



Photo courtesy of Western Development Museum

Rod Weeder sheared weed roots below the soil surface while leaving crop residue in place, helping retain moisture and reduce soil disturbance.

Morris Rod Weeder Invention Celebrated In Canada

For nearly 50 years, the Morris Rod Weeder helped shape farming practices across Western Canada, earning a reputation as one of the most influential agricultural innovations developed on the Prairies. Invented in 1929 by George Morris of Bangor, Sask., the machine was specifically designed to tackle a challenge familiar to prairie farmers: controlling weeds in rocky soils without damaging valuable cropland.

In 2025, the invention of the Morris Rod Weeder was officially designated a national historic event, acknowledging its impact on Canadian agriculture and the ingenuity behind its creation. The nomination was submitted by Dr. Merle Massie, a professional historian specializing in Western Canadian history.

"Looking at what we should celebrate and uplift in Western Canada, I found some amazing agricultural inventions," Massie says. "There were constant innovations to match our new Canadian landscape as the techniques we brought from Europe didn't always work here."

The designation process involved the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which evaluates nominations for nationally significant people, places and events. After Massie presented the case for the Morris Rod Weeder, Parks Canada historians conducted additional research and ultimately supported the nomination before returning it to the board for final consideration.

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A key factor in the Rod Weeder's significance was its innovative design. The machine sheared weed roots beneath the soil surface while leaving crop residue in place, helping retain moisture and reduce soil disturbance. These advantages made it especially effective for dryland farming across the drought-prone Prairies. Additionally, Morris introduced an automatic, spring-loaded trip mechanism that allowed the machine to pass over buried stones and quickly resume operation without damage.

"Morris's tripping mechanism kept it from breaking apart when it contacted a stone. It would lift and go up and over the stone before quickly reengaging," Massie explains.

She describes the Western Canadian Morris Rod Weeder as unique and special because it solved so many regional problems, including contacting the weeds with as little soil disturbance as possible.

"Farmers loved it once they saw it in action. Very few farms in Western Canada didn't have one at some point, as it was ideally suited for efficient dryland farming in Canada's 20th-century prairie drought conditions."

To commemorate the achievement and designation, a bronze plaque marking the invention's historic significance will be installed at a publicly accessible location. Potential sites include Bangor, where Morris developed the machine; the Western Development Museum in Yorkton; or a site in Regina.

"Morris is a name synonymous with farming in Western Canada, and the company is still in existence, going on nearly 100 years, currently as part of Superior Farm Systems," Massie says. "The name and reverence for George Morris lives on. There are rod weeders, and then there's the Morris Rod Weeder."

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Food Influencer Finds Audience With Historical Recipes

Donnie Dodson of "Eats History" made a name for himself online by cooking and rating each U.S. president's favorite meal.

"I've always been a major history buff despite going to school for finance," he says. "This passion translated into a historical cooking hobby after experimenting in the kitchen after college."

Dodson's first video, a recreation of George Washington's favorite hoe cakes (dry cornmeal pancakes slathered with honey and butter), was viewed 1.6 million times in 24 hr. He's since made more than 300 additional videos.

"Each video takes 4 to 5 hr," says Dodson. "That's usually 2 hr of diving into old cookbooks, websites or PDF texts on the targeted recipe, adapting to a modern kitchen, then filming the cooking video."

On "Eats History," Dodson explores a range of culinary tastes, from what U.S. soldiers ate during WWII to Abraham Lincoln's last meal to Charles Darwin's favorite recipes. Inspiration comes less from the specific recipes than from the stories behind the meals.

"One crowd favorite was my series on Ancient Roman Recipes, which is what my upcoming cookbook is about, and one of my personal favorites was the Presidents series."

Dodson's video content aims to shed light on forgotten histories in a way that's engaging for casual viewers to connect with. That means paying careful attention to logistics for the modern cook.

"It's a challenge to modify these ancient and pre-modern recipes," says Dodson. "I try to make it so that the home cook can replicate them with available ingredients while maintaining the original essence of the dish."



"I try to make it so that the home cook can replicate historical recipes with available ingredients while maintaining the original essence of the dish," says Dodson.

Dodson finished his presidential series in 2024 and is now cooking historical recipes spanning from Ancient Egypt to Victorian England.

"I'll be traveling full time in August, launching the Eats History Project, where I'll be documenting food history from all over the world," says Dodson. "I'll be providing videos and recipes for my followers to replicate at home."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Donnie Dodson (Instagram: @eatshistory).

'Nicola' May Be The Perfect Potato

The Nicola potato is a German cultivar celebrated for its waxy, firm texture and buttery flavor. It's the kind of tuber that holds up well to boiling, roasting and use in potato salads, making it a high-value choice for market sellers and home growers.

Better yet, the Nicola's waxy, yellow flesh has another secret — it has a lower glycemic index than most potatoes. This means eating the Nicola leads to a smaller spike in blood sugar, making it ideal for diabetics and pre-diabetics while keeping everyone else feeling fuller longer.

Considered a common variety, the Nicola is a reliable grower that produces high yields. It's available online and at garden centers, though growers recommend buying seed potatoes from certified suppliers to reduce the risk of disease.

For best results, grow Nicola potatoes in moist, well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. Start chitting or sprouting Nicola potatoes 4 to 5 weeks before planting. Keep the potatoes in cool, light conditions to encourage short, green sprouts. Be conservative with your planting date, as even a light frost can damage potato foliage. A severe frost might kill them entirely.

Before planting, thoroughly till the soil and add plenty of compost or rotted manure. The Nicola is typically ready for harvest in



Photo courtesy of Julia Balbilla, Editor Cookipedia.co.uk

Nicola potatoes, which have a lower glycemic index, are prized for their buttery flavor, smooth yellow skin, and firm, waxy texture.

90 to 110 days. It handles drought well and produces moderate-to-high tuber yields. It's suitable for growing zones 3 through 9. As an indeterminate variety, Nicola potatoes benefit from hilling as they grow.

Water the plants thoroughly when they're establishing and 2 weeks before harvest. It's resistant to diseases such as late blight, rhizoctonia, blackleg, scab and potato cyst nematode. Thanks to its low starch content, the potato stores well for long-term use. If harvest must be delayed, the potato can be left in the ground for a month or longer.

Seeds are available online from www.gurneys.com and other seed retailers.