

The next step in the preparation of cuttings is their storage until planted and this is very important.

If boxes are to be used they should always be treated with 1% sodium hypochlorite (used in swimming pools) and stored about ground level, well lined with clear plastic and unprinted paper inside the plastic liner.

After cuttings have callused they can be machine-planted or hand-planted. Hand planting can be assisted by the use of a small tool (Figure 1B) to save palms of the hand and to keep cuttings at the one depth for the task of budding, where necessary. All of the hardwood cuttings are planted through tar paper which is laid several months prior to planting. This paper is laid by machine and pre-punched for correct spacing of cuttings. The paper creates a capillary action and keeps the base of the cuttings moist.

GETTING DOWN TO BUDDING

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One problem that all nurserymen who grow their plants in the open fields have in common is that they have to do much of their work at ground level. Planting, weeding, shaping, budding, heading off, etc. all involve getting down to ground level by bending, squatting, kneeling, crawling, or, if you are lucky, sitting. Before long, every one of these positions becomes insufferably uncomfortable, and you are left wishing that you were growing your plants at bench height in the comfort of an air-conditioned propagating room.

Some of the faster "ground-bound" operations, such as planting and digging can be done by tractor-mounted rigs, but the slowest of all operations, that of budding, seems to have defied all efforts to make the job tolerably comfortable. And a comfortable working position, by its nature, makes for greater efficiency and higher morale.

Some people will argue that by growing the product in containers it will overcome all of these difficulties in one fell swoop, but it seems to me a very radical cure to have to change the whole cultural technique if the only problem is the comfort (or lack of) for the working position.

Many budding positions and aids have been tried. The most common, and the fastest, is to stand feet astride the row and bend from the waist. Other positions are to kneel on one knee, to

kneel on both knees, to squat, and even sit on the ground. Various budding seats have been used, including one about 1 metre long, along which you slide, and a one leg stool, sometimes strapped onto the budder.

In my case, I suffered budding in every conceivable position for many years until about eight years ago, when I developed my "bud-mobile." It is based on an idea I learned from Howard's Rose Nursery in California. The prototype was a device which was adjustable in all directions and, from the experience gleaned from this model, I made the one I have used ever since.

It is made of two standard bicycle wheels (cheap and easy to get), the frame is made of light tubular steel, and the skid underneath the kneeling pad provides the vital third point which steers the "bud-mobile" (Figure 1). It weight approximately 12 kg. The budder kneels on a pad some 20 cm above the ground, and leans his chest over a contoured pad with his hands free to reach down either side. The pads are 10 cm thick foam plastic, covered with vinyl material and are set obliquely across the row at an angle of from 30 to 50° depending on the crop and the preference of the budder. The net result is that the budder is supported at about the same position as the popular and fast "stand over" position, but closer to the work, thus giving him a better view.

I would emphasize that you should put a lot of attention into getting just the right amount of "give" in the two pads so that you are comfortable. You can very well try inflatable cushions as an alternative.

It is important that the chest pad be able to be raised or lowered to fit the particular budder, typically from 45 cm to 55 cm from the kneeling pad. To move the "bud-mobile" you simply press sideways with your toes.

One particular aspect that I like about the "bud-mobile" is that you can carry your budding supplies and equipment arranged in a convenient layout around you. Budwood, ties, sharpening strop, secateurs, rag or towel, radio, sunshade, can be arranged near at hand.

I have been using my "bud-mobile" for the past eight years and, for me, it has turned budding into a reasonably tolerable chore. I am sure that anyone else who does not possess the suppleness of a gymnast could also benefit from it.

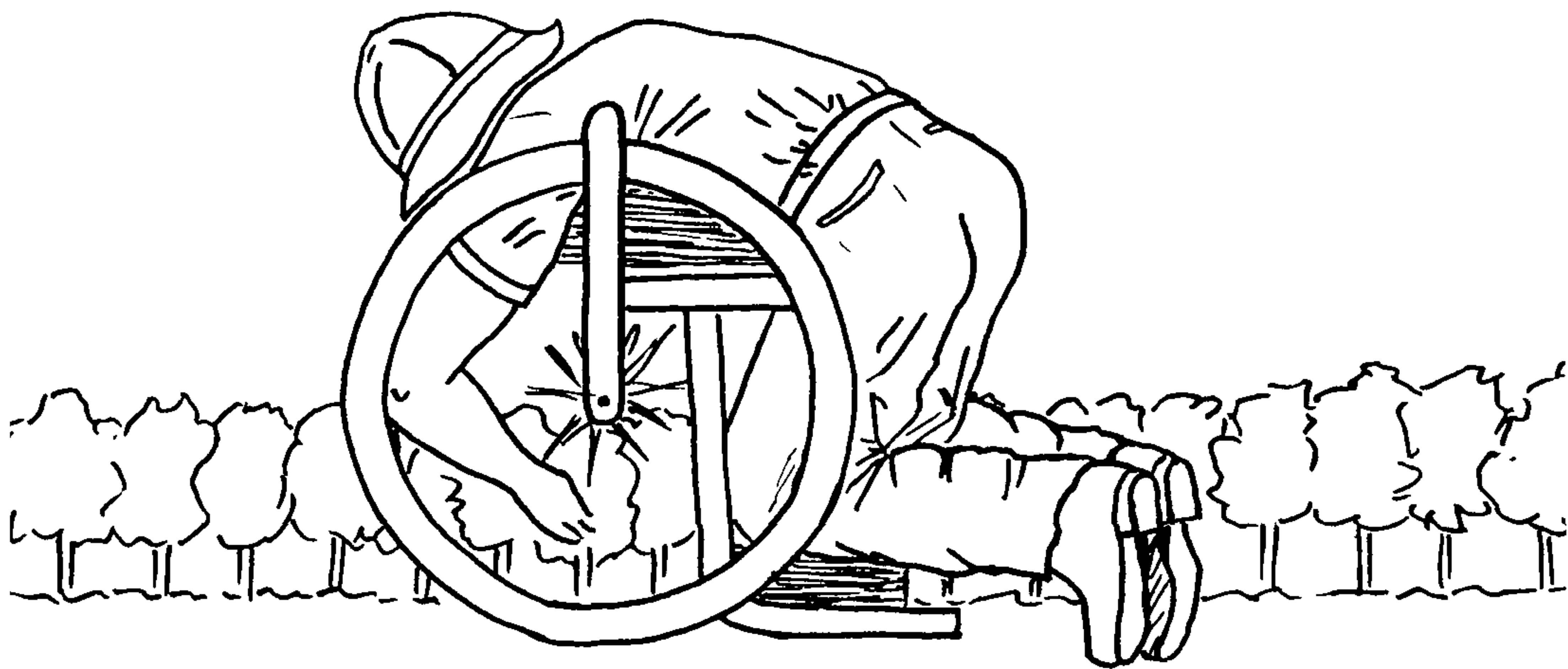
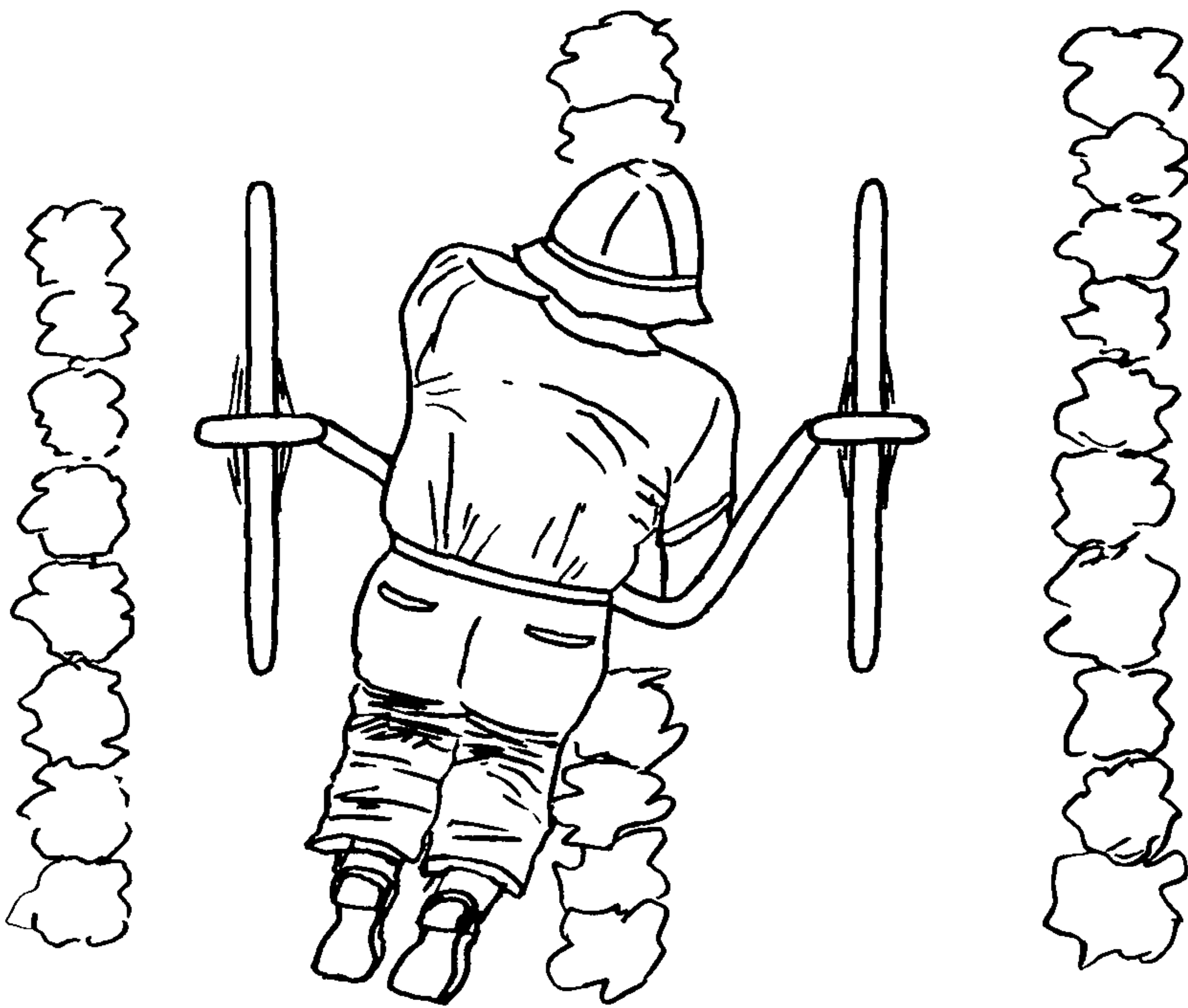


Figure 1. Bud-mobile An aid to more comfortable field operations, such as budding