

Dump Position Locator

This electric "load spotter" takes the guesswork out of unloading grain from trucks and wagons.

The "dump position locator" consists of a 4 by 6-in. weather-tight box that encloses a red photo eye. You place the locator on a post or wall about 3 ft. beyond the pit or auger opening. Then mount a strip of reflective tape on the side of the truck or wagon. When the electric eye strikes the tape as you pull into the unloading area, the light beam reflects back, closing the circuit and turning on a light bulb to alert the driver.

"It's much more exact than using sticks or stones or painted strips to eyeball where to stop, and much more convenient to use," says inventor Marvin Houin. "You don't have to worry about using different flags or blocks to account for the difference in wagon sizes and tongue lengths, and it doesn't matter if you have to switch tractors on the wagons."

Each unit includes a 110-volt power cord, two 18 by 2-in. strips of tape. Sells for \$249 plus S&H.



"Dump position locator" consists of a weather-tight box that encloses a red photo eye. Locator should be placed on a post or wall 3 ft. beyond pit or auger opening.

High definition reflectors, measuring 2 by 8 in. with a 10-ft. range, sell for \$10 each plus S&H. Medium definition reflectors, measuring 1 by 12 in. with a 5-ft. range, sell for \$5 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marvin Houin, 17671 West 13th Road, Plymouth, Ind. 46563 (ph 888 747-1424 or 574-842-2275).

Brewer Makes Tasty Compost Tea

"Compost tea" is mighty tasty to soil microorganisms and growing plants, but only if it's brewed right. Make a mistake, and it may have no value or even be dangerous to plants, says Paul Sachs, North Country Organics, Bradford, Vermont.

Interest is growing in compost tea, which is made by "brewing" compost. The resulting liquid is applied directly to gardens or crops.

Making quality compost tea is where the Bobolater sold by North Country comes in. Sachs says the concept was developed by Robert Norson, an organic grower in Washington State.

"Lots of compost tea brewers bubble air from the bottom of the tank up through the water to a "tea" bag at the top," says Sachs. "The roiling water is designed to move through the bag and extract the microbes."

The dissolved oxygen is needed for growth of the organisms feeding on the compost. Insufficient oxygen can reduce growth or worse, replace beneficial aerobic bacteria with undesirable anaerobic organisms.

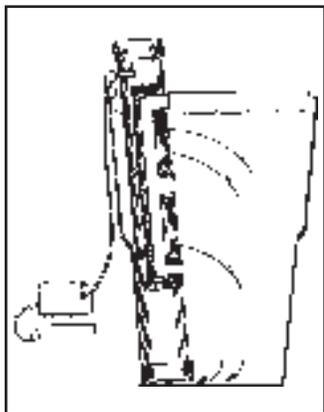
Once the tea is made, the saturated water is applied to plants and/or plant root zones. There the bacteria compete with, antagonize or even parasitize parasitic soil organisms. If the tea is properly balanced, it contains fungi that are equally beneficial. The key is to get optimum fungal and bacteria growth in the tea, and that requires optimal air flow and quality compost.

The Bobolater puts the two together. It consists of a chamber with a fine mesh screen-covered opening on the side. An air tube assembly carries air from a pump into the bottom of the chamber. Water intakes at the bottom of the chamber help maintain a current through the chamber. Before inserting the tube into a tank or pail, the appropriate amount of compost is dropped into the chamber and a cap is placed over the top.

"When air is driven into the chamber, the bubbles are constantly tumbling the compost to make extraction easy."

Once optimal quality tea has been made, the chamber is removed and the air tube is taken out. The tube is then returned to the tea to keep it aerated until application.

Another advantage of the Bobolater is its ability to make only the needed amount of tea. Most commercial units tend to be fixed batch type. The smallest Bobolater can make 5 to 25-gal. batches while the larger Bobolater can make from 25 to 250 gal. at a time. Only three cups of compost can produce five gallons of high quality tea while



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Only three cups of compost can produce five gallons of high quality tea.

five cups can produce 12 gallons.

North Country offers recipes for different plants. Some plants such as trees, shrubs, strawberries, rhododendrons and vines benefit more from a higher rate of fungal organ-



It has the hood and grill from a Cletrac bulldozer, the engine from a 1/2-ton Chevy pickup, and many other parts, says Eric Lindroth about his home-built tractor.

Made-It-Myself "Parts" Tractor

Eric Lindroth of Hartwick, New York, had a lot of fun and learned a lot when he built his own tractor from a wide selection of parts scavenged from a variety of machines.

The unique tractor is the only one he has, but it has worked well for him for the past eight years. Lindroth spent a winter and about \$400 putting it together.

"A saying we've had in my area for years is that poverty is the mother of invention," he laughs. "I got most of the stuff from junkyards and friends who gave it to me. The only expense was for new inner tubes, battery, starter and paint."

He took a 1946 Allis Chalmers transaxle and bolted it to a 2 by 4-in. steel tube frame that he made, and added a 4x4 front truck axle, a half-ton Chevy engine, and an automatic transmission.

Lindroth took the hood and grill from a Cletrac bulldozer. The hood hinges at the radiator base and tilts forward.

"The radiator came from a '64 Ford van and the front wheel steering sector came out

of a 1970 Ford pickup," he says. "The back wheels are off an 8N Ford tractor. I converted and welded them to the Allis Chalmers driven discs."

Lindroth put a hydraulic/electric snowplow on the back of the "parts tractor," and uses the unit for clearing his yard and driveway in winter. He says this is the main reason he built it in the first place. He also uses it to pull a wood wagon when he goes out to get wood, plus he pulls a big mower with it in summer.

"I also use it on a pto-driven post hole digger," Lindroth adds. "It has come in handy for a lot of different things."

He says he has towed the local 4-H float with it in a few parades, and entered it in a tractor show - "a lot of people got a major kick out of it," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Eric Lindroth, 246 Bristol Rd., Hartwick, N.Y. 13348 (ph 607 293-7701; email: rnbtime@usadanet.net).

"Loadhelper" Distributes Weight

Lonnie Spears was tired of his headlights pointing up at the sky when hauling heavy loads in his 1/2-ton pickup. "I came up with a blocking system that changed the rear suspension of my pickup from a long, soft spring, to a short stiff spring," he says.

The Loadhelper system allows a pickup with a leaf-spring rear end to carry the maximum load with 65 percent less sag. Though it dramatically improves driving control, it does not increase the load handling capacity. The wheels and axles aren't modified at all by the system.

The Loadhelper consists of two brackets, one for each side of the truck. They mount directly to the frame, behind the rear wheels. After drilling 4 pilot holes, the unit attaches with 4 self-tapping bolts. It installs in about an hour.

When you expect to do some heavy hauling, just lower the arm and secure it in place with the lynchpin. When not hauling a heavy load, the Loadhelper can be raised back up and the truck will perform normally.

"I use it when I haul cows in my goose-neck trailer," says Spears. "I can also load two tons of fertilizer and pipe in it without worrying about running on the highway."

The Loadhelper kit sells for \$197.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lonnie Spears, 2716 W. Eppler Dr., Durant, Okla. 74701 (ph 580 920-0992; email:



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lspears@netcommander.com; website: www.loadhelper.com).

isms. Others such as cole and brassica crops prefer a higher rate of bacteria.

The company markets a high quality compost for use with the Bobolaters. They also sell micronutrient, bacterial and fungal boosters and other accessories.

Contact FARM SHOW Followup, North Country Organics, P.O. Box 372, Depot Street, Bradford, Vt. 05033 (ph 802 222-4277; websites: www.norganic.com and www.soilfoodweb.com).