David Johnson made a 3-pt. dibbler wheel using a 5-in. section of 12-in. dia. pipe fitted with "teeth" that leave 3-in. deep depressions every 6 in. in the row.

Dibbler Wheel Speeds Garden Planting

Making holes to set plants and seeds with David Johnson's dibbler wheel is as easy as driving down the row. His 3-pt. dibbler leaves 3-in. depressions that are 6 in. apart for seedlings, onion sets and more.

"When arthritis in my knees made getting up and down more difficult, I started to look for other ways to keep gardening," says Johnson.

To make the dibbler, he cut off a 5-in. section of 12-in. dia. steel pipe to serve as the rim of the wheel.

"I cut a circle out of 3/16-in. flat scrap and chucked it into a lathe to true-round it to fit inside the pipe," says Johnson.

The biggest challenge was the "teeth" for the dibbler wheel. "I had to do some calculating to get them mounted evenly on 30 degree angles," he says.

He found a no-till planter framework at a farm auction. He realized it would make a good mount for the dibbler wheel and was just the right width for the electric 3-pt. lift arms on his 1974 Sears garden tractor.

The top of the framework provided a tray for a cement block. Johnson finds the weight just right for making 3-in. depressions.

"I've used it for all types of plants," he says.

He works up the ground and uses discs to build up a bed about 12 in. high. This is raked down to about 6 in. high and 16 to 18 in. wide.

Seeds or bulbs are easily dropped into depressions made by the dibbler wheel.

"I run the dibbler down the row, straddling it with my garden tractor," says Johnson.

He uses pvc drop tubes to place plants or bulbs into the holes. He has a 2-in. diameter tube for plant plugs and a slightly smaller one for onion bulbs. He added a handle to the length of tubing and a slightly larger section of pvc pipe to its top connected by an adapter.

"I stick the end in the hole, drop in the plant or bulb and move to the next hole," says Johnson. The plant stands up, and I come back with a hoe to pull dirt around it. It sure beats bending over and pushing them into the ground."

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Jeff Buckner uses a shop vac to clear out post holes and trenches as he digs.

He Uses A Shop Vac To Dig Holes

Keeping holes for posts free of dirt and debris can be a challenge. Jeff Buckner, Cannon City, Colo., found a way to make the job faster and easier.

"I live in an area where the ground can be hard or rocky, making it difficult to dig a hole. Using a digging bar and post hole digger it can take a long time to dig and clean out the hole. I usually end up having to reach down into the hole and clean it out by hand."

Buckner started using a large shop vac to clear out the hole as he digs. "I tried duct taping the hose to the digging bar, but it was awkward and the hose got in the way. I put the hose in the hole and keep the digging bar moving. It saves a lot of time. If I need to smooth the edges to make the hole round I put a metal pipe on the end of the shop vac hose and scrape the sides to clear a hole that fits a 2 3/8-in. corner fence post perfectly."

He notes the need to be careful not to crush the end of the vac hose when working. "You can even use a demolition hammer or jack hammer if needed for rocks etc."

Buckner recently dug a 250-ft. trench for a water line to a horse shed. He duct taped a 2-in. by 10-ft. pvc pipe to the shop vac hose to clean out the trench. "As I moved along I kicked the line into the trench and when the shop vac was full I dumped it back into the trench, which was easier than digging and backfilling with a shovel. He checks the filter when dumping the vac.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jeffrey Buckner, 45780 W. US Hwy 50, Cannon City, Colo. 81212; (jbuckner@yahoo.com).

The Tree Hog provides excellent control when cutting down trees and stumps.

"Hogs" Make Quick Work Of Trees, Stumps

Tree Hogs from the Stumpster Co. have been around since the 1980's but owner Dan Sikes says their unique design still makes them the most productive and efficient machines on the market.

What sets the Tree Hog apart from other machines is that you set it next to a tree or stump and the cutting wheel feeds hydraulically into the tree. "Other machines just have a wheel on back and you drive into the tree. The Tree Hog gives you a lot more control. You can manipulate the force applied as needed," says Sikes.

The Houston, Texas-based company keeps the cost down by selling direct to customers. There are two 3-pt. mounted pto-driven Tree Hog cutters with hydraulically positioned 40 or 48-in. dia. cutting wheels made from 3/4-in. A-36 steel plates. Both models feature extra heavy-duty gearboxes, welded steel skirts to prevent flying debris, fully enclosed friction disk clutches, and a double-acting hydraulic cylinder on 7-ft. push bars to safely direct taller trees away from the operator and tractor.

The Model 40 has a 40-in. dia. cutting wheel extending 16-in. The Model 48 is equipped with a 48-in. dia. wheel reaching 20 in. from the rear of the machine. Sikes recommends a minimum of 40 hp. to operate the Model 40 and 85 hp. for the Model 48.

Cutting wheels consist of 10 carbide bits that Sikes says on average will cut approximately 200 10-in. trees or stumps before needing sharpening. Soil type is a large factor, but bits can be sharpened 2 to 4 times before needing replacement. Replacement costs are $15 each or $150 for all 10 bits.

Cutting wheel is moved into trees with hydraulics and is fitted with carbide cutting teeth.

"You can cut trees or stumps pretty much as big as you want with either machine," says Sikes. "With the bigger trees, you just make multiple cuts from different sides at various levels. The blades cut flush with the ground."

Most machines are purchased by farmers reclaiming land and pecan growers thinning tree crops in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas.

The Tree Hogs are built in Houston and shipped directly to customers ready to go.

The Model 40 sells for $7995 and the Model 48 is $9995.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dan Sikes, The Stumpster Co., 7200 Long Dr., Houston, Texas 77087. (ph 800 527- 2881; dan54s@hotmail.com; www.stumpster.com).

Spiral Connector Creates Simple Gates, Pens

This wire panel connector hinge has been around nearly 30 years but many small farmers have never seen how useful it can be when getting started with livestock, says Joe Putnam at Premier 1 Supplies.

The 9-gauge, stainless steel spiral is designed to easily twist through the ends of a pair of wire panels with 3 or 4-in. openings.

"It allows you to make gates, pens, and even big bale feeders. Once in place the panels won't come undone," he says of the connectors. "One thing people really like is how with the connectors in place the panels fold flat for easy transport."

The connectors practically drop in place when the panels are lined up, and they can be quickly twisted out.

They sell for $3.50 for the 36-in. long unit, $4 for the 40-in., and $4.50 for the 48-in.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Premier 1 Supplies, 2031 300th St., Washington, Iowa 52353 (ph 800 282-6631; www.premier1supplies.com).

Steel spirals connect panels to make strong hinges for pens, gates, or feeders.