

Ground-Drive Seeder Simple And Easy To Use

Ground-driven Greenscape seeders stand out for their simplicity in an industry that routinely adds technology, power and size to specialized equipment. In fact, the simplicity of design is a key and highly appreciated feature, suggests Andy Pearson, Belco Resources Equipment (BR-Equipment).

"We have sold Greenscape seeders all over the U.S. and Canada," says Pearson. "Users tell us they like the rugged build, the ability to handle many different applications, and especially the simplicity."

He adds that the heavy tubular frame construction and lack of pto driveshafts or gearboxes to maintain has made the seeder a favorite of dealers who rent out equipment.

"Our customers like that the Greenscape seeder is built right here in North Carolina," says Pearson.

The seeders are available in 60 and 84-in. widths. The 60-in. model requires only 35 hp., while the 84-in. model requires 50 hp.

The Greenscape prepares the soil, and drops and lightly covers the seed before firmly pressing the seedbed. The ground-driven seeder, with its broadcast seed delivery, eliminates rows produced by drills.

With its broad array of options, the Greenscape can be set up to seed everything from lawns and food plots to pastures and fields. Options include large grass seed boxes, small seed and native seed boxes, a legume seed box, and a fertilizer box. Seeders can be equipped with 1, 2 or 3 boxes to handle any combination of seed sizes or types.

A variety of ground contact options ensure good seed-to-soil contact. They can be used with or without the seed or fertilizer boxes being engaged, if additional ground preparation is needed.

Applications include primary seeding, overseeding, applying fertilizer or lime, aerating and dethatching.

The combination of 3-pt. hitch and ground



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driver simplifies seed delivery shutdown. Simply lift the machine and the seed stops flowing.

While the numerous attachments make every seeder a near-custom order, Pearson says the 2 models with a large grass seed box and the legume seed box are the most popular designs. This version of the 60-in. model is

priced at \$9,435. The 2 versions of the 84-in. Greenscape are priced at \$13,525.

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The ground-mounted systems for Mull's home and shop are capable of producing 33,000 kW a day, and can run a 200-amp MIG welder.

Home-Built Solar Units Make Them Self-Sufficient

When an ice storm encased Louisiana and took down power lines for a week last winter, the lights stayed on in the solar-powered Mull family home. It was a satisfying part of Gary Mull's journey to self-sufficiency which started about 8 years ago when he purchased an inexpensive solar panel kit from Harbor Freight. Once the auto mechanic understood the way it worked,

he started buying parts to custom build solar generators.

There are no power lines on his remote Colfax, La., property. Instead, he spent \$10,000 for parts for a solar system when he built his home 5 years ago. The ground-mounted systems for his home and shop are capable of producing 33,000 kW a day.

"I have an oversized system so I can run

AC or my 200 amp MIG welder," Mull says.

With 240 volts available, the setup for the house powers the higher amps easily and has eight L16 batteries for storage. The shop has a couple of batteries for storage and 1,000 kW capacity for lights and tools. Mull initially had the solar generator on a truck that he used to build his home.

He buys used and inexpensive solar panels from sources he finds on Facebook Marketplace, and buys other components from solar companies to build the combiner box (breakers), inverter and charge controller that maintains and keeps the batteries at specific voltages—60 volts/day and 40 volts/night. Mull notes that he ground mounts the solar panels so he won't have to climb on the roof when he gets older. That also made it easier for him to throw protective tarps over the panels before the freezing rain hit last winter.

The panels were also resilient through three hurricanes. Hurricane Laura's 108 mph winds just slightly damaged one panel that still works, and loosened a few others. The Mulls' power stayed on, while neighbors were without electricity for 3 weeks.

Since the storms, Mull has gotten requests from people to custom-build solar power systems for them. He also mounts solar panels on golf carts and on trailers. He uses his golf cart to charge his electric chainsaw when he gathers firewood, and he has two panels on his pickup.



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"My big incentive was to have no bills and to live off the grid. We have a well, everything runs on solar. I'm 48 years old and not in debt," Mull says.

The Mulls have a rainwater catch system and a wood cookstove they can use for cooking, and they raise a variety of livestock including goats, which they plan to milk and make cheese.

Mull shares videos of the family's setup on YouTube: Off Grid Gary.

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Spray-On Edible Coating Might Replace Plastic Wrap



Spray-on edible coating is made of natural biodegradable materials. Photo shows starter pots made with the new material.

The problem of dealing with plastic wrap used on baled hay and silage might be a thing of the past, if a promising new spray-on edible coating proves reliable.

The focus of a field trial at the University of Guelph with 13 producers and a team of researchers is to test a spray made of natural biodegradable materials to provide a protective seal. The natural ingredient is zein, a powder protein byproduct of corn that is not commonly used in food, but is edible, water-insoluble and dries hard when combined with a follow-up spray with a salt or acetic acid. Zein has been used in many applications, such as coating for candy and fruit, encapsulating drugs and coating paper cups.

"When you spray it, it clings like a spray-on Band-Aid," says Environment Engineer Erica Pensini, who has been experimenting with adding zein to water, spraying it on hay or soil, then spraying it again with a solution containing fertilizer salts to solidify

it. Working with Alexandro Marangoni, a professor in the Food Science Department and graduate students, the goal is to find a formula that provides good protection and breaks down safely to work into the soil.

Last summer, she sprayed it on soil to create an invisible mulch, with holes poked in it to place seeds or plants. Because the zein spray seal held moisture, the plants did better during drought times compared to plots that weren't mulched. This summer, Pensini is working with a garlic grower using the same principle.

But the biggest interest comes from dairy and beef producers interested in protecting silage and bales, so she will also be experimenting with them. Since the products are edible, cattle could eat the coating along with the feed. The problem is that rodents could also eat the coating, resulting in feed losses.

To avoid that, researchers will be testing various formulas adding things like linseed

oil hardened with oxidizers.

The trial's goals are to come up with a spray that stands up in all field conditions in low and high temperatures, and holds up when silage ferments and that can degrade safely back into the soil. Creating a flexible, durable bale wrap will likely be the biggest challenge, Pensini says.

With zein easy to access and only simple mixing involved, a successful product would be easy to make. It likely won't be cheaper than plastic. But for many farmers, avoiding the hassle of waste plastic is worth the cost of an environmentally-friendly product.

There are many other potential applications. For example, Pensini melted zein, added linseed oil, and shaped plants for pots that are durable and attractive to consumers who are environmentally conscious.

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