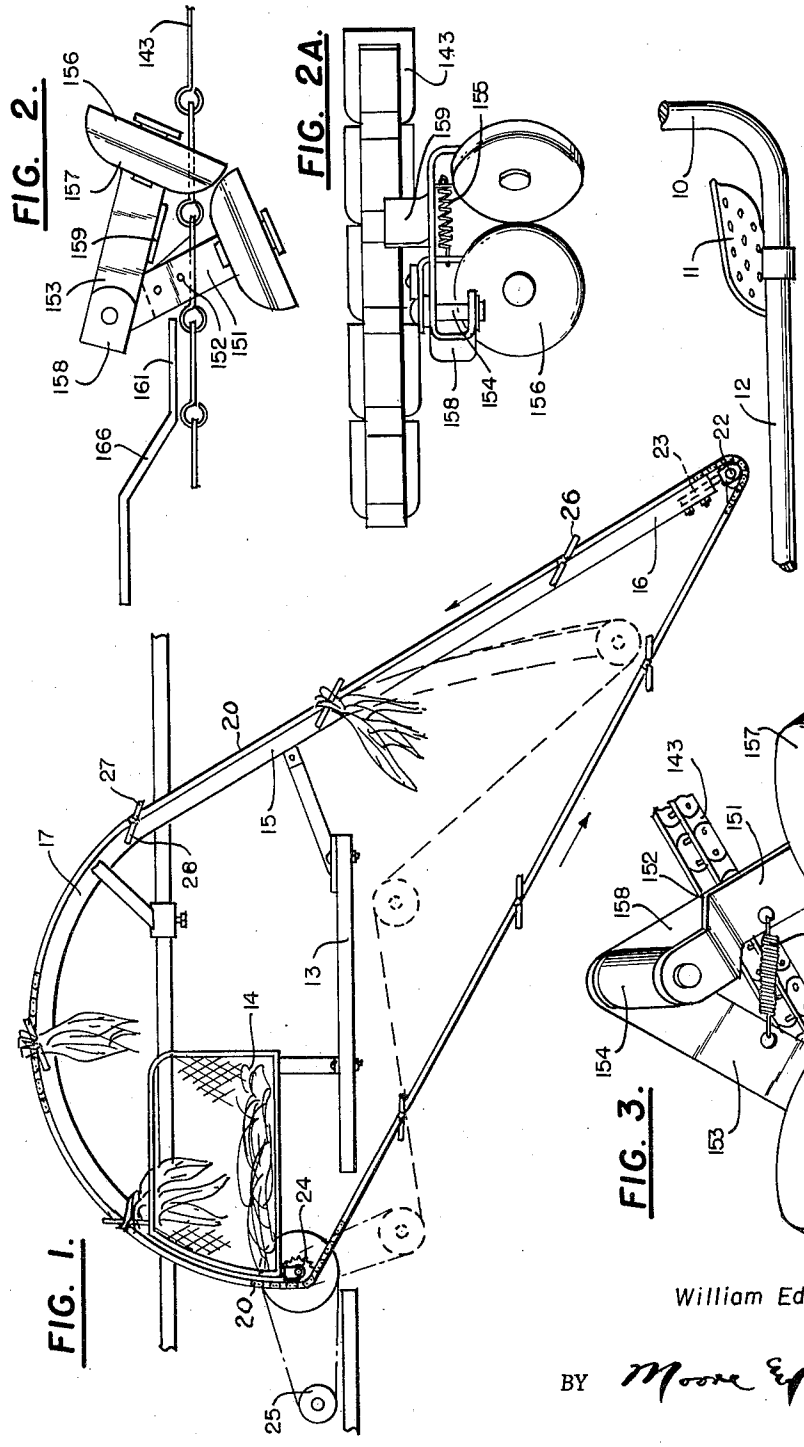
May 15, 1962 W. E. DAVIS 3,034,664

TOBACCO HARVESTERS

Filed Oct. 24, 1960 6 Sheets-Sheet 1



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May 15, 1962 W. E. DAVIS 3,034,664

TOBACCO HARVESTERS

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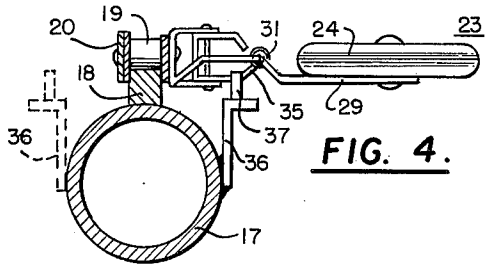


FIG. 4.

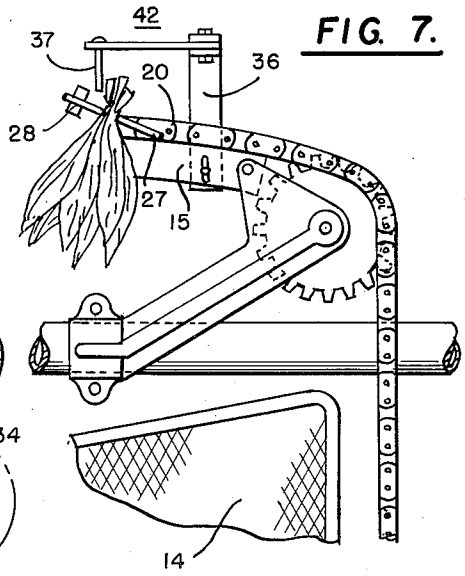


FIG. 7.

FIG. 4A.

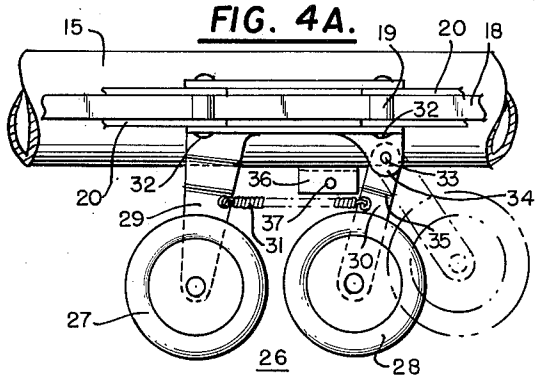


FIG. 5.

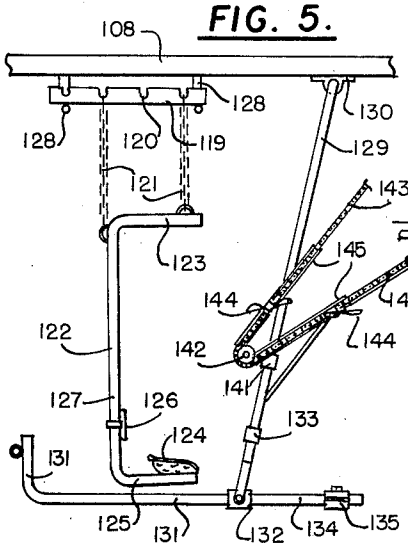
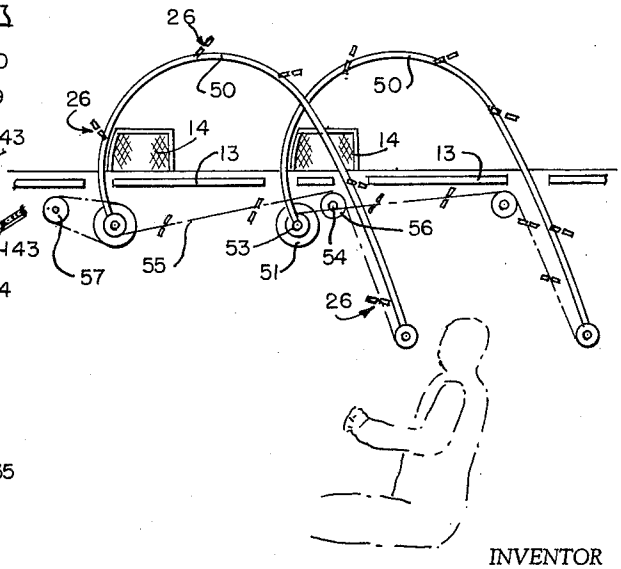


FIG. 6.



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TOBACCO HARVESTERS

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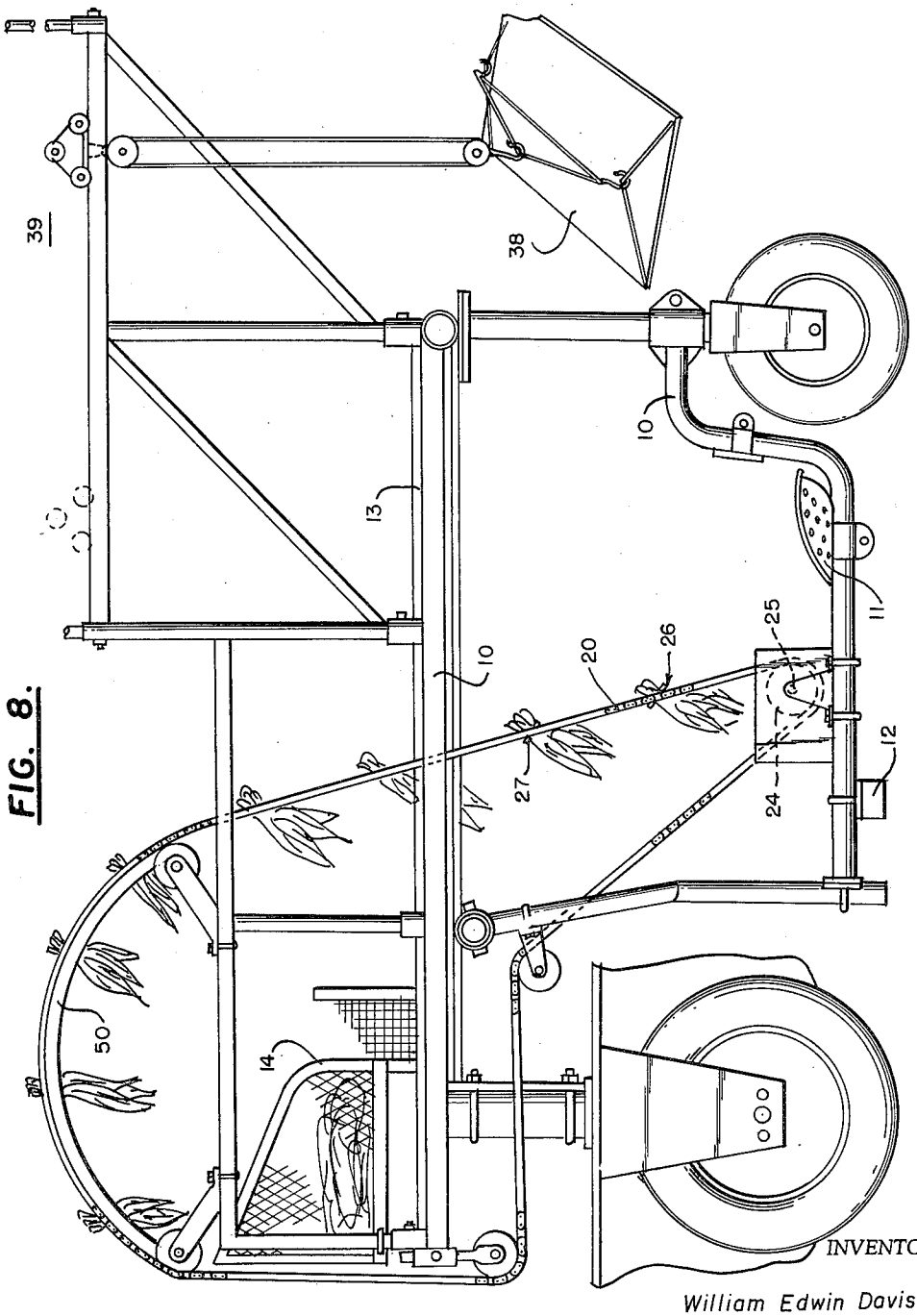


FIG. 8.

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TOBACCO HARVESTERS

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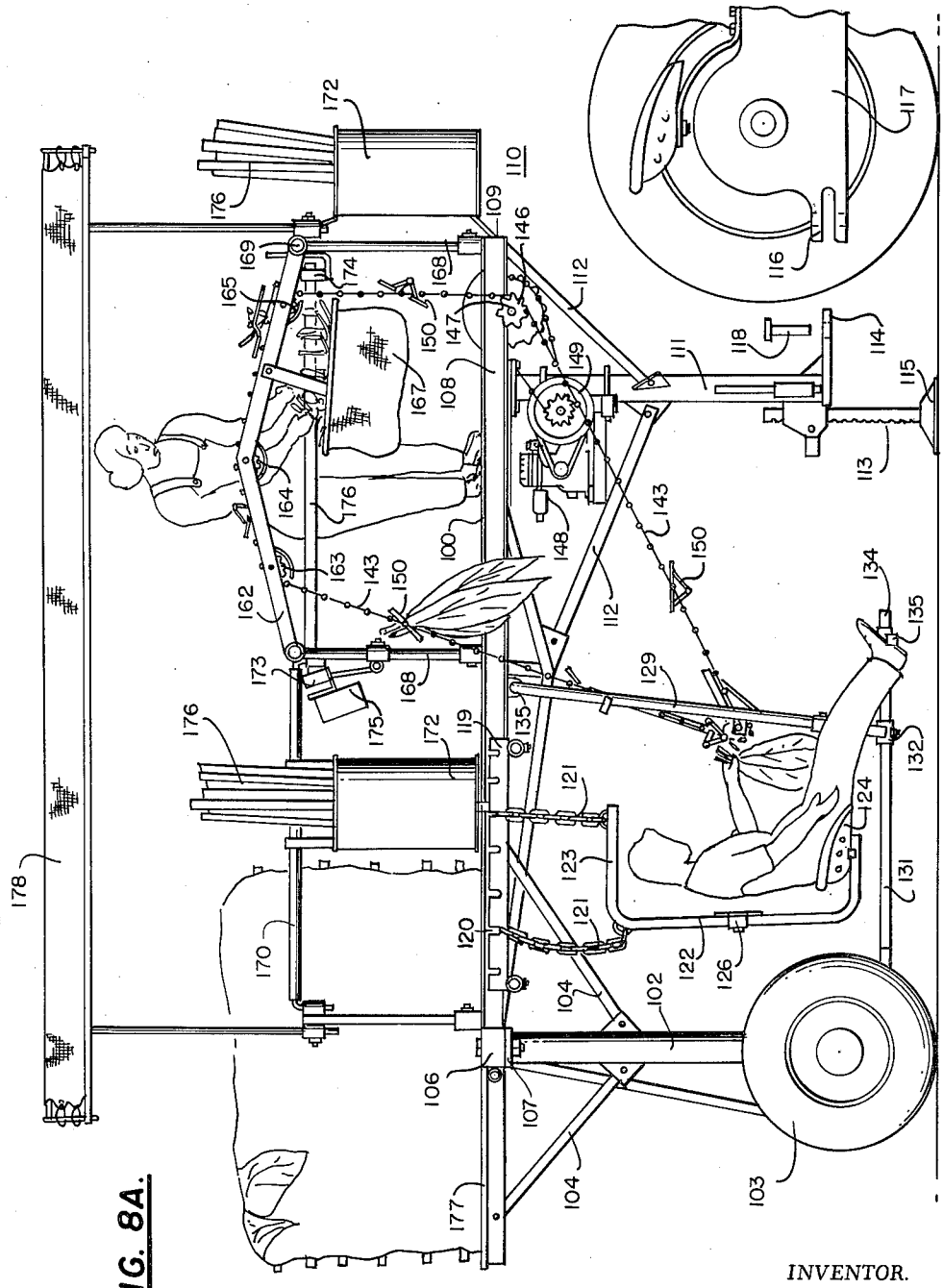


FIG. 8A.

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TOBACCO HARVESTERS

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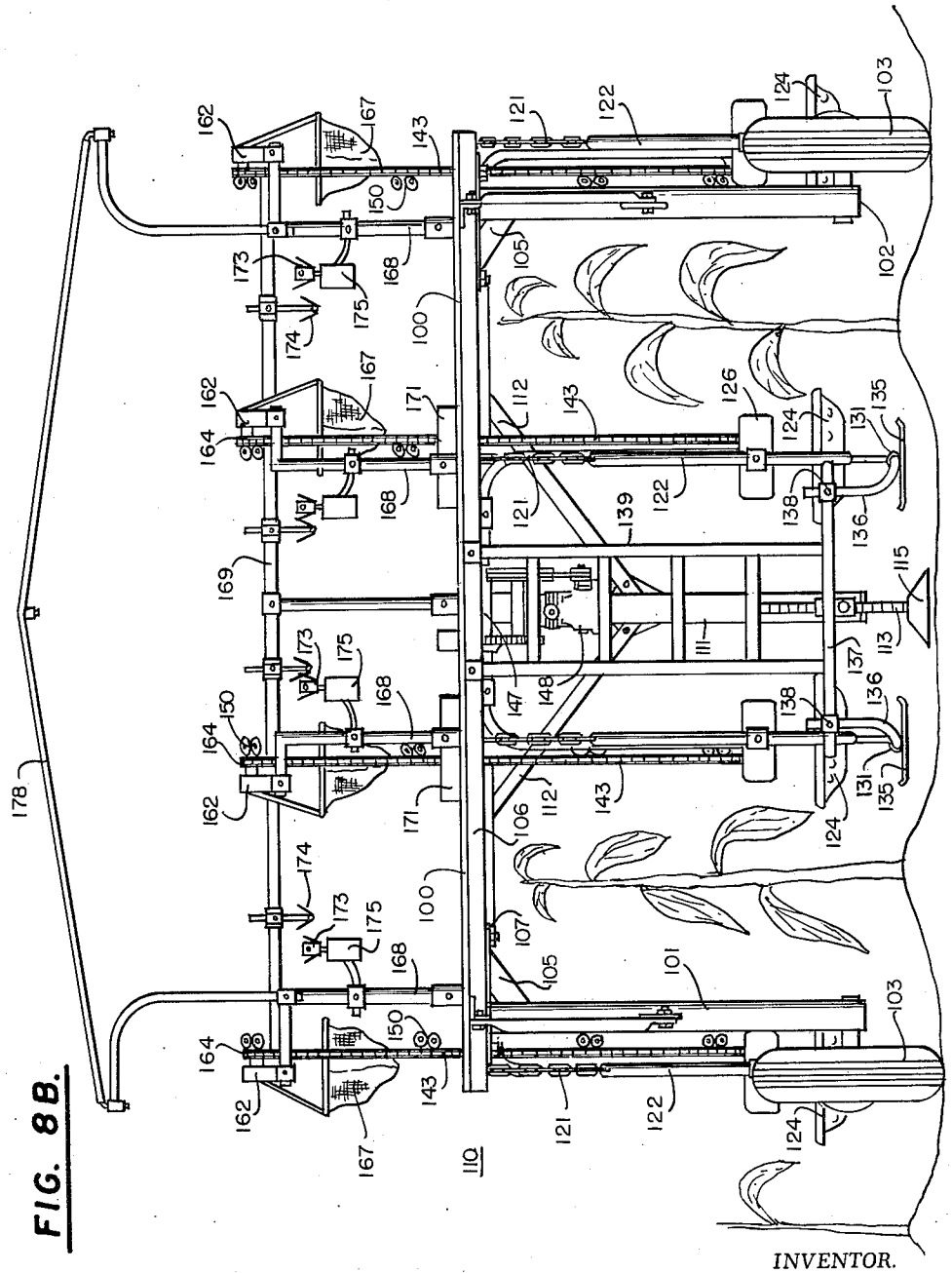


FIG. 8B.

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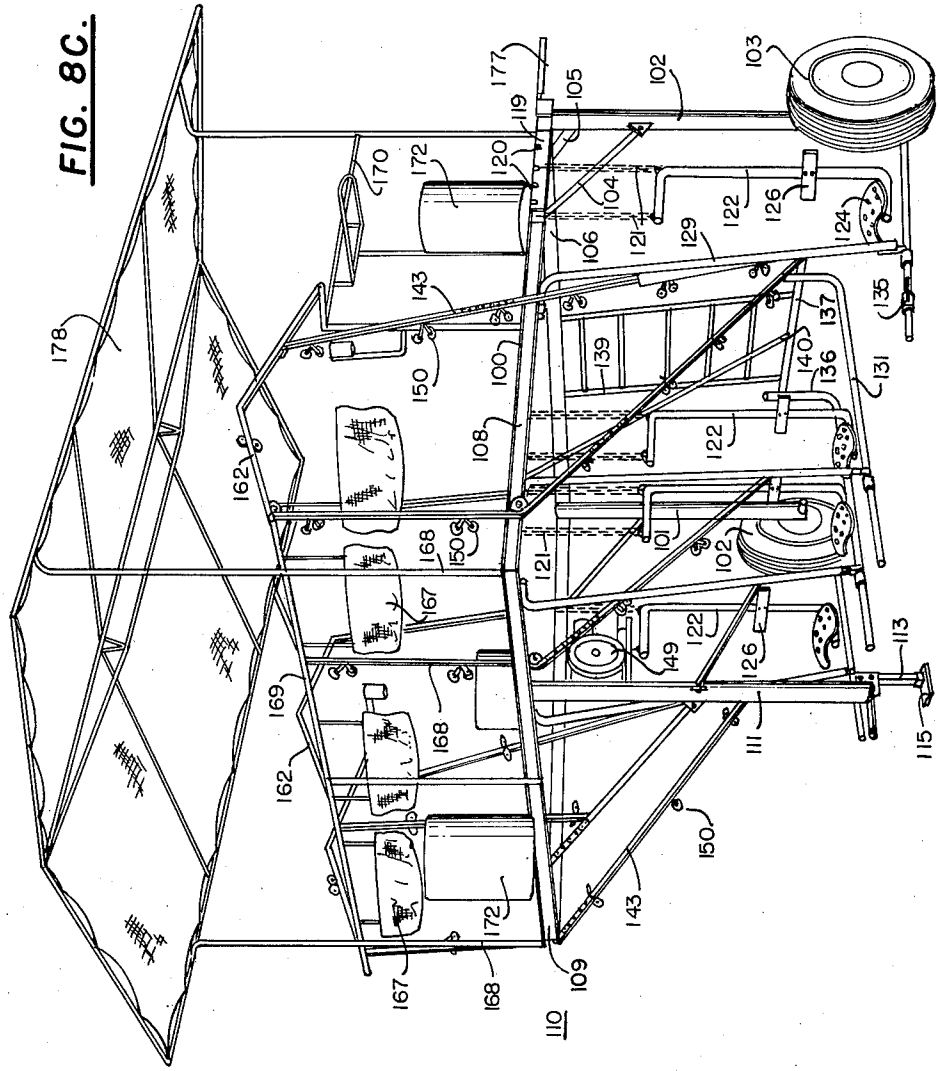
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May 15, 1962 W. E. DAVIS 3,034,664

TOBACCO HARVESTERS

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FIG. 8C.



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United States Patent Office 3,034,664 Patented May 15, 1962

3,034,664

TOBACCO HARVESTERS

William Edwin Davis, Seven Springs, N.C.

Filed Oct. 24, 1960, Ser. No. 64,446
9 Claims. (Cl. 214—5.5)

The present invention relates to tobacco harvesters and more particularly to simplified apparatus for facilitating the picking of tobacco leaves and their handling in the fields. In the harvesting of tobacco it is desirable to pick the ripened leaves from the standing tobacco plant, fasten them in bundles of about five leaves, and drape 20 to 30 bundles over a long stick which is used to hang the leaves in the drying barn. Formerly this has been done by using a large number of workers called "primers," who walk between the rows of tobacco, picking the ripe leaves with one hand and placing them under their other arm. When a primer has accumulated an armful of leaves, he must carry them to a tobacco truck which may be situated several rows away. When the truck is filled, it is moved to another area where other workers called "handers" select small bundles of about five leaves with their stems bunched together, which they hand to still other workers called "loopers," who tie the stems of the several leaves together and drape the resulting bundles over the drying stick on alternate sides thereof. The disadvantages of this method are that the leaves are thrown together in a pile and handled many times, resulting in the deterioration of the leaves. It is a slow and costly operation because the picking, handing and tying operations necessarily comprise work which involves, in the first case at least, hard labor by many men. The present invention is intended to obviate the difficulties experienced in the past in a simple and novel manner.

The present invention is a continuation-in-part of my copending application of the same title, Serial No. 503,062, filed April 22, 1955, allowed February 18, 1960, and now abandoned, which is in turn a continuation-in-part of my copending application Serial No. 355,791, filed May 18, 1953, and now U.S. Patent No. 2,715,968, for Tobacco Harvesters.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a simple, foolproof apparatus for facilitating tobacco handling operations during harvesting.

It is an object of the invention to provide an apparatus which can be moved between rows of tobacco plants for carrying the tobacco leaf primers and facilitating their work of picking, automatically bundling, looping and mounting the tobacco leaves on a drying stick.

It is an object of the invention to provide an apparatus for holding tobacco leaves in bundles for mounting the bundles on an elongate stick, many of which can be carried on the apparatus.

It is an object of the invention to provide simple means for storing looped hands of tobacco on sticks on a raised platform carried by the apparatus high enough to clear the tobacco plants over which it passes.

It is an object of the invention to provide a machine having conveyor means to carry bundled leaves of tobacco from the primer seated near the plants being harvested to a looper standing on a raised platform with automatic means for the removal of the bundle to the conveyor and depositing the bundle in suitable receiving means.

It is an object of the invention to provide a tobacco harvester having spring pressed clips thereon for grasping and conveying bundles of tobacco leaves from a point near the ground to a raised position, and pin means or the like for releasing the spring pressed clips and depositing the bundled leaves in a suitable basket in the raised position.

Reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 2,786,585, for

Tobacco Harvesters, and U.S. Patent No. 2,954,132 for Tobacco Harvester With Automatic Looping Mechanism, for supplemental background.

In the drawings, like numerals refer to like parts throughout.

FIGURE 1 is a fragmentary side elevation of one form of the invention.

FIGURE 2 is a fragmentary elevation of a spring pressed clip mounted according to the invention.

FIGURE 2A is a plan view of FIGURE 2.

FIGURE 3 is a perspective view of a spring pressed clip mounted on a conveyor chain.

FIGURE 4 is a fragmentary view partly in section of one form of mounting for spring pressed clips.

FIGURE 4A is a plan view of FIGURE 4.

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary elevation of one form of adjustable primer seat mounting.

FIGURE 6 is an elevation of a variation in arrangement of the invention.

FIGURE 7 is a fragment showing of the releasing mechanism in action.

FIGURE 8 is a side elevation of a modified form of the invention.

FIGURE 8A is a side elevation of a preferred arrangement of the invention.

FIGURE 8B is a rear elevation of the arrangement of FIGURE 8A.

FIGURE 8C is a perspective view of the arrangement of FIGURE 8A.

A machine frame **10**, comprising piping or angle iron of suitable shape, supports a primer seat **11** located close to the ground in which the primer sits with his feet extended and placed on a foot rest **12**. Frame **10** also supports a raised platform or floor **13** on which is located a basket **14** removably secured thereto and positioned to receive hands of tobacco. A tubular framework **15** is carried by frame **10** and comprises a portion extending above the platform or floor **13** which is curved in a semi-circle as at **17**. The portion **16** of tubular member **15** extending below the platform **13** to a point adjacent the primer seat **11** may be straight or, if desired, curved, as shown in dotted lines. As shown in FIGURES 4 and 4A tube **15** has mounted on the upper surface thereof steel track means **18** of sufficient width to receive the roller **19** of a tobacco hand carrying chain **20** rather snugly, without binding. The side portions of the individual chain links extend downwardly and serve to maintain the bunched hand carrying chain **20** on the track portion **18** despite any twist due to loading thereof. At the lower end of tubular member **15** is an idler sprocket **22** which is mounted on a stub member **23** which telescopes in the lower end of the member **15** and is spring pressed downwardly so as to maintain the links of the carrier chain **20** taut. The links of the chain **20** are driven at a desired speed by sprocket **24** connected to a suitable motor shaft **25** which is geared down as shown so that the chain **20** moves at a sufficiently slow speed to accommodate the actions of a primer sitting in seat **11** in harvesting tobacco. Mounted on the links of chain **20** are spring pressed clips **26** comprising two relatively large wheels **27** and **28** one of which is pivotally mounted on one of the arms **29** and **30** and urged toward each other in tobacco hand grasping relation by spring **31** which also serves as a cooperating resilient means for holding a tobacco hand.

In the form of the device shown in FIGURES 4 and 4A, arm **29** is firmly fastened to a link of the chain **20** by pin means **32** and arm **30** is pivotally mounted at **33** to a lip means **34** projecting from and carried by a link. Arm **30** will be seen to have an offset at **35** for reasons that will be described later. Mounted on tube **17** adjacent the basket **14** is a bracket **36** carrying a pin projec-

tion 37 so positioned that it will engage the offset portion 35 of arm 30 as it passes by and separate the wheels 27 and 28 against the resilient action of the spring 31. The pin 37 is so positioned with respect to the offset portion 35 that as the chain moves by, the offset portion 35 will slip off the pin 37 and be released, so that it will automatically return to hand grasping relation with respect to arm 29 under the return action of spring 31. A modified form of bracket 36 is shown at 42 and may be preferred where the hands tend to twist clips 26 and chain 20 slightly, but not enough to require upper track 38.

The operation of the device of FIGURES 1, 4, 4A, 7 and 8 is as follows. With a primer seated in seat 11 and the tobacco harvester proceeding at regulation speed between rows of ripe tobacco, the primer harvests the tobacco by selecting the ripe leaves to be picked and inserts hands comprising groups of fixe or six leaves with their stems up and bunched together between the rollers 27 and 28 as they pass by him on the adjacent portion of track 18. The clips comprising the rollers 27, 28 continue along with the chain on which they are mounted and follow the upward rise of track 18 and the curve 17 to a point adjacent and above the basket 14 at which the pin 37 engages the projecting portion 35 of arm 30. As explained above, pin 37 operates to pivot the arm 30 about the point 33, stretching spring 31 separating wheels 27 and 28 and depositing the hand of tobacco in basket 14. As the chain 20 continues to move, the projection 35 slips off the pin 37 and the spring 31 restores the wheels 24 and 25 into hand grasping relationship so that when they again pass adjacent the seat 11 the primer may insert another hand in the clip. When the basket 14 is filled, it can be placed upon a pallet 38 and lowered by crane arrangement 39 to a suitable truck. However, in normal operation the pallet 39 carried by the platform 13 is intended to be filled with tobacco sticks on which the hands of tobacco are looped and the basket 14 has as its primary function to catch those hands which the looper has not removed from the clips, and in conjunction with the automatic trip of pin 37, assures that the clips are always free for the insertion of new harvested hands of tobacco by the primer in seat 11.

As shown in FIGURE 6, the curved tracks 50 may be placed one after the other in echelon. The two sprockets 51 and 52 may be on the same shaft if desired. Otherwise, a chain drive is provided between the shafts 53 and 54 to supply power for both conveyor chains 55 and 56 from motor drive 57. As shown in my copending application and the patents referred to above, and in FIGURES 8A, 8B and 8C, they may also be placed in side-by-side relation.

In the form shown, the wheels 27, 28 are relatively large and have rounded rims so as to insure that the leaf stems are not broken and that the depending hands are permitted a certain amount of freedom to swing a little under the action of gravity when held between wheels 27, 28 and spring 31.

As shown in FIGURES 2, 2A, 3, 5, 8A, 8B and 8C, a preferred form of tobacco harvester embodying the invention comprises a platform 100 supported by two upright rear leg members 101 and 102 which mount rubber-tired wheels 103 and are braced by tubes or angles 104 to the sides of frame 100. Braces 105 provide lateral support for rear leg members 101 and 102 which are adjustable transversely as much as eight or twelve inches. The rear transverse member 106 of frame platform 100 is constructed of two channel members facing each other and spaced about ¾ inch apart to receive the leg mounting bolts which may be loosened for transverse adjustment of the legs 101, 102, or reversal thereof to reduce vehicle width, for highway transportation. For this purpose the leg members 101 and 102, with their braces 104, have a cross member 107 to which they are welded or

bolted, providing a strong base when bolted to the underside of the dual channel near frame member 106.

The longitudinal frame members 108 are channel elements positioned on their sides with the base inward and are connected to a front transverse member 109. Members 106, 108 and 109 comprise the frame 110 and support the platform 100.

A central post 111 is fastened to the frame 110 and firmly braced by tube or angle members 112 which have been omitted from FIGURE 8c for clarity. Post 111 is fitted with a jack 113 and a coupling 114. Jack 113 has a foot member 115 capable of supporting the harvester, and may be manually adjusted so that coupling 114 is at the correct height to fit into tractor coupling 116 on tractor 117 and secured by pin 118. After the harvester is coupled to tractor 117, the foot 115 is raised clear of the ground so as not to interfere with movement of the harvester when being hauled by tractor 117.

Platform 100 is supported by additional longitudinal frame members 108 centrally located between the outer longitudinal members 108. Members 108 have mounted thereon seat supporting angles 119 with a series of spaced slots 120 for receiving selected links of chains 121 from which are suspended seat supports 122. Seat supports 122 are bracket shaped, with fore and aft chains attached to the ends of the upper arm 123. A primer's seat 124 is mounted firmly on the lower arm 125 and an adjustable back rest 126 is slidably mounted on the upright central part 127 which joins upper arm 123 and lower arm 125. As the links of chains 121 slide into spaced slots 120 it will be seen that seats 124 are fully adjustable fore and aft, up and down, and may be tilted as desired. As they are chain suspended they are easily swung transversely to suit the primer's convenience in selecting and picking ripe tobacco leaves. With such a chain support the angle supports 119 need be mounted for only limited transverse adjustment as at 128, if at all. For normal construction transverse adjustment of the angle supports 119 may in general be dispensed with.

Longitudinal members 108 carry conveyor chain positioning rods 129 which are transversely slidable and pivoted at 130 at their upper ends and slidably mounted at their lower ends on a horizontal member 131 by locking sleeve 132 which may be fixed in a desired position. The length of rods 129 may be adjusted at 133. Horizontal members 131 extend beyond sleeve 132 which supports them and have a cantilever extension 134 which carries slidable footrest 135 which may be adjusted and then locked in position. The rear end of each horizontal member 131 is bent as at 136 and is anchored in a suitable manner. In the showing of FIGURES 8A–C there are four members 131. The outer two members 131 have their bent portions 136 anchored to rear leg members 101 and 102, respectively. The inner two members 131 have their bent portions 136 anchored to a horizontal member 137 by adjustable connectors 138. Horizontal member 137 is braced and connected firmly to the frame 110 by rear ladder steps 139 and brace 140.

Conveyor chain positioning rods 129 carry a slidably adjustable bearing support 141 which mounts sprocket 142 meshing with conveyor chain 143 and determining its point closest to primer seat 124 within easy reach of a primer harvesting tobacco. Chains 142 carry spring clips 144 and pass through a guard 145 supported by rods 129. Guard 145 is a channel member open at the point of insertion of the primer's hand for placing bundles in clips 150. Guide-guard 145 permits chain 143 to be run slack and prevents injury such as losing a finger, at sprocket 142. A loose chain 142 may be lifted off the sprockets at any time, or the chain stopped by grasping by the hand.

Conveyor chains 143 each extends above the platform 100 and meshes with four sprockets in addition to a sprocket 142. Of these groups of five sprockets, sprocket 142 is both a chain positioning sprocket and a tension adjusting sprocket. A second sprocket 146 in each group

is a drive sprocket for the respective conveyor chain 143. The four drive sprockets 146 are keyed to shaft 147 which is preferably driven by a separate small gasoline motor 148. The use of a motor instead of driving of the rear wheels 102 or 103 gives better speed control and keeps the conveyor chains running at set speed where the harvester slows down or stops, allowing for uneven or heavy yields, and does not leave tobacco hanging on the chain out of reach of the loopers standing on platform 100. Again, the conveyor chains do not operate on the highway merely because the harvester is moving. Motor 148 drives shaft 147 through a slip clutch 149 which permits the chains 143 to stop in the event of a jam or accident.

Conveyor chains 143 extend above the platform 100 and are maintained in a path which sweeps above and around the position of a looper on platform 100 such that a major part of the conveyor chain path above the platform and the tobacco bundles conveyed by the chain are positioned within an area of small compass while moving along the sweeping path to provide normally ample time for the manual removal of tobacco hands or leaf bundles from the clips 144 as they move along. Although the curved path of FIGS. 1, 6 and 8 is preferred, as providing a smoother operation as well as for aesthetic reasons, the construction of FIGS. 8A, 8B and 8C can approximate the curved track element sufficiently to achieve satisfactory results at a lower cost.

The framing 162 carries sprockets 163, 164 and 165 which are arranged to provide a conveyor chain path which sweeps above and around the position of a looper's hands when standing in a working position on platform 100, and allows sufficient time for the removal of the bundles from clips 150. Although recycling of the bundles is eliminated by automatic release, it is desirable to handle the tobacco as little as possible. Automatic release by trip means or cam action requires that the loose bundles which have been dropped into a basket or bag be picked up and in many cases reassembled before looping. Where bulk curing under forced draft with heated air is employed the trip means may be employed extensively and the need for looping may be substantially eliminated.

Conveyor chains 143 carry spring clips 150. One arm 151 is fixed rigidly at 152 to a link of chain 143 which assures the clips 150 being in the correct position for use at all times, both for insertion of bundles, removal of bundles, and automatic release. Such mounting prevents spinning clips and clips being in upside down position. Movable clip arm 153 is pivoted in bearing 154 having substantial length which prevents binding and provides very easy insertion and removal by the primers and loopers, eliminating bruised tobacco. A spring 155 urges arms 151 and 153 resiliently together with a very easy, smooth action because of elongate bearing 154. Although bundles of tobacco are gripped firmly by the clip 150 they are free to adjust under the action of gravity so that the tobacco is not broken or bruised. Clip arms 151 and 153 are bent outward at their free lower ends and pivotally mount rollers 156 which have a convex upper surface 157. Because rollers 156 and 157 are offset from arms 151 and 153 they exert a twisting action at the bearing 154. When arms 151 and 153 are merely pinned together, this twisting action causes them to bind and even jam. This eccentric loading is readily carried by bearing 154 which extends across the yoke part 158 of arm 151. A slight tilt of the rollers 156 allows multidirectional insertion and removal of tobacco bundles.

Movable clip arm 153 carries a projection 159 which serves as a cam follower for the automatic release of bundles into a basket or bag 160. A cam means 161 is mounted on framing 162 which mounts sprockets 163, 164 and 165 closely adjacent the path of conveyor chain 143 and has an offset preferably inclined part 166 which engages projection or cam follower 159. The opening force exerted by cam 161 is readily taken by long bearing 154 so that clip 150 and chain 143 are not twisted and jammed.

A basket or bag 167 is suspended from framing 162 just below cam means 162 adjacent sprocket 165, so that any bundles missed by the loopers are not recycled and interfere with the primer. Where the yield is heavy, recycling can make it necessary to slow down or halt the harvester, affecting the production of the entire group of nine people. Bundles dropped in basket 167 are later looped as time permits unless the crop is bulk cured as mentioned above. Framing 162 is supported by uprights 168 mounted on platform 100 preferably not far removed from longitudinal frame members 103. Horizontal bracing is supplied by member 169 which also acts as a railing. Additional safeguard is supplied by side railings 170 and raised well guards 171 surrounding the two wells in platform 100 through which the two central conveyor chains 143 pass to convey bundles from the primer station to the looper station.

Adjacent each looper station on platform 100 is mounted a tobacco stick, supply cans 172, and looping rack comprising spaced hook support members 173 and 174. Hook support members 173 are mounted on uprights 168 and carry a typing cord supply 175. Hook support members 174 are carried by transverse member 169. Cans 172 contain sticks 176 which rest across hook members 173—174 while the tobacco bundles are being looped and draped alternately on opposite sides of each stick 176. Filled sticks are stacked on rear platform extension 177. A canvas canopy 178 provides protection from sun and weather.

Where the crop is to be bulk cured the sticks 176 are no longer necessary. Cans 172 may be used to store extra bags 167 which would be larger than those shown in the drawing. Baskets could not be stored in cans 172, but could be nested on platform extension 177 until needed.

The operation of the form of harvester shown in FIGS. 8A, 8B and 8C is as follows:

Supplies are checked to an adequate supply tying twine 175 and tobacco sticks 176 in cans 172 at each looper station. Jack 113 is adjusted so that coupling 114 is at the correct height for tractor coupling 116. The harvester is then coupled to tractor 117 by pin 118 and jack foot 115 raised for clearance.

The primers adjust chains 121 in slots 120 so that their individual seats 124 are positioned to best advantage in relation to conveyor chain 143 at sprocket 142 and the ground level. The whole seat assembly should swing freely from side to side. Back rests 126 and foot rests 135 are adjusted to suit the individual primer. Positioning rods 129 are adjusted at 132 and 133 to assure correct tension on conveyor chains 143 which are run loose to increase machine life and afford safety to the primer. A primer should be able to stop his conveyor chain 143 by grasping a clip 150 and to lift it off the sprocket 142 in an emergency. This check should be made with conveyor chain drive motor 148 running and, if necessary, clutch 149 should be adjusted to slip when a chain 143 is held by hand. All sprockets and clips should be oiled and move freely.

With primers and loopers at their stations the tractor 117 with the attached harvester is driven into a tobacco field and along the rows of tobacco at a speed of between one and two miles an hour. Tractor speed and the speed of motor 148 are adjusted to suit the character of the land and of the crop being harvested. As the harvester travels along the rows of tobacco the primers select the ripe leaves and break them off the stalks. The seats 124 may be easily swung sideways to facilitate this work of selecting suitable leaves and harvesting them. Bundles of five or six leaves are inserted, stems up, between rollers 156 of clips 150 and are carried by chains 143 to the respective looper stations above platform 100. The pointed teeth of sprockets 142, 163, 164 and 165 allow

the chain **143** to be pushed to one side without coming off the sprocket.

The loopers have each placed a stick **176** on support hooks **173** and **174** in preparation to receive looped bundles. As a bundle arrives on chains **143** the looper grasps it firmly below clip **150**, pulls it free, loops tying cord **175** around the bunched ends, and drapes it over the stick **176**, ready to receive it. The bundles hang down from the stick **176**, alternately on opposite sides and are held in place by the looped tying cord **175** held taut by the weight of the bundles. When a stick **176** is full the looper cuts the string or cord **175** and ties it to the end of the stick. Full sticks are placed on platform **100** and extension **177** and a new stick is placed in supports **173** and **174**. If during this change over or for any other reason, the looper is not able to remove a bundle from its clip **150** during the extended time it is passing along its sweeping path around the looper position and the bundle approaches sprocket **165**, inclined portion **166** of cam **161** engages cam follower projection **159** on arm **153** of the clip **150** and causes the arms **151** and **153** to separate against the action of tension spring **155** and to deposit the bundle of leaves in the basket **167** to prevent recycling, resulting in less damaged tobacco and less loss of time.

A harvester of the above type frees the tractor for other work and reduces harvester maintenance to a minimum by the simplification of parts of the machine. The machine is highly stable because of width and cross bracing and is well suited to rough terrain. Safety is promoted by reducing sprocket hazards by reducing the number and size of existing sprockets which are more easily shielded. Using a loose chain and slip clutch promotes safety and saves time, as discussed above.

The ski lift type seats are highly adjustable. The primer can adjust his seat to a semi-reclining position or to any position he desires, momentarily, and without the use of tools. The seats are flexibly mounted and the primer can position himself as desired in relation to a row of tobacco by the use of his feet on the foot rest. This feature is highly desirable as it gives a primer with short arms a longer effective reach, and allows one with long arms to back off. In tobacco rows, of uneven width, the primer is able to swing his body clear and avoid damaging the tobacco.

The fixed non-binding clips make it easier to insert tobacco bundles. This permits a heavier spring to be used, thereby decreasing the possibility of fall out. The clips are fastened solidly to the conveyor chain and are properly supported by a guide rail. When a primer inserts the tobacco bundles there is no flexing of the conveyor chain or spinning of the clip. Clips are never presented to the primer upside down or filled with recycling tobacco. The conveyor chains are preferably constructed of detachable pressed steel and repairs are very simple and inexpensive. The clips are spaced at eighteen inch intervals, giving the primer more available clips and eliminating the need for waiting. The harvester is easily adjustable to varying row widths by moving the rear legs in or out.

For bulk curing of the crop baskets or bags **167** are used and the automatic trip means may be relied upon to deposit hands therein. However, in view of the need of forced draft to drive the heated air through the filled baskets during the curing operation, it may be desirable for the former loopers to remove the bundles by hand from the clips **150** and to place them in a basket **167** resting on platform **100** according to a desired pattern to maximize the curing efficiency of air flow through the bulk of leaves in the basket, so as to reduce handling to a minimum consonant with obtaining sound well cured leaves.

While there have been disclosed above what are at present believed to be the preferred forms of the invention, it will be understood that the invention may take various forms. The appended claims are intended to cover in generic terms all such variations as fall within the true spirit of the invention.

I claim:

1. In combination, a tobacco leaf harvester for the successive harvesting of the ripe leaves of a field of tobacco plants without damage to the continuing growth of the tobacco plants and the successive ripening of leaves higher on the plant which are to be subsequently harvested, comprising a frame, spaced wheels supporting the rear of said frame, means for connecting a prime mover to the forward part of said frame for moving the harvester along rows of tobacco to be harvested, a raised tobacco receiving means comprising a platform and a leaf receiving surface secured to said frame, above said platform, a leaf picker's seat mounted on said frame and positioned near the ground, flexible conveyor means carried by said frame and bundle holding spring pressed clip means firmly fastened in fixed relation to said flexible conveyor means for conveying loose bundles of tobacco leaves with their bunched stems up and leaves in draped depending position from a point within easy reach of said seat to a point above said tobacco receiving means, independent motor drive means to move said conveyor means and said bundle holding means, at a speed which can be regulated independently of the harvester speed, release means positioned adjacent said leaf receiving surface, means mounting said conveyor means on said frame and maintaining said conveying means and said bundle holding means firmly in a position such that said release means engages said bundle holding means individually and releases any leaf bundle carried thereby upon said tobacco leaf receiving surface, said release engagement being automatic as the holding means are carried past the release means and recycling of leaf bundles is eliminated, said means mounting said conveyor means comprising positioning means such that the upper portion of said conveyor means above said platform conveys the bundles of tobacco in a path which sweeps above and around said leaf receiving surface along a locus the major part of which is within easy arm reach of an operator stationed on said platform adjacent said leaf receiving surface whereby said bundles are positioned within an area of small compass while moving along said major part of said locus to provide normally ample time for the manual removal of leaf bundles from said conveyor means.

2. The combination set forth in claim 1, said conveyor means comprising a linked chain, said bundle holding spring pressed clip means each firmly fastened to a link of said chain and having an arm which is moved by said release means upon engagement as it passes to release tobacco leaves.

3. The combination set forth in claim 2, said positioning means comprising a curved track element having a circular portion with said release means mounted closely adjacent thereto, said conveyor chain sliding over said track element with said spring pressed clips projecting outwardly from said chain.

4. The combination set forth in claim 3, said track element having the links of said conveyor chain extending downward on each side thereof to form guiding flanges to help maintain said chain on said track.

5. The combination set forth in claim 4, a basket comprising said leaf receiving surface and having upstanding walls in leaf receiving relation to said track, a forward centrally located wheel for said frame, a motor overlying said forward wheel, said means for connecting a prime mover to said frame for moving the harvester comprising mounting means for said motor and a drive chain between said motor and said forward wheel.

6. The combination set forth in claim 5, said means mounting said conveyor means having combined guide and positioning means adjacent said release means for maintaining said bundle holding means in positive release position.

7. The combination set forth in claim 6, said guide and positioning means forming a path for said conveyor means above said raised receiving means such that said bundle holding means are positioned within easy reach of said release means during the major part of their travel above said raised receiving means.

8. The combination set forth in claim 7, said raised receiving means comprising a basket carried by said frame, said release means comprising a projecting pin positioned on said combined guide and positioning means directly above said basket to open said bundle holding spring pressed clip means.

9. The combination set forth in claim 1, said leaf pickers' seats being swingingly supported by chains, slots in said frame for receiving the links of said chains whereby they are readily adjustable both with respect to distance from the ground and in angle of tilt.

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