A SIMPLIFIED CONTINUOUS WATER DRIP SYSTEM

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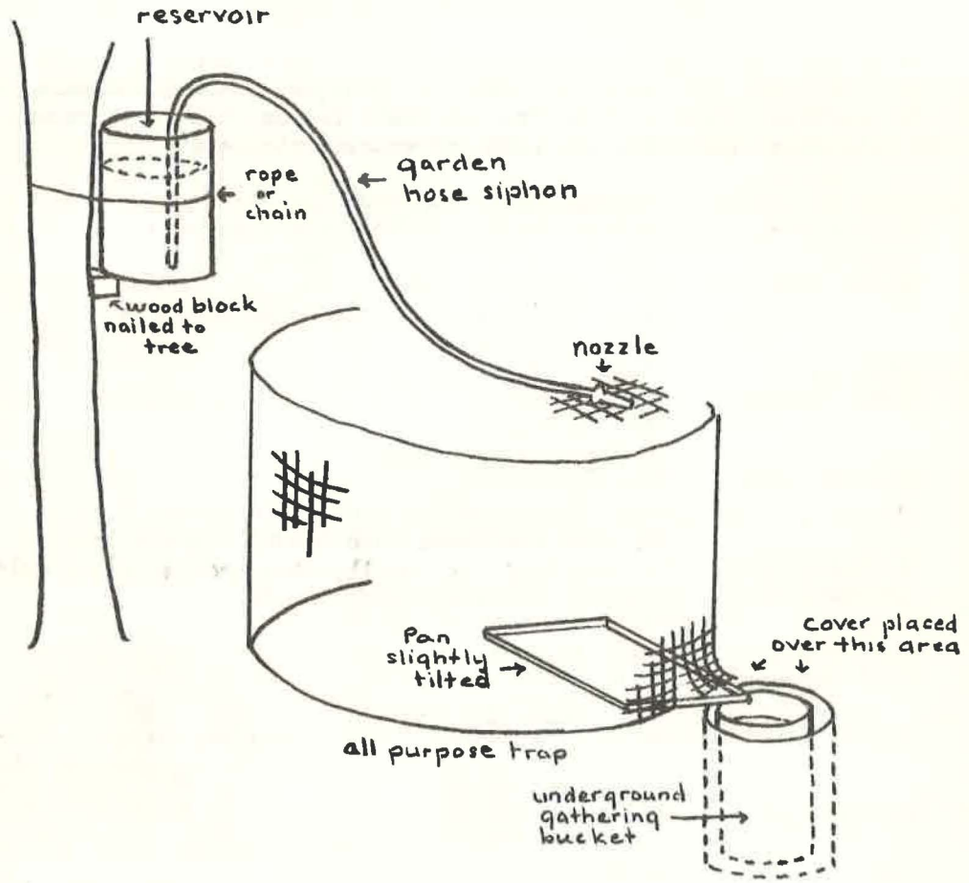
In 1950 (Ibba, Vol 22 #1) I described a water drip system that made it possible to reuse the same water over and over again. Such a system is useful where water must be carried a distance to the trap. Basically the system consists of a water drip, a pan and an underground receptacle to catch the overflow from the pan. The water in the collecting bucket can be returned to the water drip reservoir.

The system described in 1950 was constructed from material obtainable from a college chemistry lab, but the one described here is made with materials purchased from any hardware store. This has been used only with the all-purpose trap described in the Bird Banding Manual (1953), but it can be adapted for use with most kinds of traps.

The water drips from a garden hose nozzle that should be of the type that shuts off completely. The nozzle is connected by way of a male-fitting to a length of plastic garden hose, which is the siphon from the reservoir can. In order to make more than one siphon from a coil of garden hose, make certain it is possible to purchase extra male-fittings for the size hose that is being used.

The two buckets used in the system happen to be the type that contain cake frosting for bakers, but lard cans, carried by most hardware stores, can be used just as well. The lard cans are shiny and should be painted a flat black, but these cans also rust easily into a soft brown color when left in the weather. The reason a siphon is used rather than a spigot soldered to the can is that the bucket can be tied to a tree trunk or platform to the side of the trap rather than directly above the trap.

The drip pan used is a cookie sheet with raised edges, painted a flat black. The big problem is getting the water from the pan into the bucket underground. Originally a spout was soldered to the pan so that a length of garden hose could be slipped over it. The hose then drained into the bucket. It is much easier, however, to place one corner of the pan just outside the trap and place the collecting bucket under the protruding corner. The pan should be tilted toward that corner slightly so the water will spill over at that spot. A sceptic watching the original construction of this modification maintained that the water would flow back underneath the pan before it would drop off, and therefore miss the bucket. This does not happen, however, unless more than the normal



amount of water is spilling over. A flap is cut in the side of the trap to allow the corner of the pan to protrude and this flap can be bent down again to keep birds from escaping. Birds could easily utilize the water from the corner of the pan outside the trap, so the cover that is made to cover the underground bucket and its hole should also be large enough to cover the exposed corner. A shallow wooden cherry box with one side removed has worked satisfactorily as the cover.

This system has been in use for a year now and has proved to be as successful with a lot less maintenance than the other systems used before.

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