3-pt. mounted.

maximum of 40 gal. per minute at 2,500 psi.

Hicks built the cutter to fit the mounting brackets on most skid steer loaders. Or, with a hydroslide adapter, it can mount on a tractor's 3-pt. hitch.

"It cuts faster than most of the push-type cutters I've seen," he says. "It will cut through a 12-in. tree in one pass. I've cut trees with trunk diameters up to 3 ft. And

it will cut through soil and even rocks in order to cut trees off below the soil surface. With this cutter blade, once you've cut off the tree, you can angle the blade and grind the stump out with it."

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Reader Inquiry No. 33

## Vending Machine Sells Veggies Direct

Using vending machines to sell their potato crop has paid off for growers Pete and Euan Grewar of Perthshire, Scotland.

The potato-growing cousins have installed 4 vending machines in several Scottish locations and are considering more. "The core of our business is certified seed and potatoes for supermarkets, and that will continue," says Euan. "But the vending machines are a great add-on, a logical diversification."

In addition to the Grewars' potatoes, the machines are stocked with fresh eggs, brussels sprouts, strawberries, carrots and onions. Interestingly, the Grewars have discovered that customers prefer unwashed produce. "One of the most common comments we got was that customers like dirty carrots. They don't want us to clean them," says Euan.

The farm-food vending machines are manufactured by Roesler in northern Germany and are being used throughout Europe for eggs, vegetables and potatoes. "Vending machines are the ideal solution to replace honesty boxes for farm-gate sales, where would-be customers walk off with eggs or produce without paying," says John Gordon, an egg producer in Scotland.

Roesler vending machines cost from \$7,500 to \$16,000, depending on whether a unit is refrigerated. The Roesler vending



Potato growers Pete and Euan Grewar have installed vending machines that sell potatoes as well as fresh eggs, Brussels sprouts, strawberries, carrots and onions.

website states that the machines are made of rust-free high-grade steel and are weatherproof. Machines can be equipped with a cash-card scanner.

Pete Grewar says the brothers are contemplating adding more vending machines. "Obviously it doesn't make sense to have one machine in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, but 6 to 10 in each city might be efficient." He says they're also considering

franchises for the vending business.

The business uses Facebook and Twitter for promotion and the cousins say they value interaction with customers and customer feedback.

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