



The “grasshopper” makes it easy to work on the lower part of trees.

For more information, contact Leon Taylor, Greenleaf Nursery Co. Inc, 28406 Hwy. 82, Park Hill, OK 74451-2845; 800-407-5550; fax: 918-457-5629; Greenleaf@greenleafnursery.com; www.greenleafnursery.com

Baby Root Hog

The baby root hog prototype is being developed by my neighbor, Frank Foley, of North Collins, New York. Something is much needed in our industry to dig rooted softwood cuttings.

The profile of the machine is similar to a snow blower. The design allows use in smaller greenhouses, with low sidewalls and closed ends. The unit has a digging scoop mounted in front, and a removable hopper in the middle. We enlarged the hopper to better catch the rooted cuttings.

The digger is powered by a Honda GX series 5.5 horsepower engine, connected to a hydro-gear variable displacement hydraulic pump. It's operating on a deep-lug track aligned for better traction on freshly loosened propagation media. All our controls are mounted on the handle, within easy reach. When operating the digger, the scoop slides under the plant roots. It raises them from the bed, shakes and removes propagation media, and dumps them into a hopper.

For this presentation, we dug

15,000 various plants by the machine, and the same varieties and numbers by hand in order to compare. Workers found that the baby root hog was simple, easy, safe to operate, and very easy to maneuver. We found two advantages to using this machine. First, we have better quality rooted cuttings. Second, harvested plants are in better shape, with no root damage or trauma to plant tops, which can sometimes be caused by over-energetic employees.

The biggest labor savings came from heavily rooted plants. Overall the operator of the baby root hog can harvest as much material as three or four people, which saves 65 percent or more in labor and frees up labor to man other projects. This low-tech machine doing the job of a high-tech machine weighs 350 pounds and comes at a reasonable price (Frank has estimated about \$8,500). Although not yet in production, we have high hopes that the new root hog will become an industry staple.

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For information on the Baby Root Hog contact Frank Foley at 4811 Genesee Road, Fort Collins, NY. Phone is 716-337-3682. Cell phone is 716-310-3391.



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