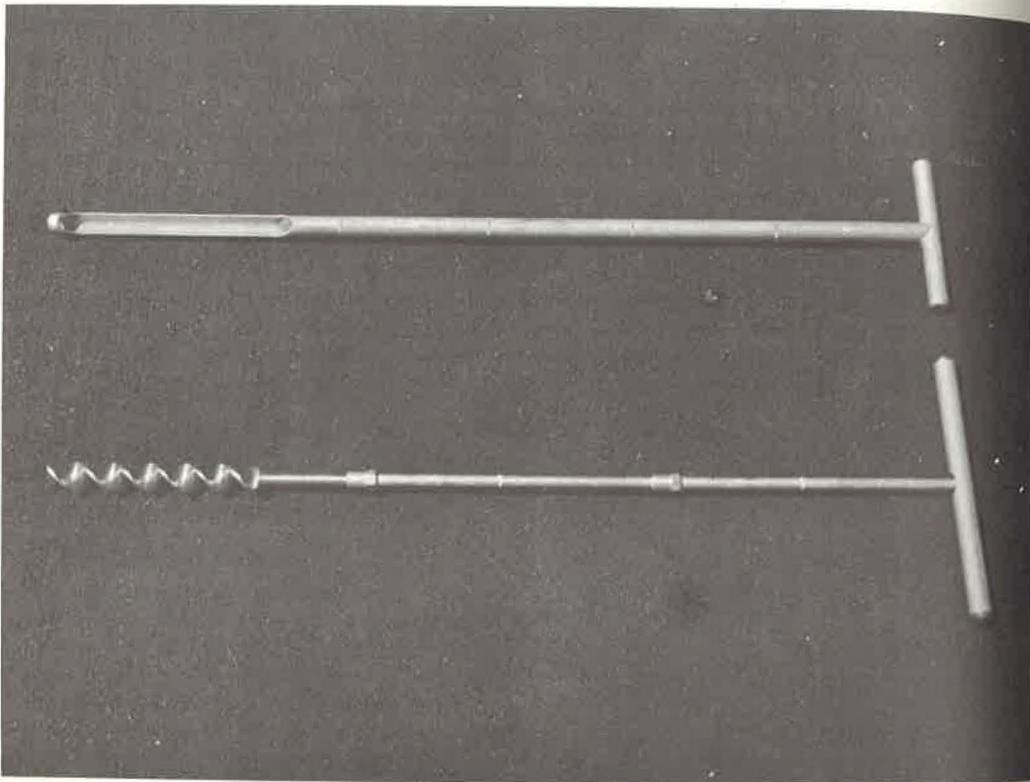


## SOIL SAMPLING AUGERS AND TUBES FOR SETTING NET POLES

By Ted Grisez

A simple, easy way to prepare holes for setting net poles is by the use of soil sampling augers or tubes. These are used by soil scientists and others to extract and examine vertical sections of soil (soil profiles) from the surface to depths of three feet or more. Although it seems certain that other banders may well have used this method, no description of it could be found.

Soil samplers consist of a handle, a shaft, and a bit, which may be an auger or a tube. The soil auger bit is a modified wood auger. To use an auger, simply twist or "drill" it into the soil and pull it out. Clean off the adhering soil and repeat the process until the required depth is reached. You will soon learn not to bore too deep before extracting the auger, or it will be necessary to back it up. I find it advisable to slant the hole slightly, so that a pole placed in it will be straightened when the tension of the net is applied.



Soil sampling tube (above) and auger (below) used in setting net poles.

The soil tube is hollow, with an opening along one side and a cutting rim at the tip that is slightly smaller than the inside of the tube. To make a hole with the tube, just press it into the soil, give it a half twist to cut the soil loose, and pull it out. The column of soil comes out with the tube and is removed through the slotted side.

Soil tubes are limited in use to soils that are free of pebbles about  $3/4$  of an inch in size or larger. Large stones, of course, will stop the auger as well as other tools, such as a crowbar. But it tends to slide off or turn the smaller ones. Most of my experience has been with silt loam soils with varying amounts of gravel and stone.

Various designs are available from a one-piece 16-inch soil sampling tube costing about \$4.00 to a combination 3-foot auger-tube kit that costs about \$17.00. The photo shows a one-piece soil sampling tube and my 3-foot auger kit. The kit consists of a handle, two 12-inch extension rods, a 12-inch auger section, and a 13-inch fiberboard canister. All units that I have seen are marked at 6-inch intervals to indicate depth. Most augers are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter but 2-inch bits are available. Most, if not all tubes are  $3/4$  of an inch in diameter. I find the  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch auger just right for my bamboo rug poles.

Soil augers and tubes have other uses that may make it worthwhile for a bander to own one. The best way to fertilize shade trees is to place a small handful in each of several auger holes spaced under the edge of the crown of the tree. And, incidentally, they can be used for their intended purpose: to learn more about the soil in your woods, farm, garden, or lawn.

Soil samplers can be purchased from farm and forestry equipment suppliers such as NASCO (National Agricultural Supply Co.), Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, Forestry Suppliers, Jackson, Miss., or Ben Meadows Co., Atlanta, Ga. Write for price lists or catalogs.

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EBBA'S NEWEST MEMBER

Michael Wagner, of Block Island, R.I.  
(with the editor - photo by Kit Frazier)

On an all too short visit to where Elise and Stanley (when he can get away) Dickerson are taking part in Operation Recovery Block Island, we met EBBA's newest member. Mike Wagner helps Elise on weekends and after school. He has also worked with Block Island's year around bander, Merrill Slate.

