

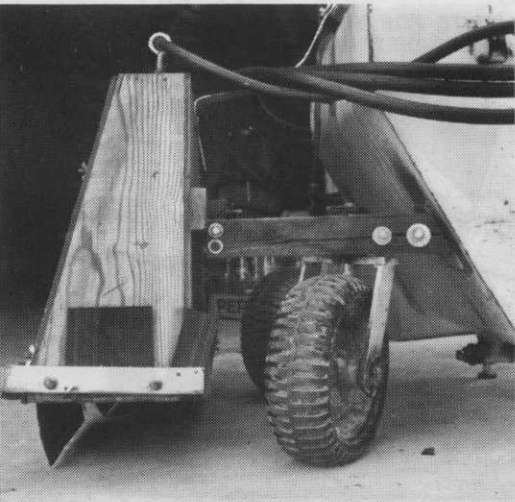
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It Saves \$2,000 a Year, He Says

Bill Colburn's Weed Machine



By BILL GENTRY
Orlando, Fla.



BILL COLBURN, president Cypress Creek Nursery, Inc., keeps his nursery aisles and roadways free of weeds for less than \$50 an acre and saves an estimated \$2,000 a year on labor costs by using a machine he designed.

One application of a mixture of simazine and paraquat will last three to four months and the operator can treat aisles in one acre in four hours.

The rig is a Gravely tractor with 20-gallon tank and a wooden hood built over a 30-inch boom with two nozzles which is attached to the front of the tank. Controls are on the handle of the tractor.

The hood is triangular-shaped and has metal bumpers on the bottom that curve inward and that help the rig to slide by nursery cans. The bumper is kept next to the cans as the machine goes down the aisles.

The two nozzles under the hood are adjustable up or down to increase or decrease the width of the spray. If just one nozzle is used it will cover a 15-inch-plus swath.

This saves spray if the operator wants to cover an area right next to cans without spraying the middle.

There are two control valves. One goes to the boom and the other goes to a handgun with a 30-foot hose with a trigger nozzle. This is handy to spray around trees in the nursery and places where the tractor

The top picture shows how Colburn's homemade weed rig is attached to a 20-gallon tank. In the rear view, note the Y-shaped filter attachment and the U-shaped controls that are placed on the handle from a Gravely tractor. The inside view shows the twin nozzles. Note the trigger nozzle lying in front. It's used with a 30-ft. extension. The hood is held in place with five wing nuts and is easily removed.

can't go, such as in holes left by large palms that were sold.

The triangular-shaped hood was designed to fit the nozzles and to go under overhanging plant branches. It's easy to reach the nozzles by removing several wing nuts that hold the cover in place. Nozzles are Tee Jet 8003.

"We put on two more filters in addition to the one on the spray tank to filter materials before they reach the nozzles. We put a "Y" filter past the pump and another filter in each nozzle," Colburn said.

He explained this was important because the low volume spraying made it difficult to tell if the nozzles were stopped up or not.

"It also saves a lot of nozzle cleaning," he added. "The operator used to carry a wrench because he had to clean nozzles so often."

Colburn says the spray will not drift, and he took rubber skirts off the hood when he found they were unnecessary. "We spray in 10-15 mph winds and I've never seen a bit of damage."

The bottom of the hood is three inches off the ground. Although it's adjustable, Colburn keeps it at three inches as this is the best height in his nursery.

Generally it takes an hour to put out the 20-gallon tank over a quarter acre of aisles. The machine is run in low gear unless a heavy patch of weeds is encountered then it's run in low volume. This doubles the volume of weed killer.

"If we had weeds that were easy to kill, we'd run it in high," Colburn said. Spurge is one of the main weeds in the nursery, located on a former citrus grove.

A control valve on the handle allows the operator to cut the nozzles off when the machine is turning around. This saves valuable spray.

The nurseryman said he experi-



Weed-free aisles last three to four months at Cypress Creek Nursery, reports Colburn. Note the controls near the left hand. Metal bumpers at the bottom of the rig permit spraying to the edge of the cans.

mented with 8-10 chemicals for about a year and with various proportions before arriving at his present mixture, which he said turned out to be one of the least expensive.

He uses 16 ounces of paraquat, 16 ounces of simazine wettable powder and two ounces of X-77 spreader sticker, mixed in the 20-gallon tank. This mixture costs \$48 an acre.

Colburn specifically stayed away from types of weed killers that would sterilize the soil and cause harm to roots protruding from the bottom of cans.

The machine is also used in roadways and in grassy patches of land being cleared for nursery plantings. Colburn estimates parts and wood used to build the rig cost \$50-60.

Almost all the nursery stock is canned materials set on four mil black poly plastic which holds down the weed population. Potting soil is steamed.

William Colburn is president of the Florida Turf Grass Association, a former golf course superintendent at Bay Hill Country Club, a former assistant county agent and is a registered landscape architect.

Certified Nurseryman Program Under Way in California

More than 100 candidates have taken the examination to qualify as "California Certified Nurseryman," according to Norman A. Springer, chairman of the Nurserymen's Certification Board.

"Of those who passed the test, about half have completed the additional requirements and have been certified," Springer said. The board administers the program sponsored by the California Association of Nurserymen.

Three years of planning went into CAN's certification program. It was

launched this January.

To qualify for certification, candidates must have had at least one year's work experience in a CAN-member retail nursery. There is a \$25 testing fee, and certification must be renewed every three years. A \$15 renewal fee is involved.

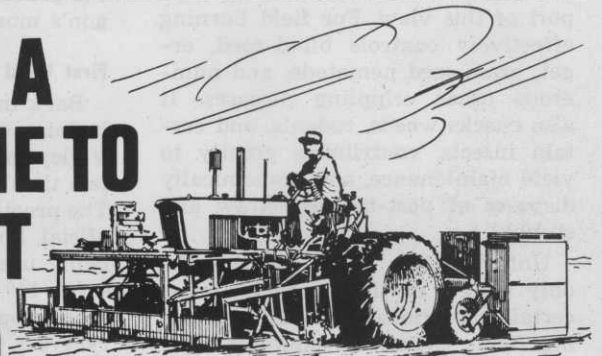
A Nurserymen's Training Manual was published, and serves as the study text for an examination. Copies of the manual are available through the CAN office, Suite 303, 1005 8th St., Sacramento 95814. Cost to CAN members is \$5; \$7.50

to non-members.

The next scheduled certification examination is set for the morning of June 9, prior to the opening of the Nurserymen's Refresher Course at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Advance registration for the examination is required, and the \$25 testing fee must accompany the application.

The three-hour exam has a written portion based on the manual; a portion on use of plants in the landscape; and an identification test on 100 plants.

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