

# POTTING SOIL DISPENSER WORKS WELL

H. E. MESSNER, *Range Technician,*  
*Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station*  
*USDA Forest Service*

A research study requiring culture of several thousand bitterbrush seedlings in planting cups revealed the need for a fast, efficient method of filling the cups with potting soil. This article describes a simple, inexpensive soil dispenser which was improvised to meet that need. With this device, 600 potting cups per hour were filled with dry soil mixture compared to 300 per hour with a scoop. Other workers raising large quantities of potted stock may want to try the system to reduce time and cost in greenhouse operations.

The soil dispenser (fig. 1) can be assembled easily from readily available materials at the approximate costs shown:

Item	Size	Cost
A heavy-duty plastic pail	10 quart	\$ .59
A metal funnel	6-inch	1.19
A flexible rubber tubing	3/4-inch I.D. x 6 inches long	.32
A spring compression clamp	3-inch	.18
A roll of filament tape	1-inch wide	1.49
An adjustable pulley rope	12 to 15 feet long	2.98
A 2 x 4 board	6 feet long	.80
Total cost		\$7.55

The flexible rubber tubing is first connected to the funnel outlet. A hole 5-1/2 inches in diameter is then cut in the center bottom of the pail. The funnel is inserted into the hole and then attached to the bottom of the pail with filament adhesive tape. Strips of tape placed in a complete circle fasten the beveled inside funnel to the inside wall of the pail, thus giving the effect of a very large funnel.

The pail is suspended by a rope from a movable 2- by 4-inch board placed between the greenhouse I-beams, and is adjusted to the proper height over the potting cups. The soil dispenser

could be suspended in many ways. Ours was arranged

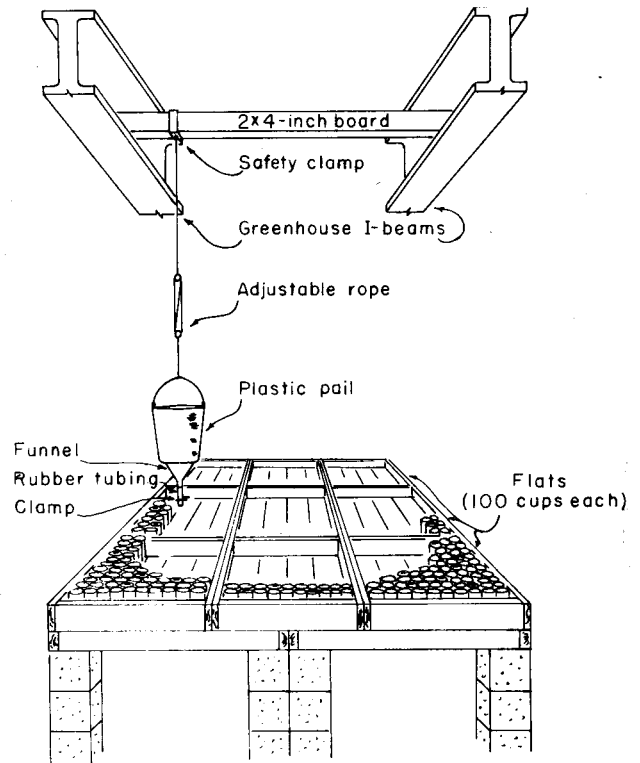


Figure 1.—Diagram of soil dispenser in perspective.

so we could fill six flats (100 cups each) before relocating the 2- by 4-inch board.

The 6-inch tubing with a spring compression clamp on the end regulates the flow of soil from the pail, and also permits easy guidance when filling the potting cups. Use of screened potting soil will prevent bridging in small-diameter cups.

Wetting the empty planting cups prevents excessive dust as they are being filled.