



This planter sows seed through plastic while metering out small amounts of growth media.

# Precision Planter Cuts Labor Costs

Less seed waste and lower labor costs are possible with this new metered seed planter.

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**G**ROWERS attempting to plant seed under low-moisture conditions are often faced with germination problems. However, the metered seed planter, a new piece of equipment from Renaldo Sales & Service, is helping growers overcome this problem.

The metered seed planter attaches to any tractor and automatically sows seed through plastic mulch. While the machine is towed by a tractor, it separates, meters, and plants individual vegetable seeds by burning or cutting holes through a plastic mulch cover.

A positive air flow system is used to transfer the singulated seed, mix, and fertilizer from the various hoppers to the planting head, where it is mechanically inserted into the seed bed. The planter is ideally suited for planting tomato, cucumber, melon, and pepper seeds.

## Significant Seed Savings

However, what makes this particular system unique is that in addition to sowing the seeds through plastic, it also meters out a small

quantity of growth media, giving the seeds a higher rate of proper germination. If a grower wishes, it is possible to adjust the planter to deliver seed only.

The planter's precise singulation virtually eliminates overplanting and the subsequent need for hand thinning.

If a grower chooses to custom blend the mix, he can add fertilizers or other media amendments, ensuring that the young plants have the proper balance of nutrients in the early stages of growth.

## Labor Saving Device

"One of our planters can do the work of 50 people," says Jim Renaldo, president of the North Collins, NY-based company. "Using this piece of equipment, one person can plant up to one acre per hour when using a seed singulator. This also eliminates seed waste.

"And we are able to adapt our planters to fit different sized operations. We can custom fabricate machines for one-, two-, or three-row planting." Row widths are available from 60 to 80 inches, with plant spacing from 8 to 16 inches.

A two-row planter sells for about \$27,000, while a three-row machine with a full line of op-

tional attachments costs approximately \$40,000.

Although Renaldo Sales & Service has been in operation for 25 years, the metered seed planter is its most well-known innovation to date. It has been so successful that it was named one of the 50 most outstanding agricultural inventions of 1988 by Agricultural Engineering, a national trade magazine.

The company was originally founded by Renaldo's father as a propane service business. In 1964, it added a farm equipment repair shop. As time went on, Renaldo began to design, build, and sell its own equipment. Today the original two-man shop has expanded to a firm that employs 18 people and has nearly \$1.5 million in annual sales, primarily to growers in Florida, Texas, and California.

## Designed for Large Operations

Renaldo says it took him about three years to make the planter fully cost-efficient. He emphasizes, however, that although the planter offers significant seed and labor savings, it is most economical for growers who have more than 100 acres of vegetable crops. □