



Jerry Faulring

Reinvent the Wheel

We have all grown up with the phrase “Don’t reinvent the wheel”. We know what it means. It’s wrong.

Reinventing the wheel has brought the human race to where it is today although in a great many respects the inventions have not always made our existence better. Looking only at those things that have hurt us such as fast food, industrial pollution, and many more suggests that progress is often a bad thing.

(continued on page 14)



(continued on page 13)

It has been said that public sewers were the greatest advance in public health...ever. Air conditioning, bridges, trains, planes, indoor plumbing, the plow (almost extinct now with new inventions) and automobiles are some of my favorite things. These are big things and will only be improved, maybe reinvented in some aspects.

Yet we can all play the game in just tiny ways that improve our efficiency, productivity and wellness.

The gratification and non-financial rewards that flow from engaging everyday challenges and their solutions are what make for a good life.

There are different ways to make progress. Invention of new 'things' that we touch are important. Yet improving on an existing method or system without a patentable outcome can be just as significant to improved efficiency, productivity, and comfort with astounding gains.

This brings me to the real matter of this article.

In August, 2012, for 10 days, I toured nurseries and equipment manufacturing facilities in The Netherlands and Germany with George Leidig (trip host and owner of Autrusa), Stanton Gill, and Brad Thompson. We spent 2 days at a nursery equipment trade show and 1 day at Floriade (the Disneyworld of horticulture exhibitions).

Amsterdam was our starting point..



**George Leidig, Brad Thompson, myself (Jerry Faulring), Stanton Gill;
The Netherlands.**



We visited Quickhedge.

Light bulbs went off. It was one of those moments, for me, when the future is right there in full view.

We have spent many years trying to visualize hedge production with less than an earnest attempt to develop a solution. It seems obvious but the challenge is to develop a production system to include absolute mechanization. It's one thing to plant and shape a 40 foot hedge in the landscape. It's another thing to grow, groom and harvest miles of finished hedge. Quickhedge has 30 miles of hedge in production and a year round crew of 4 men with some seasonal help.

What they have accomplished is an invention of process.

All production practices are accomplished with GPS driven equipment. Along with Damacon and Basjris, European equipment manufacturers, they have more or less invented the equipment needed. The equipment is highly specialized and single use except for the tractors. The pictures substitute for text as they are self-explanatory.

(continued on page 16)



Photos courtesy of Quickhedge.nl



Basjris adapted this planter from existing designs. Precision plant spacing is the critical starting point.



Shear trims between segments to cause finished ends of segments. It is also slicing the root ball at the segment end. GPS knows where to make the 'incision'.



Frequent undercutting compacts the root system for a smaller root mass.



Harvesting with a grapple.



There are six pallets on a fork-lift mounted to the rear of a tractor. Tractor and equipment are operated remotely.

Boxed and palletized, ready to ship.



Note the yellow tool sold to contractors for lifting the boxes.



Craning finished hedge segments into a courtyard. The boxes are planted and will compost quickly.



(continued on page 18)



Instant, finished hedge.

To start our production of hedges, we bought a GPS system for an existing tractor and a single row disc planter. Over time we will add the additional machines required to shape and harvest finished hedges.

It has been suggested that we not share what we are doing so potential competitors don't get started. Thinking back on my previous experiences, competition is a good thing when offering a new concept or product. It happened with automobiles, computers and most other product innovations.

I started in lawn service in 1973. During the next couple years we looked at the evolving high volume/ low priced services being implemented in the mid-west. We intentionally

waited for Chem Lawn to enter the market in 1976 believing they would create demand before we offered a high volume service of our own. We could not afford to do the marketing for a lawn service concept that was then not prevalent. It worked. Our sales increased 14 fold in just a few years. Consumers like choice.

Therefore, we welcome competition to share the marketing costs. Hopefully, demand will be sufficient for all. 🌱

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