



US 20040079064A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Morris et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2004/0079064 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 29, 2004**

(54) **VINEYARD APPARATUS, SYSTEM, AND
METHOD FOR VINEYARD
MECHANIZATION**

(52) **U.S. Cl. 56/331**

(76) **Inventors: Justin R. Morris, Springdale, AR (US);
Tommy R. Oldridge, Lowell, AR (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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For more than thirty-two years, extensive research studies involving various concepts of total vineyard mechanization have been carried out at the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station under the direction of Justin R. Morris (22). Tommy Oldridge was one of the first growers in the region to commercially test, implement and improve upon the findings of these research studies. These studies at the University of Arkansas have involved the evaluation of trellising and training systems suitable for total vineyard mechanization, mechanical shoot positioning, mechanical pruning, mechanical thinning, mechanical harvesting, and the post-harvest handling and utilization of mechanically harvested grapes (2, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 35). The success of this approach to vineyard mechanization has been the fact that it has concentrated on minimizing or eliminating all limiting factors impacting the system while maintaining, or in some cases improving, fruit quality. Also, the researchers have constantly developed, modified and evaluated new equipment for the mechanization of each viticultural operation requiring hand labor. A major effort has been placed on accomplishing these objectives without any loss in fruit quality.

(21) **Appl. No.: 10/691,016**

(22) **Filed: Oct. 21, 2003**

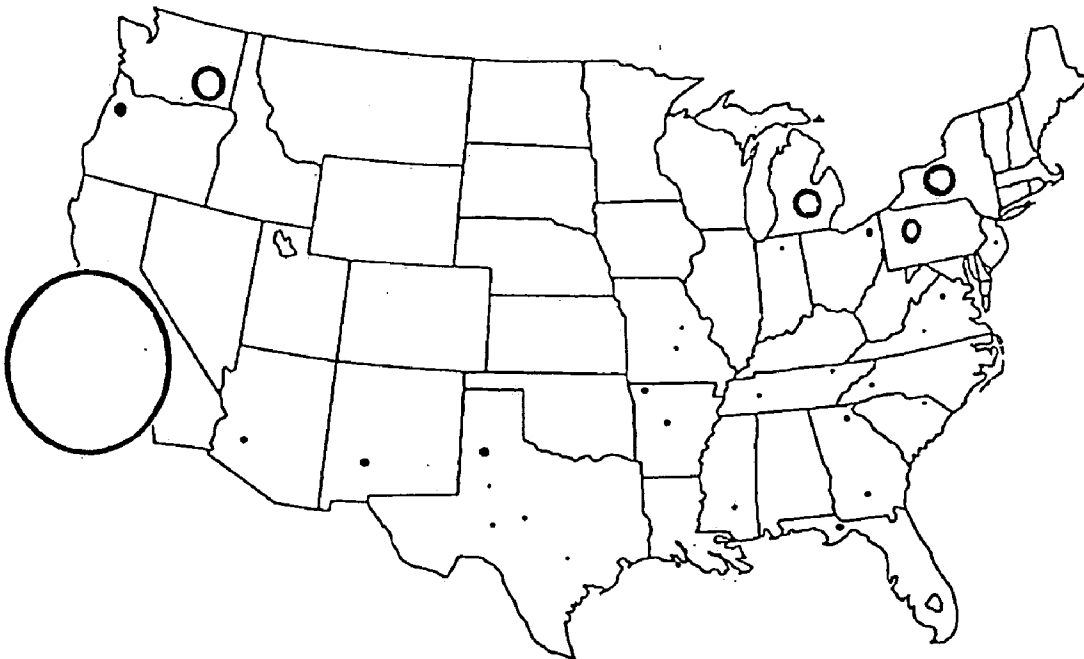
Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 10/014,914, filed on Oct. 22, 2001, which is a continuation of application No. 08/950,301, filed on Oct. 14, 1997, now Pat. No. 6,374,538.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/035,216, filed on Jan. 7, 1997. Provisional application No. 60/049,285, filed on Jun. 10, 1997.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷ A01D 46/00**



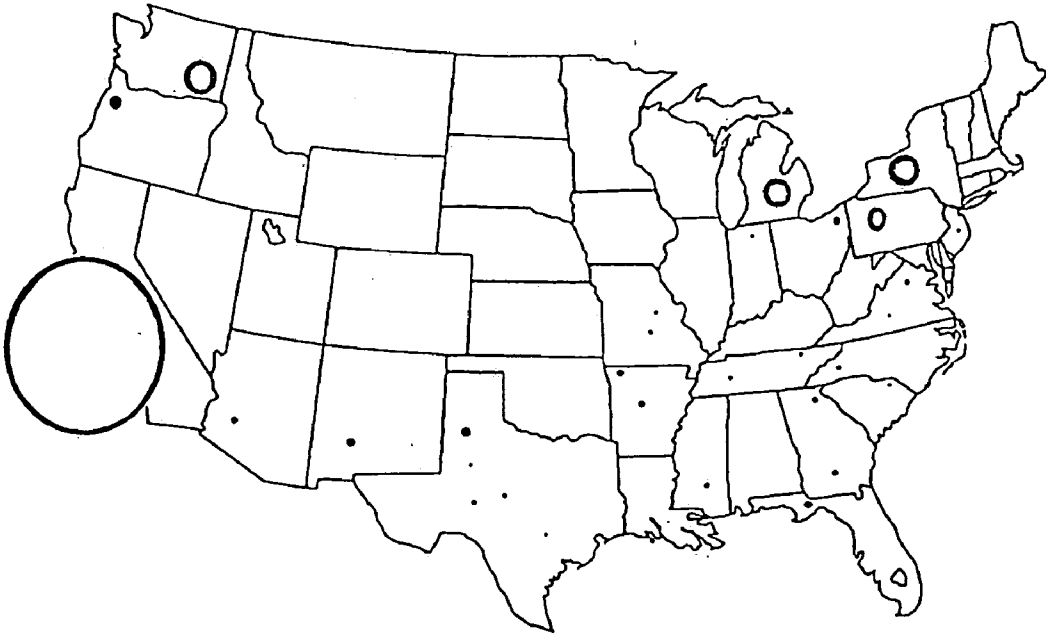


FIG. 1

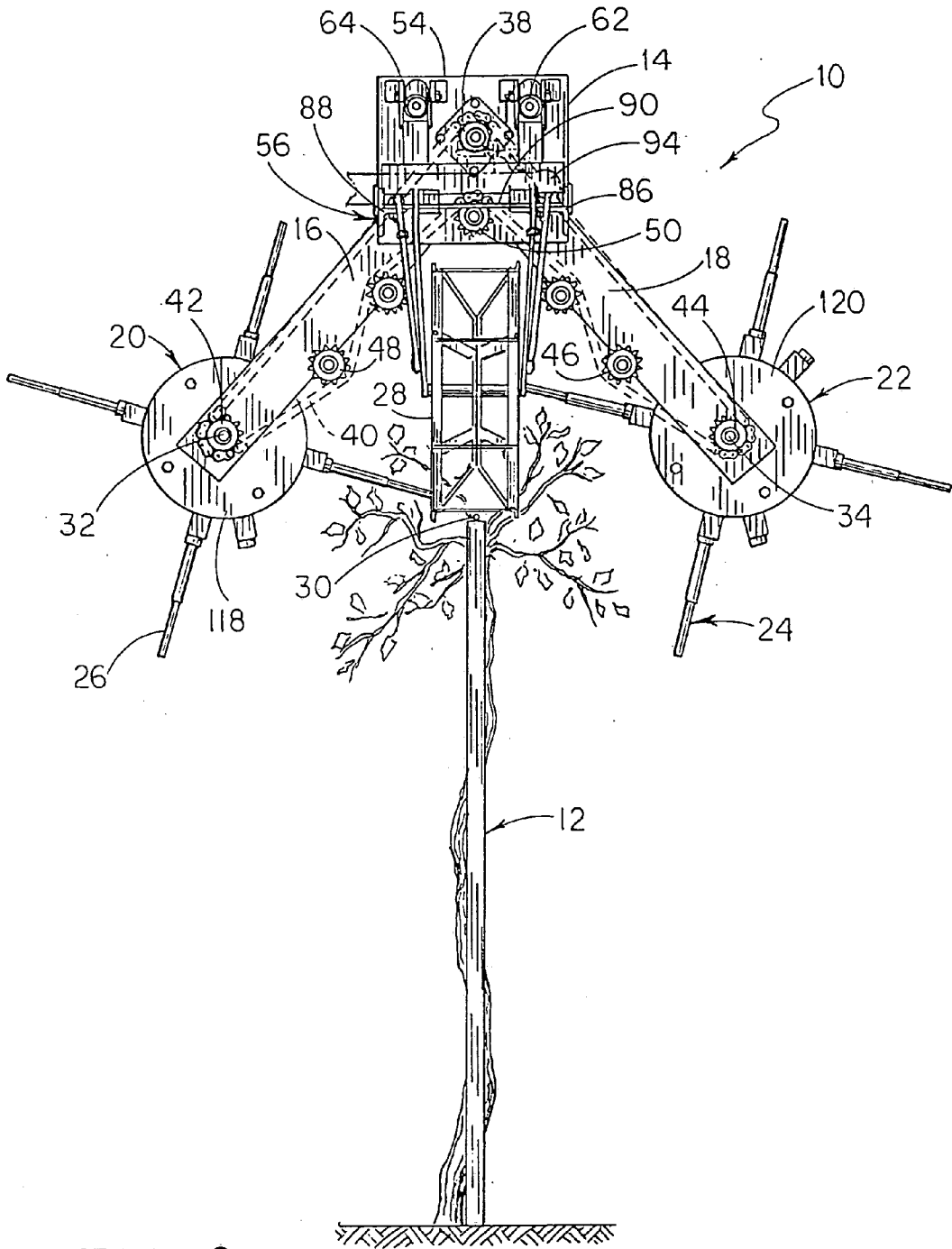


FIG. 2

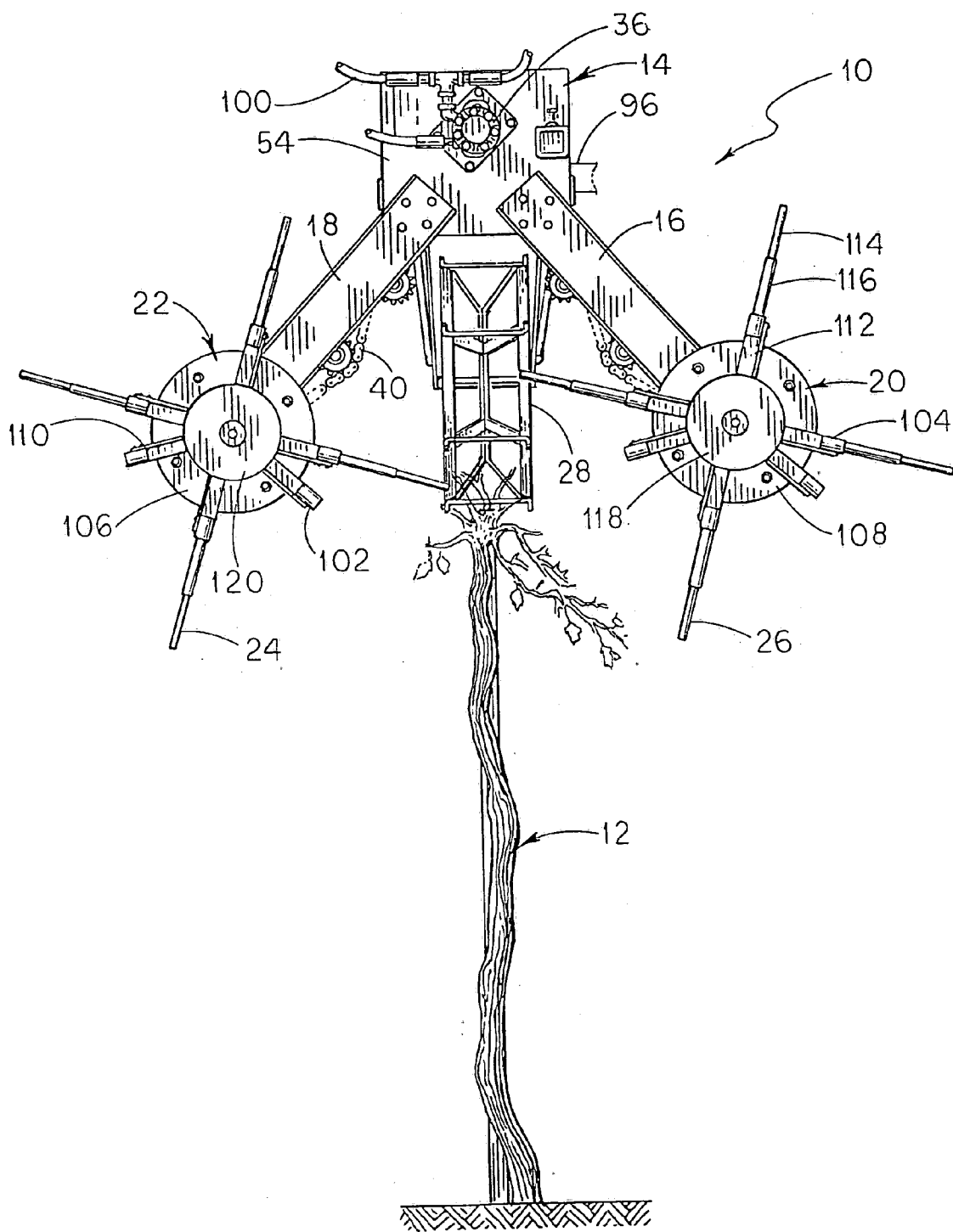


FIG. 3

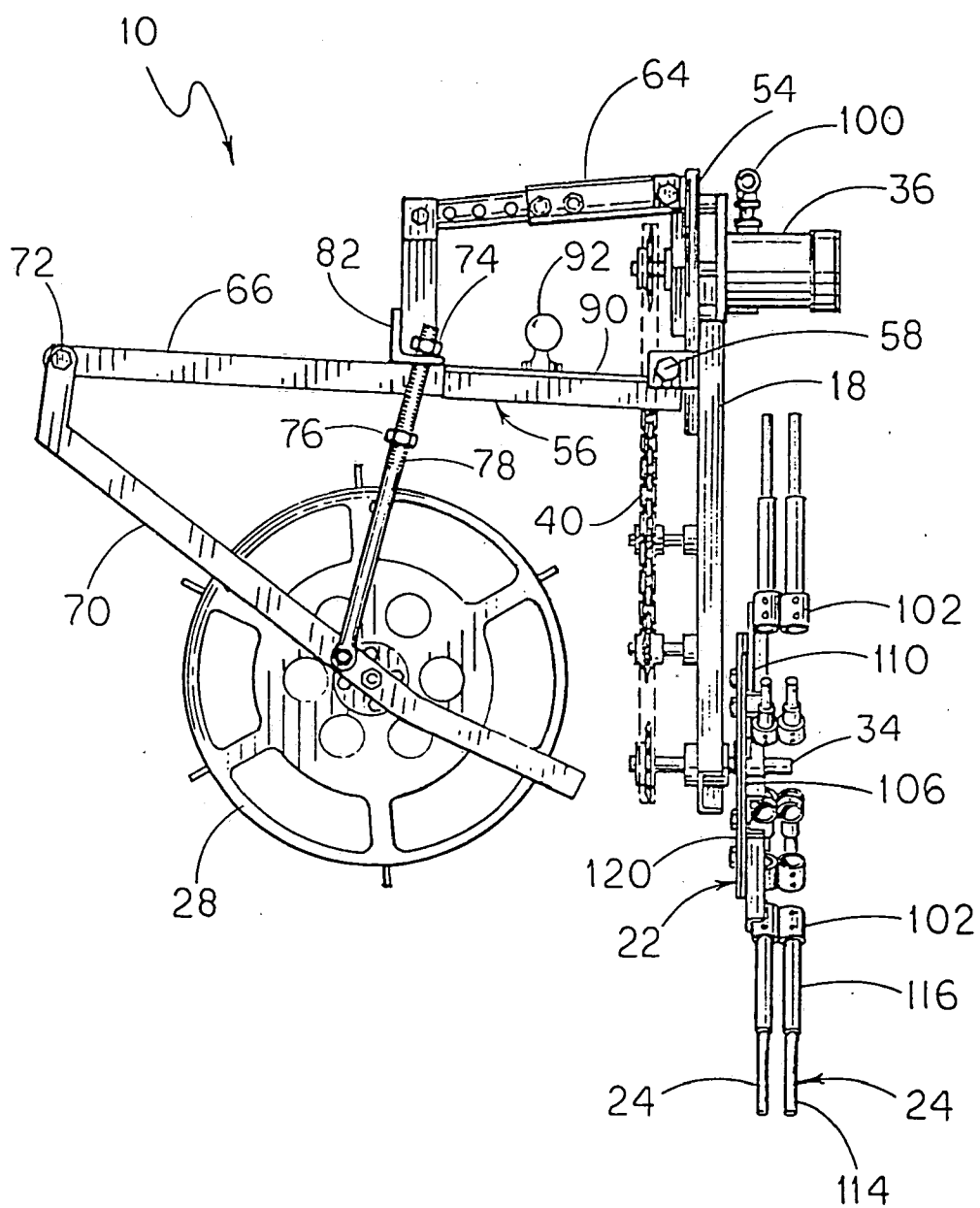


FIG. 4

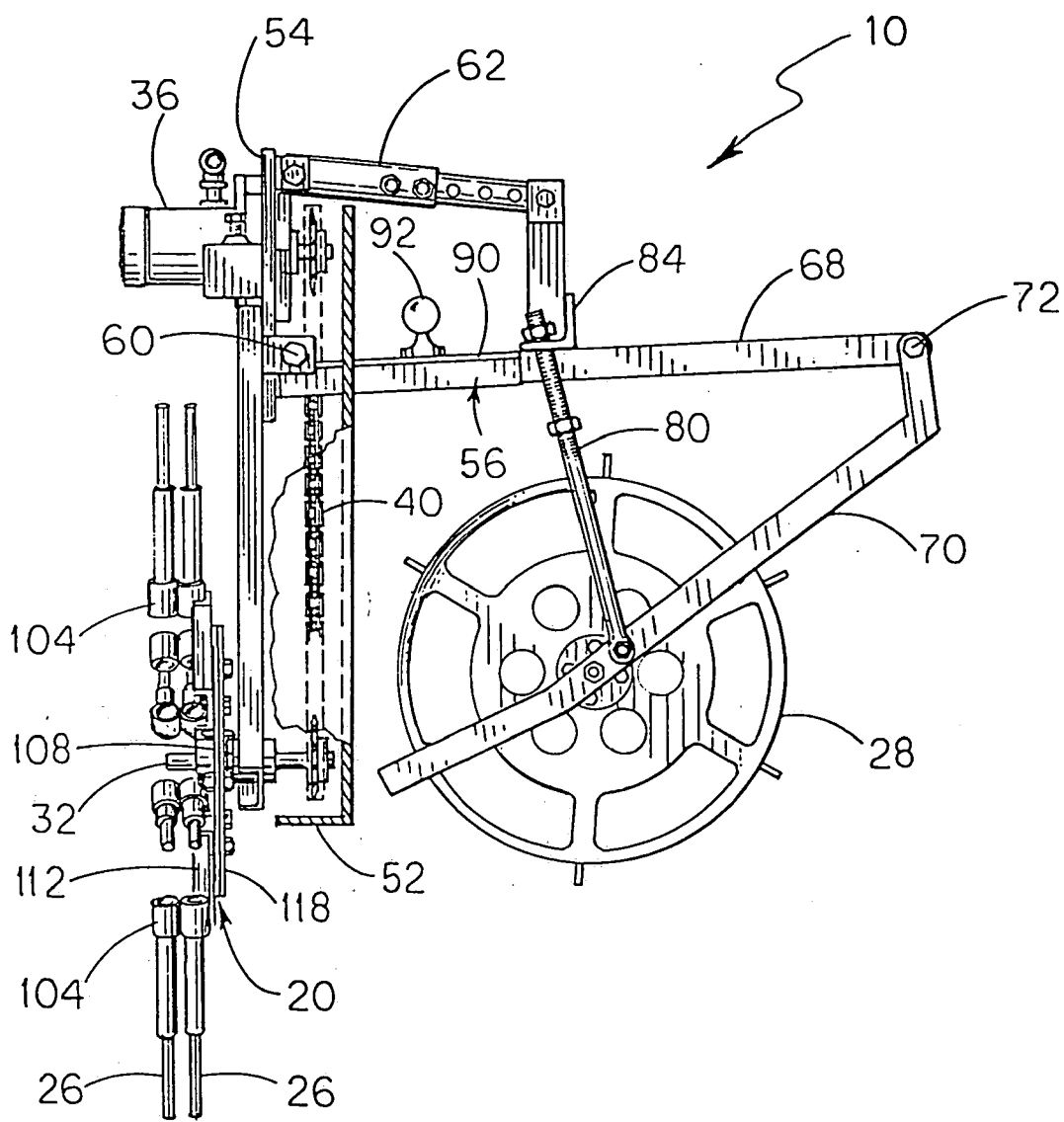


FIG. 5

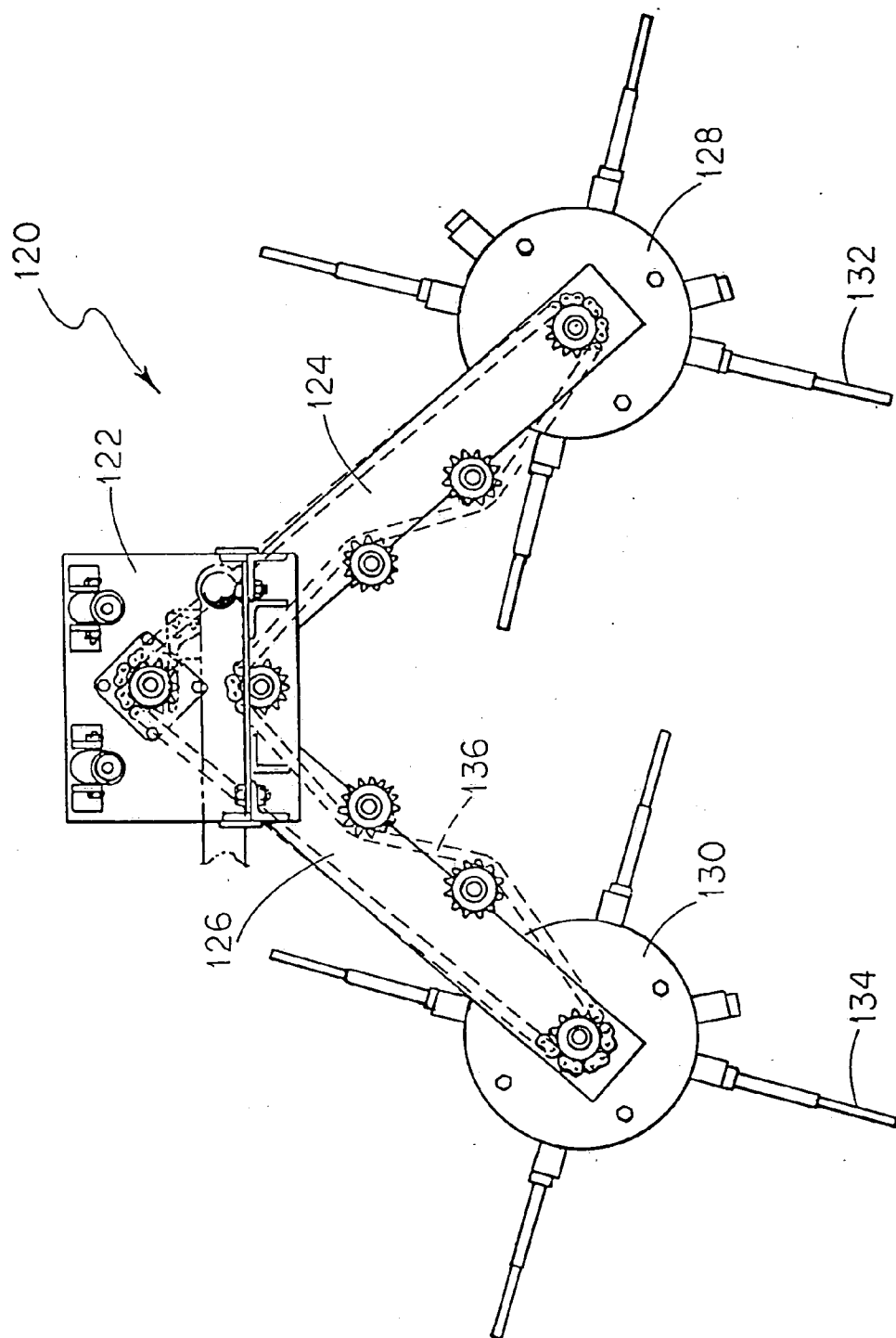


FIG. 6

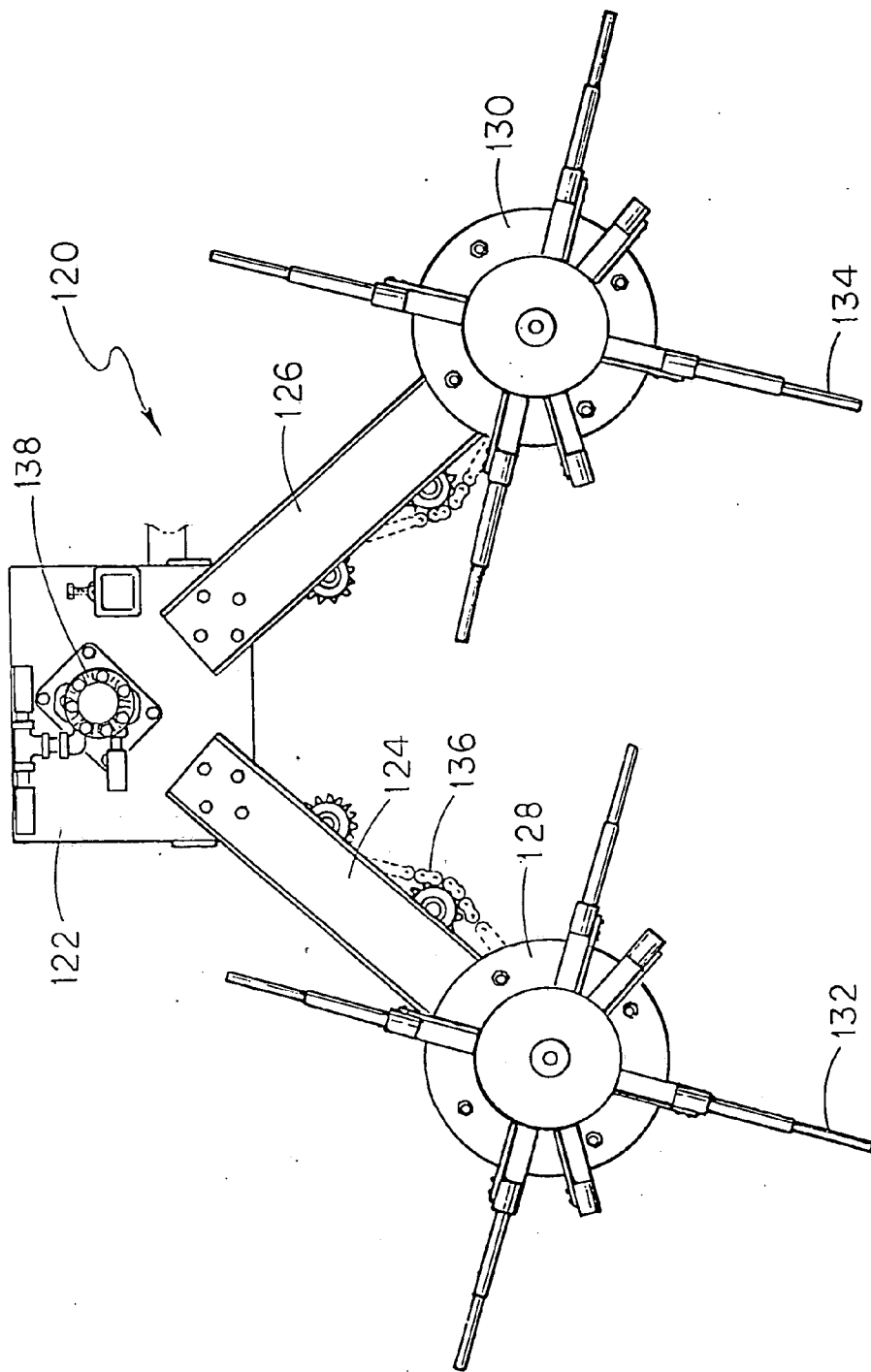
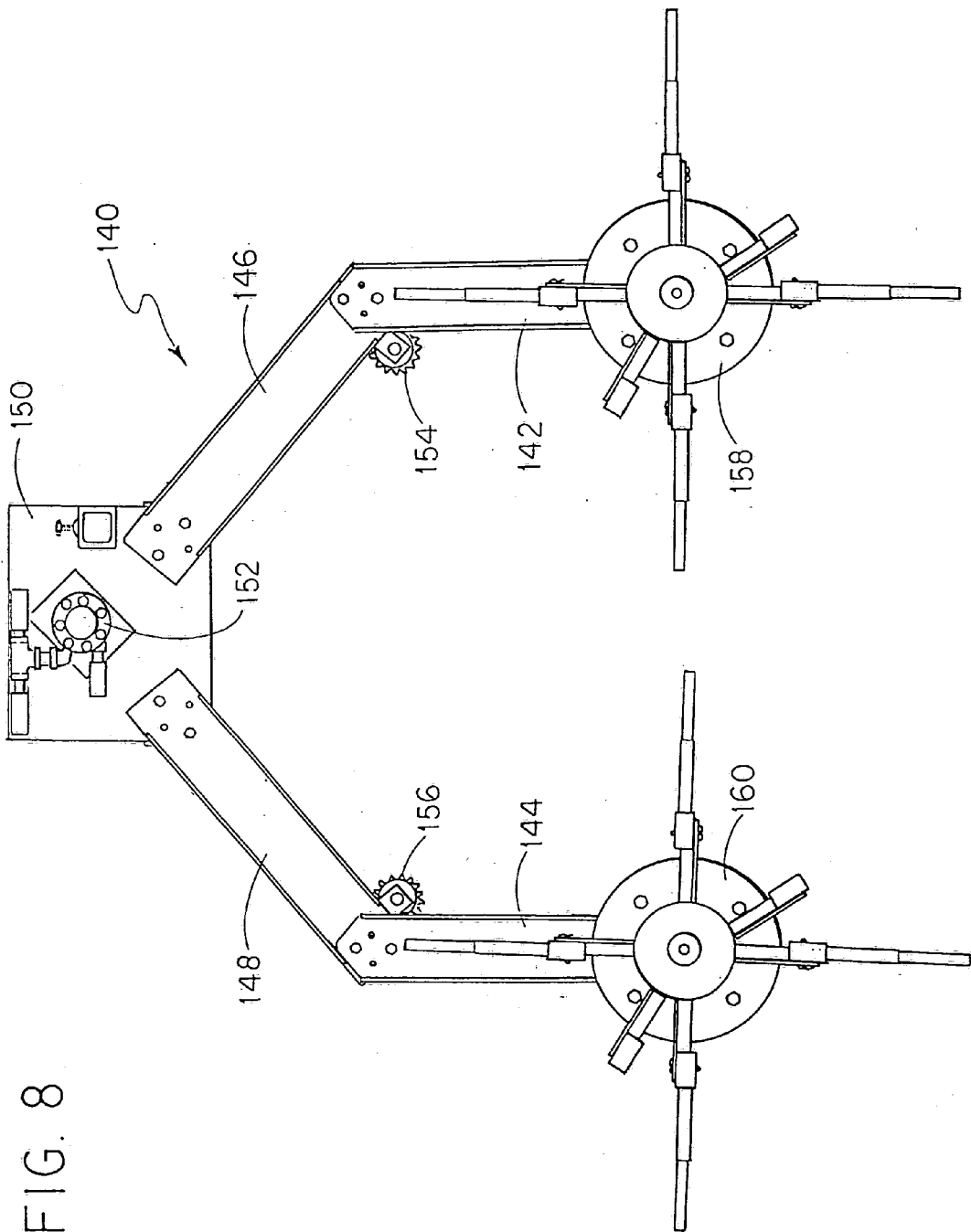


FIG. 7



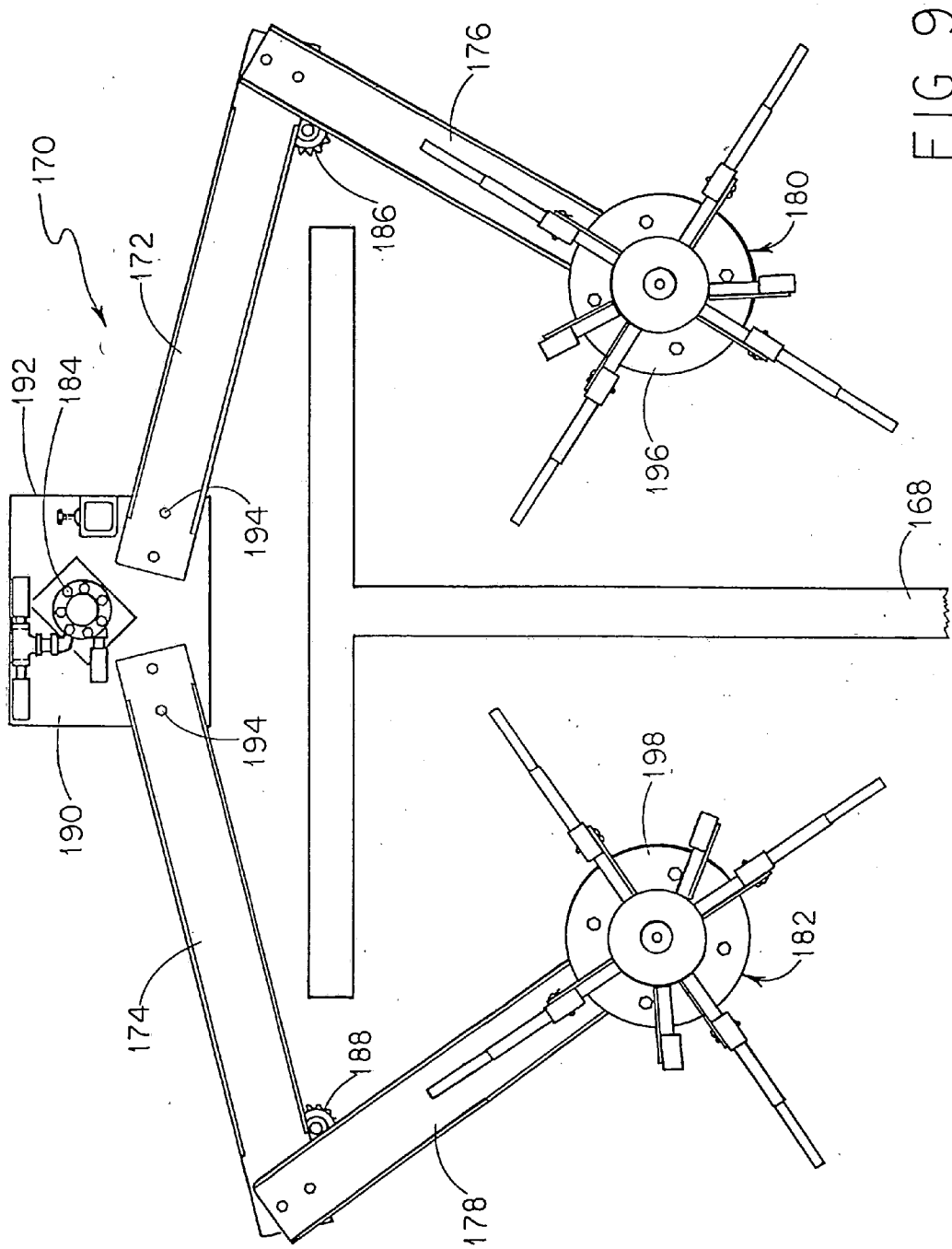


FIG. 9

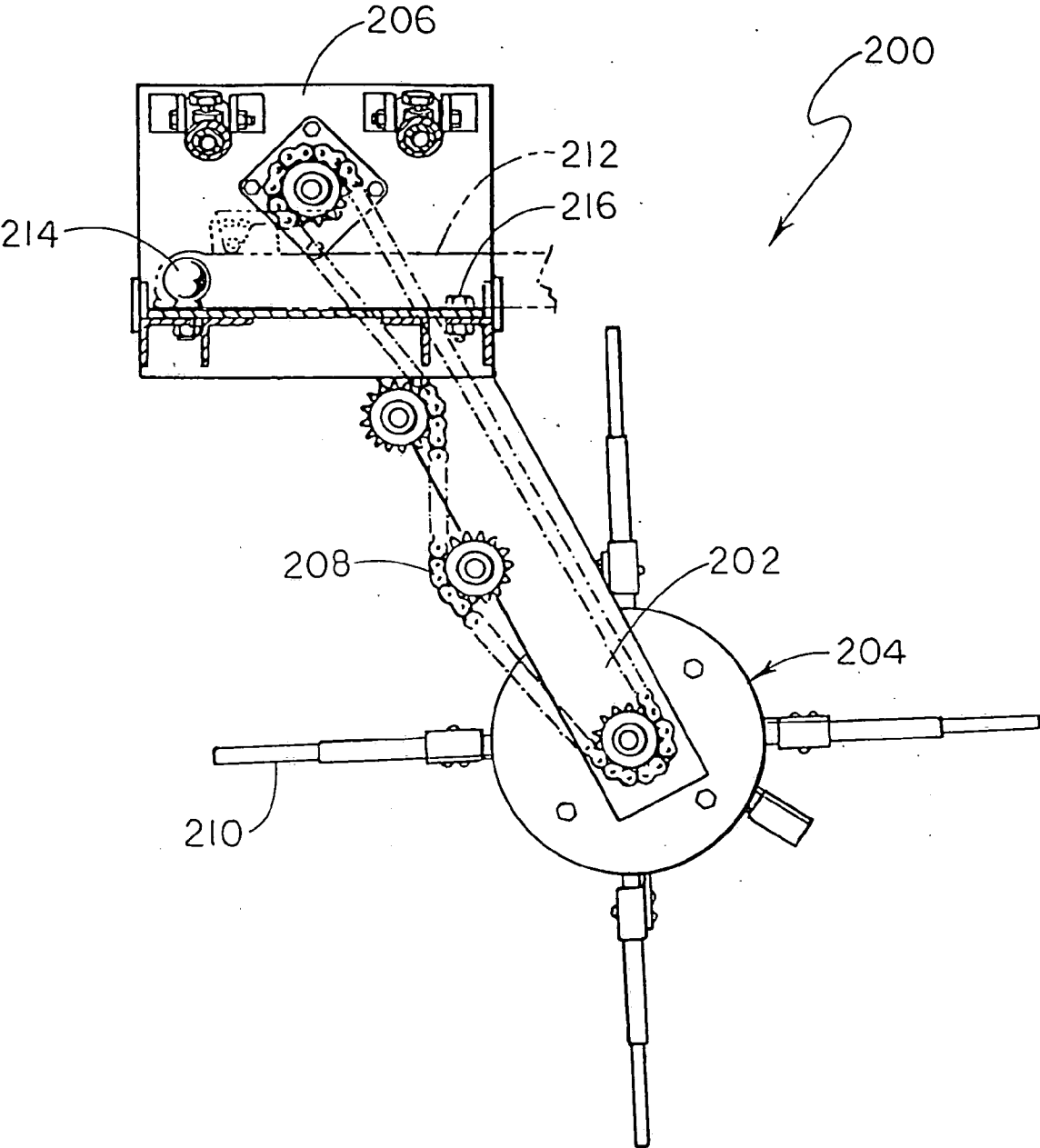


FIG. 10

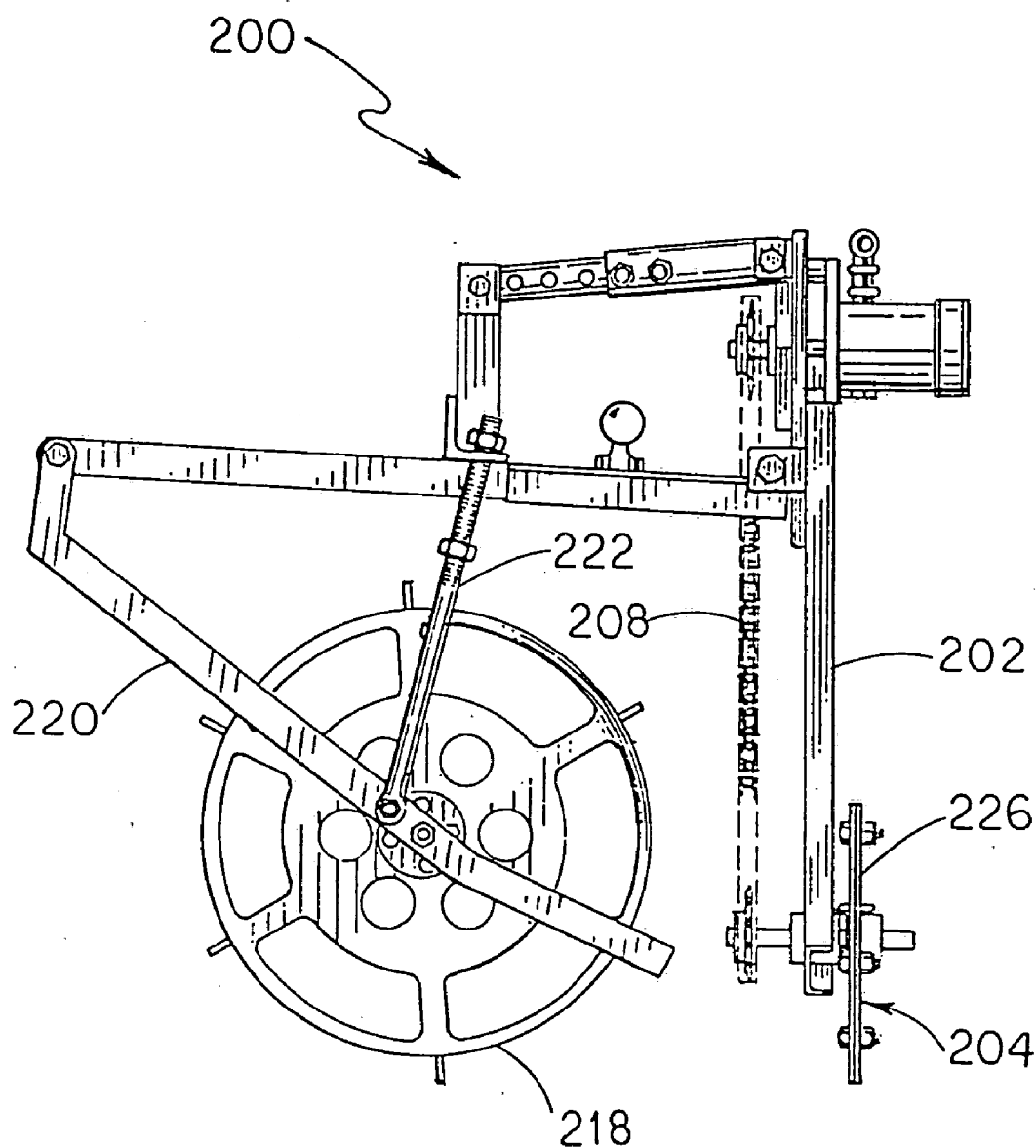


FIG. 11

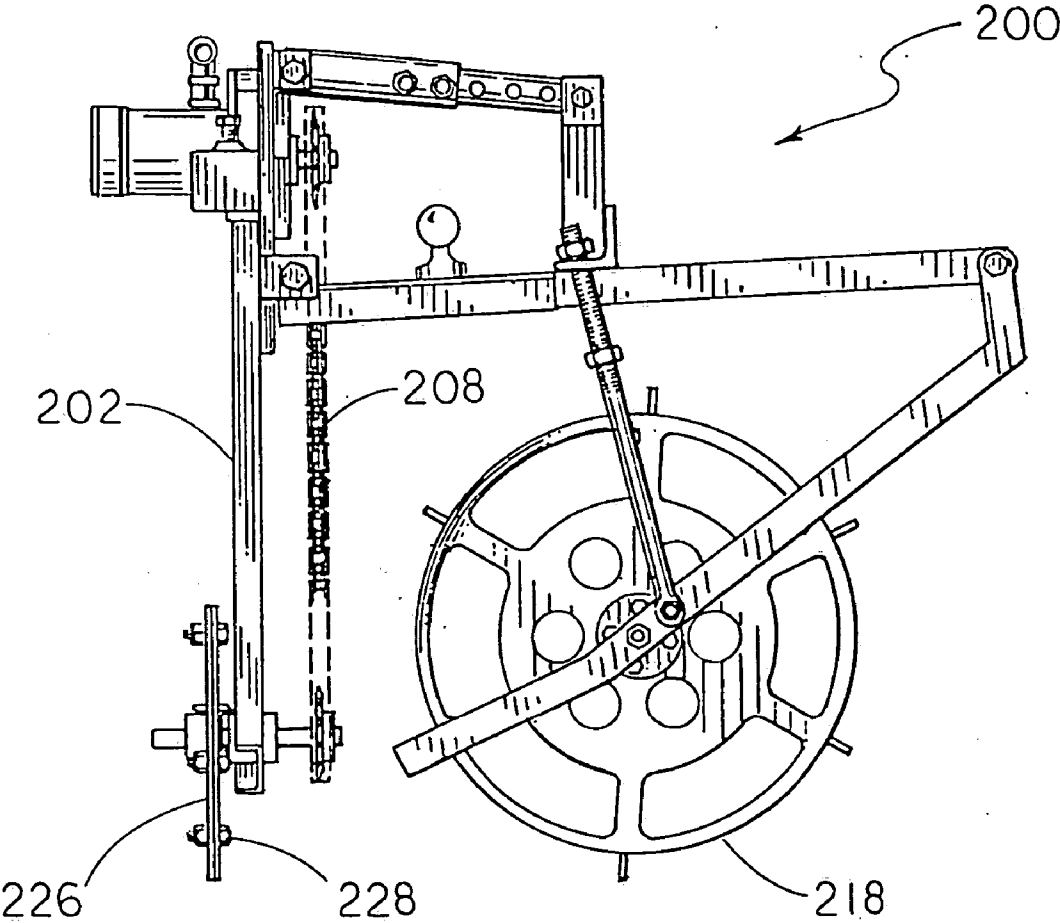


FIG. 12

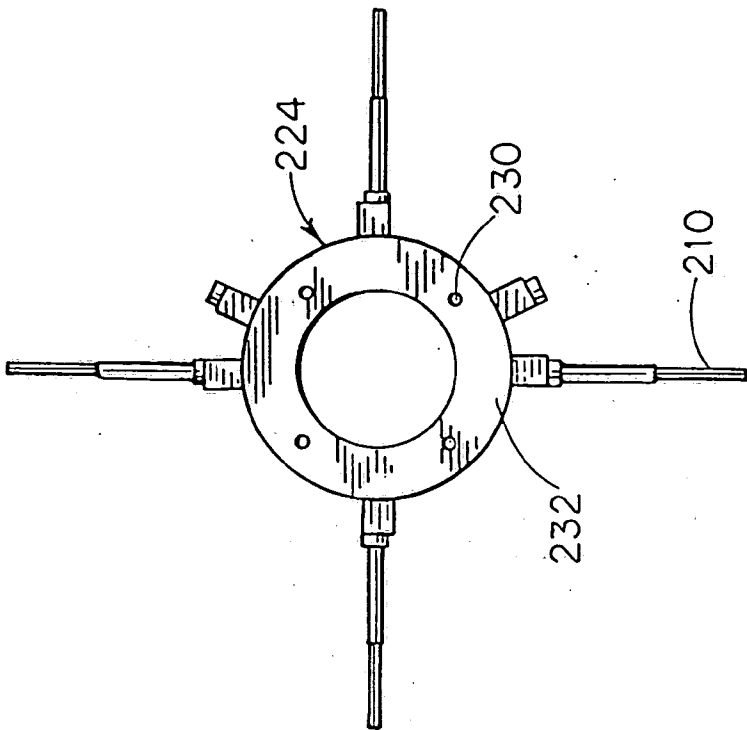


FIG. 14

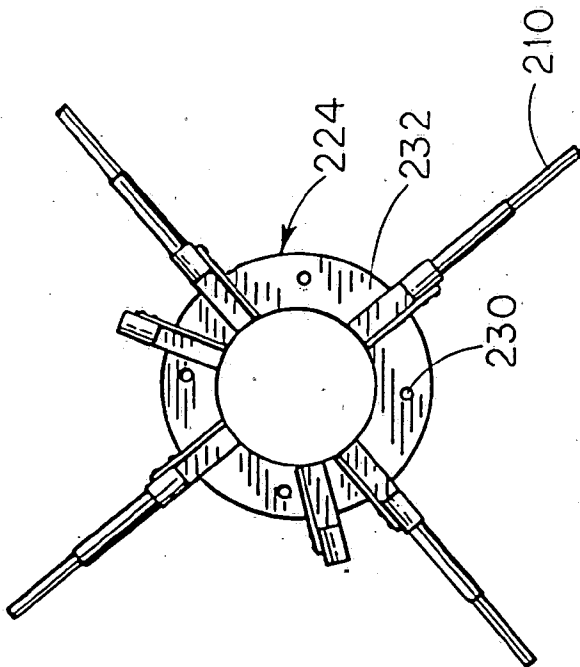
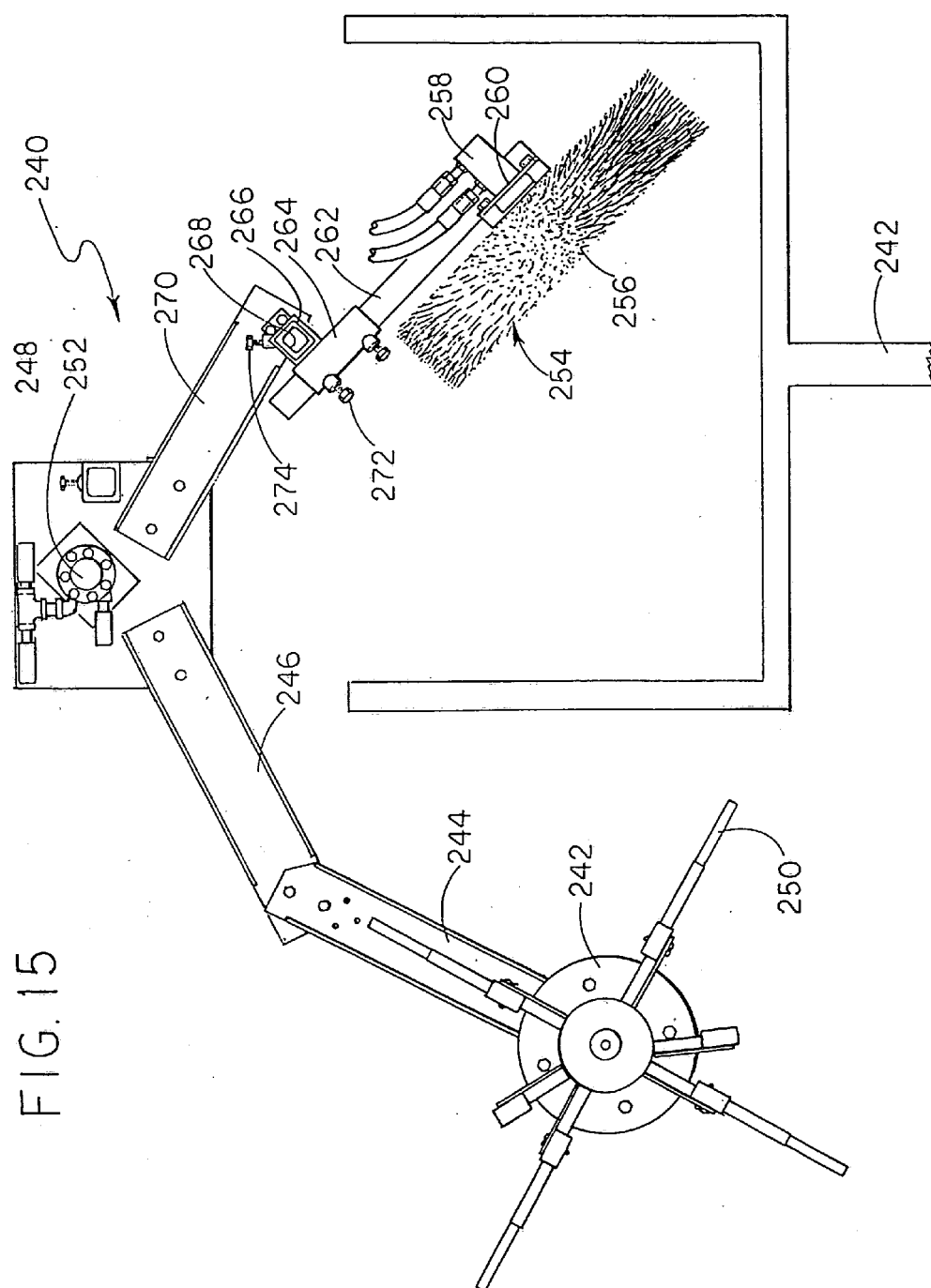
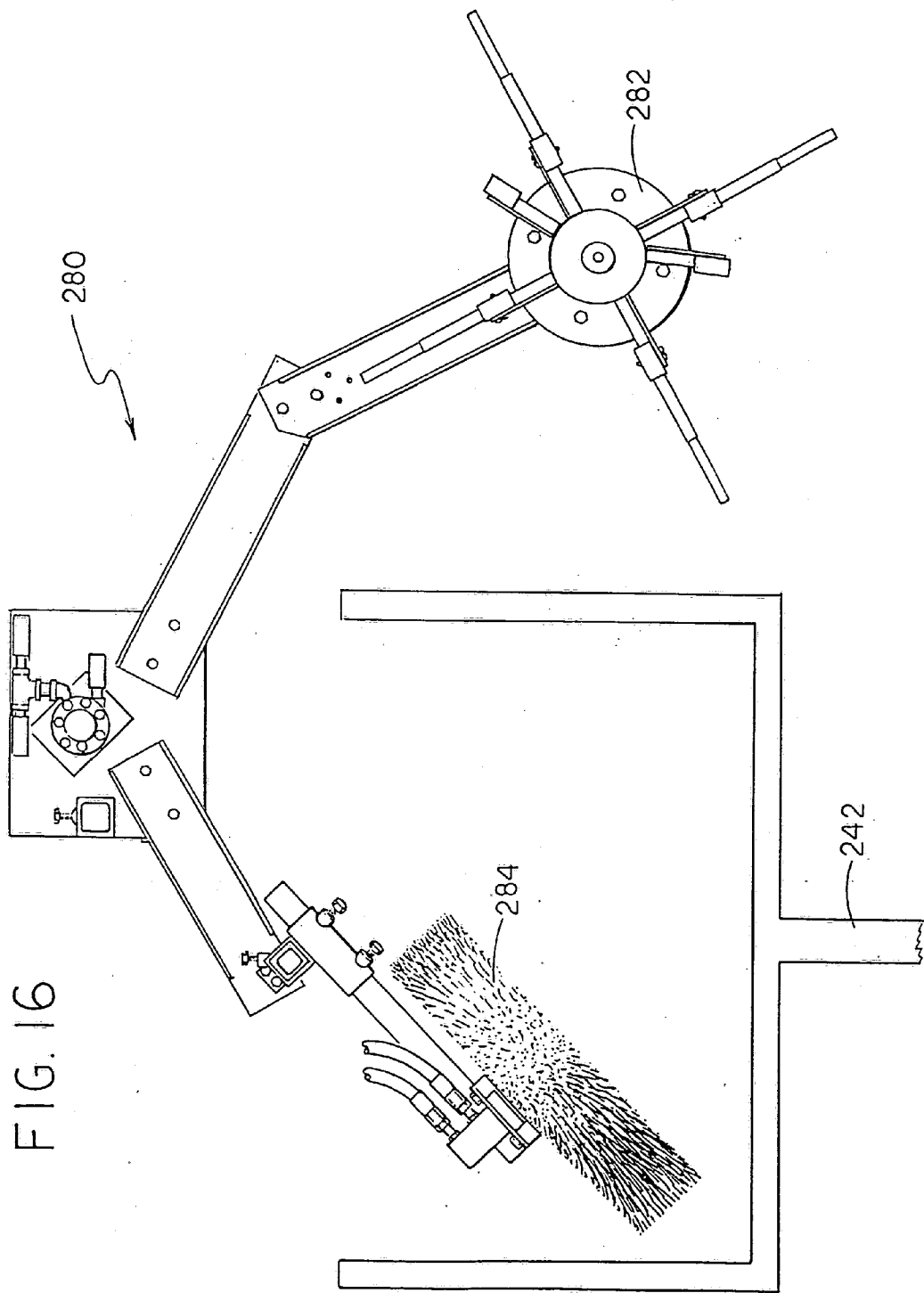


FIG. 13





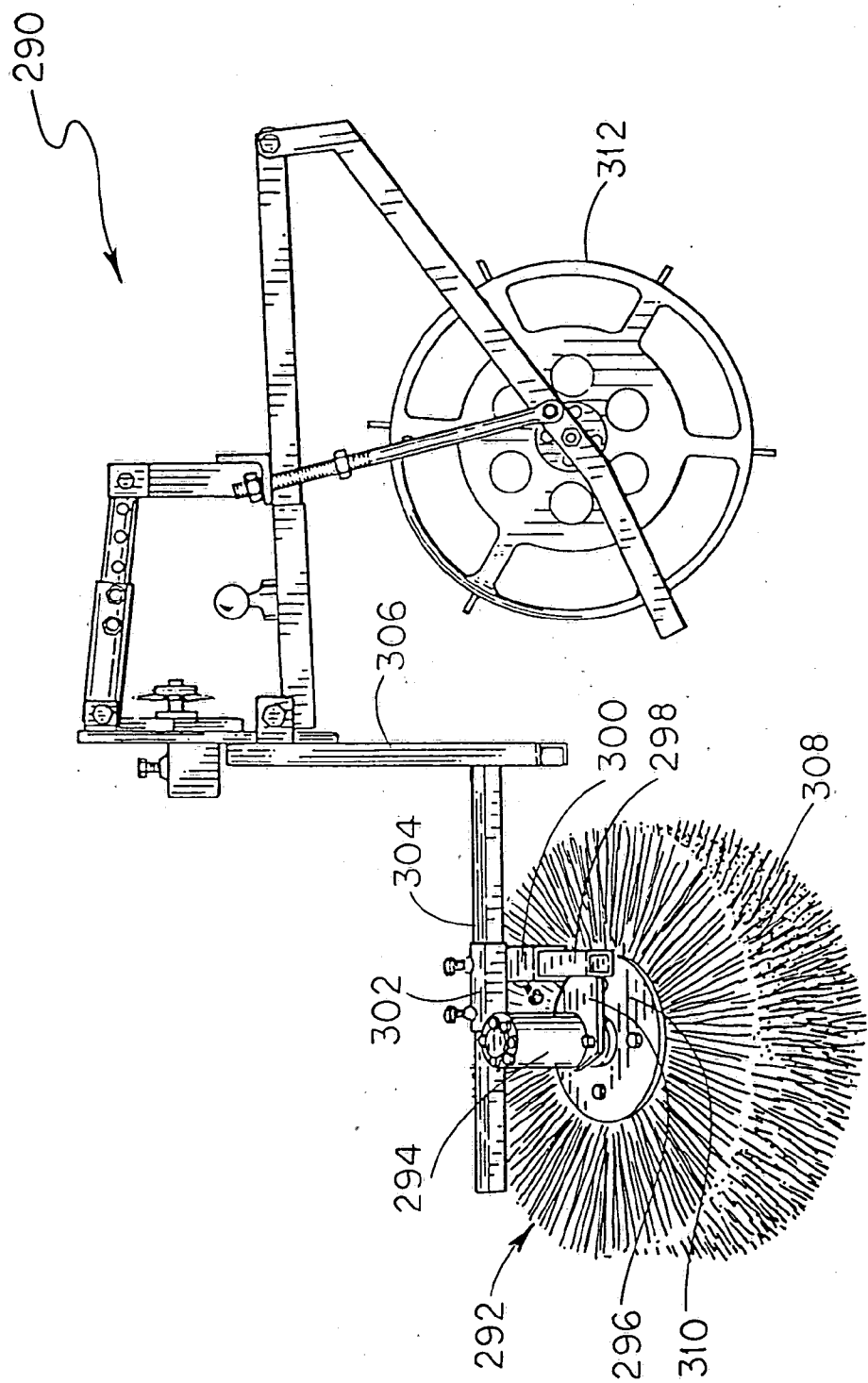


FIG. 17

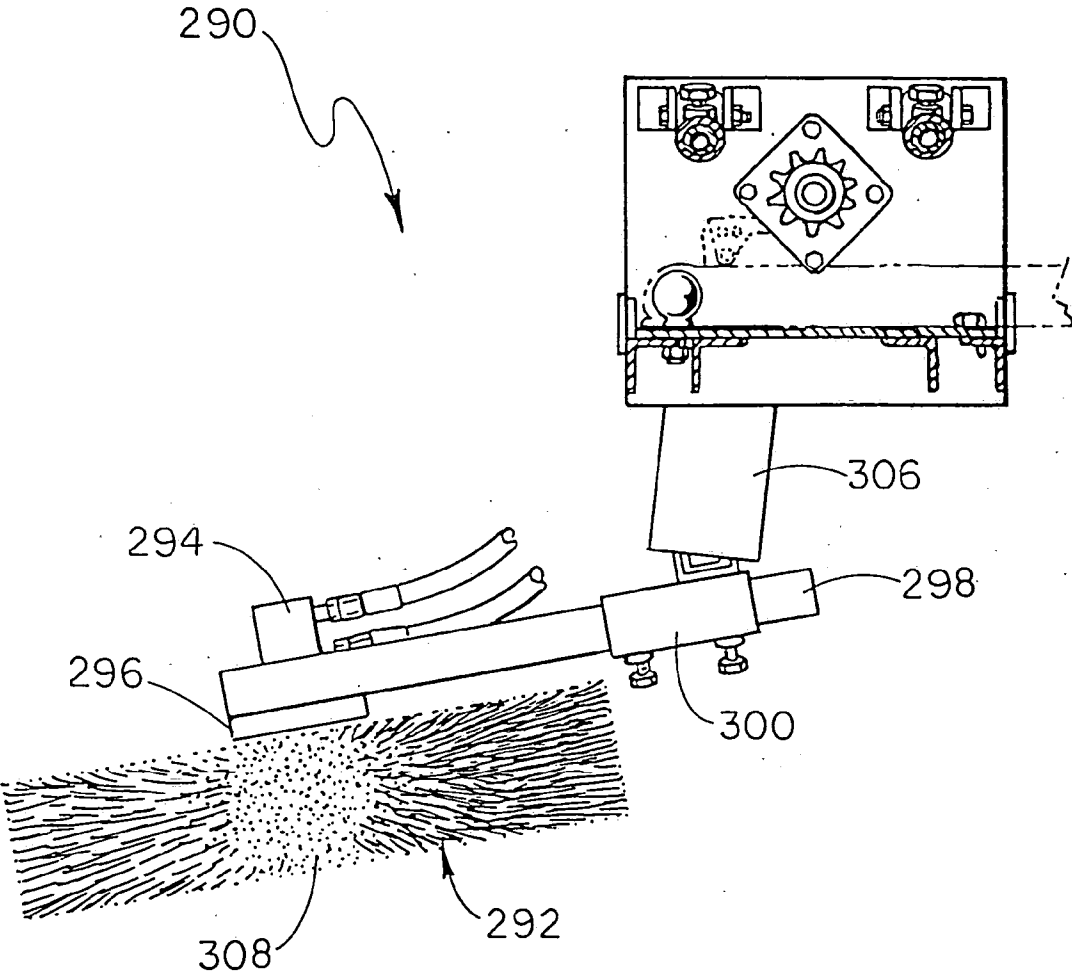


FIG. 18

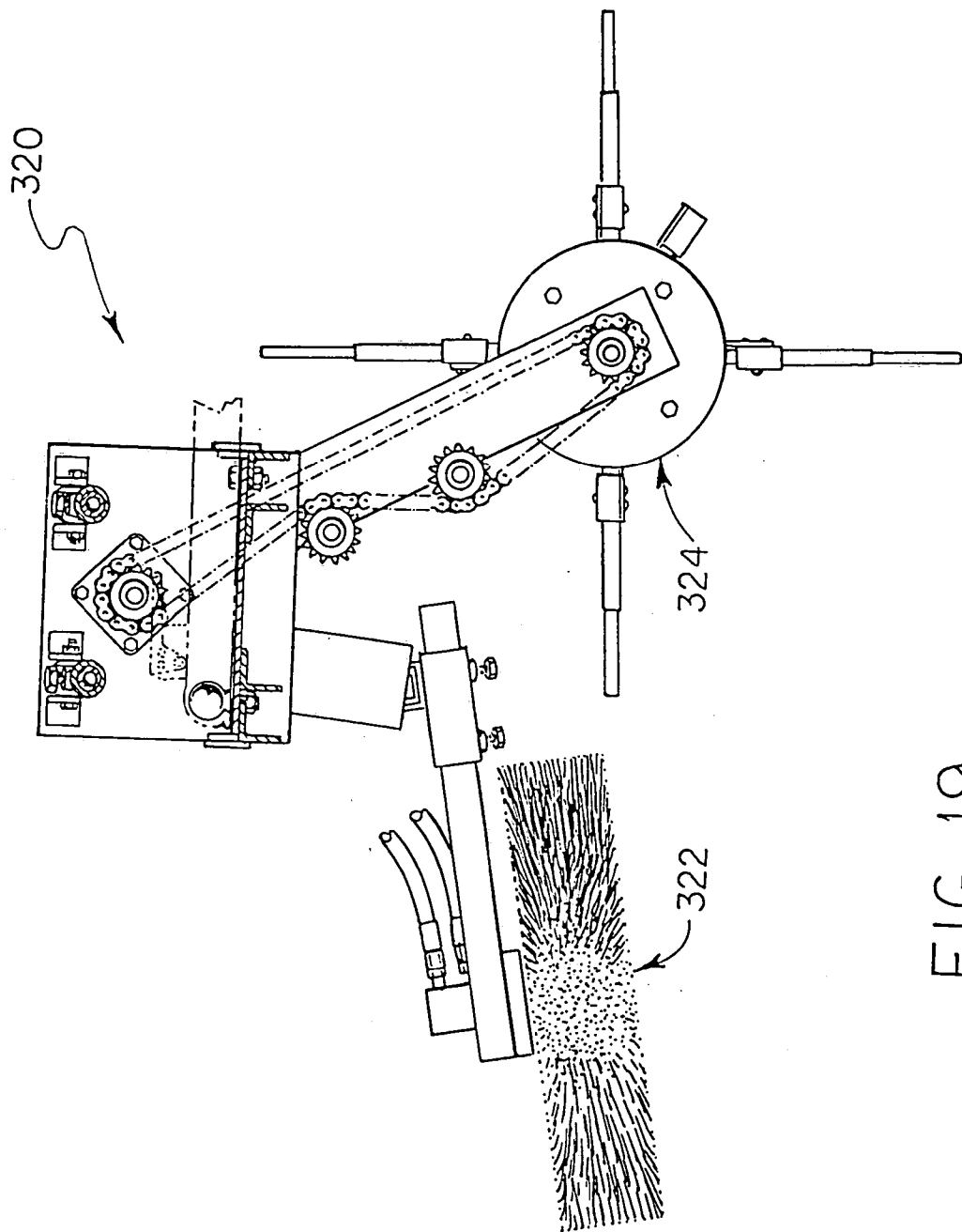


FIG. 19

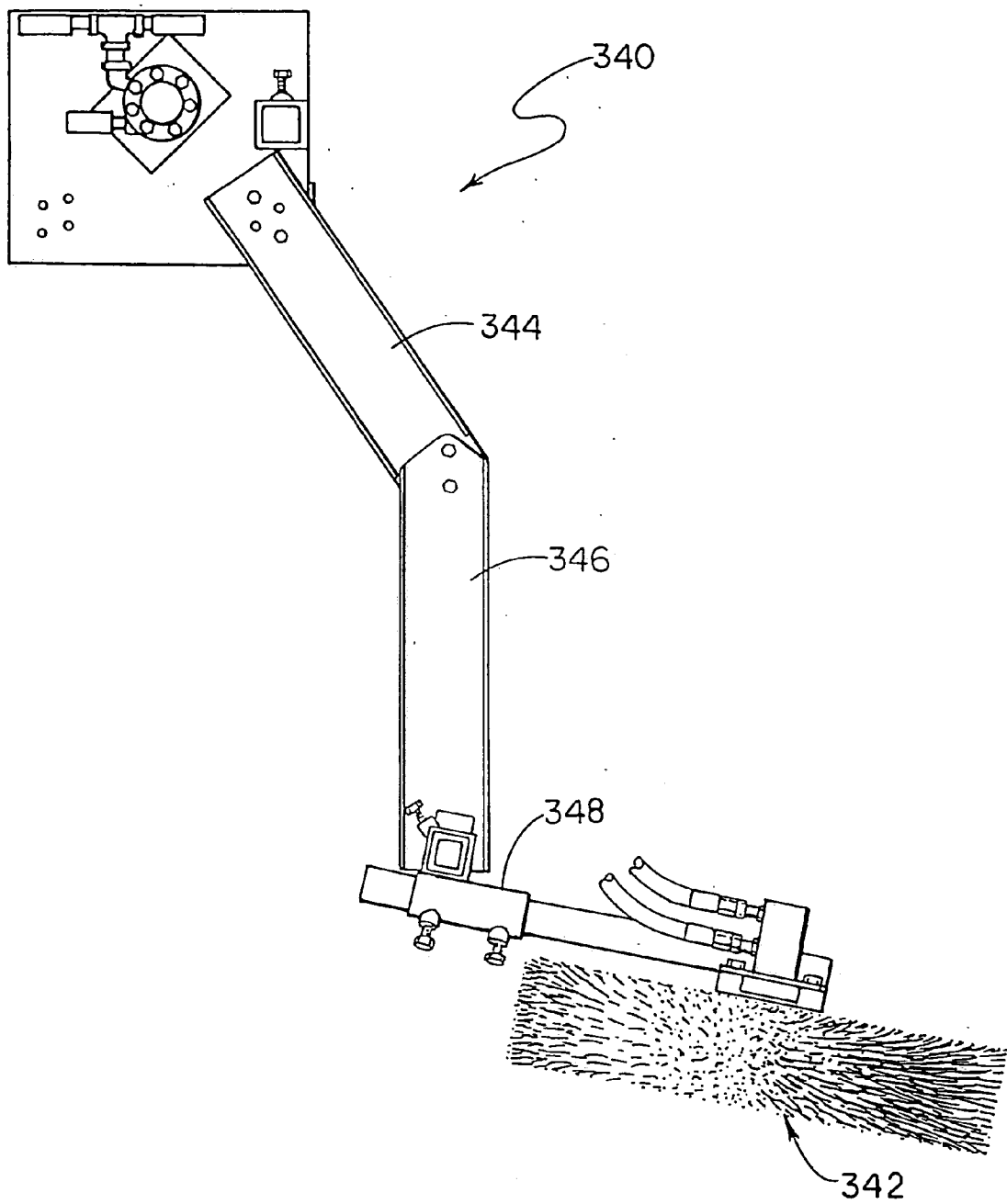


FIG. 20

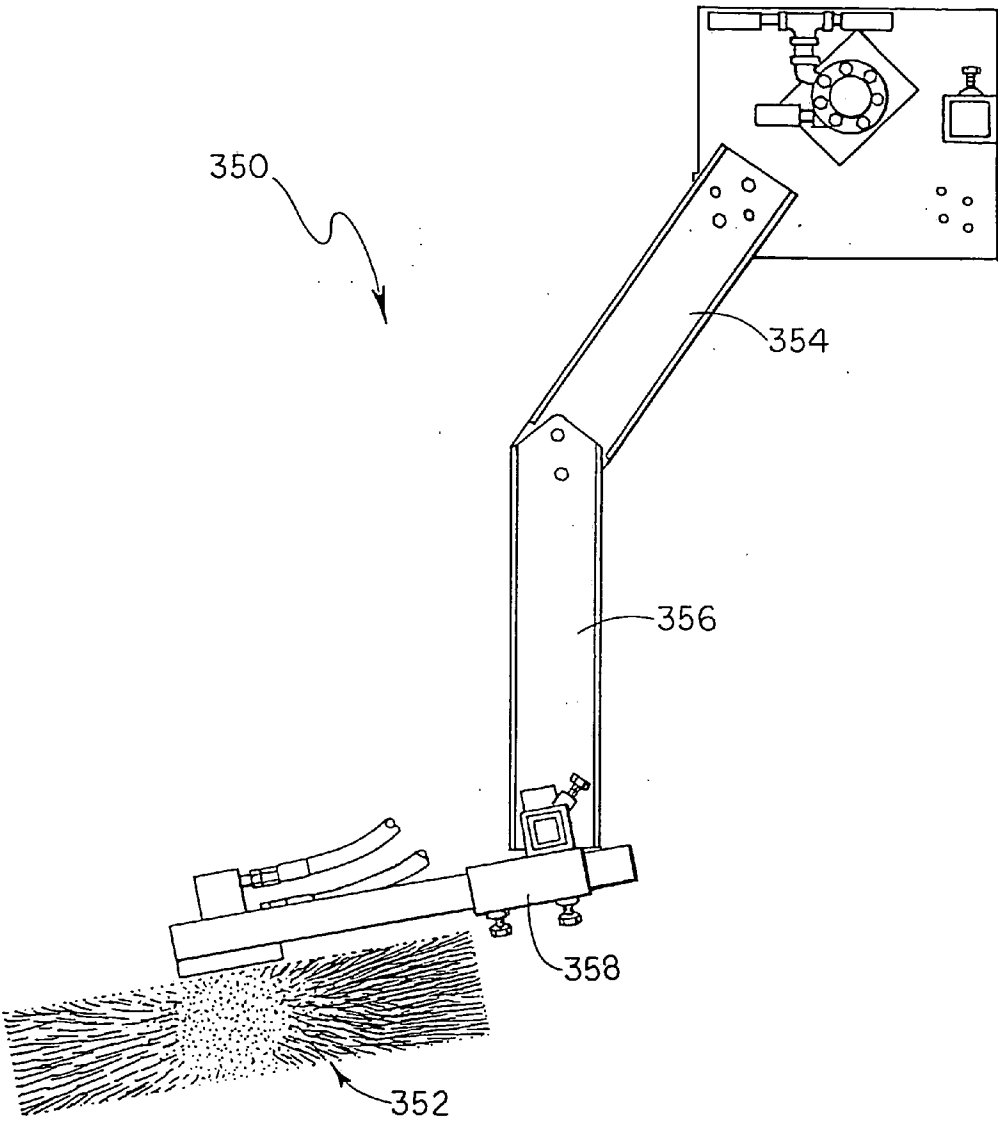


FIG. 21

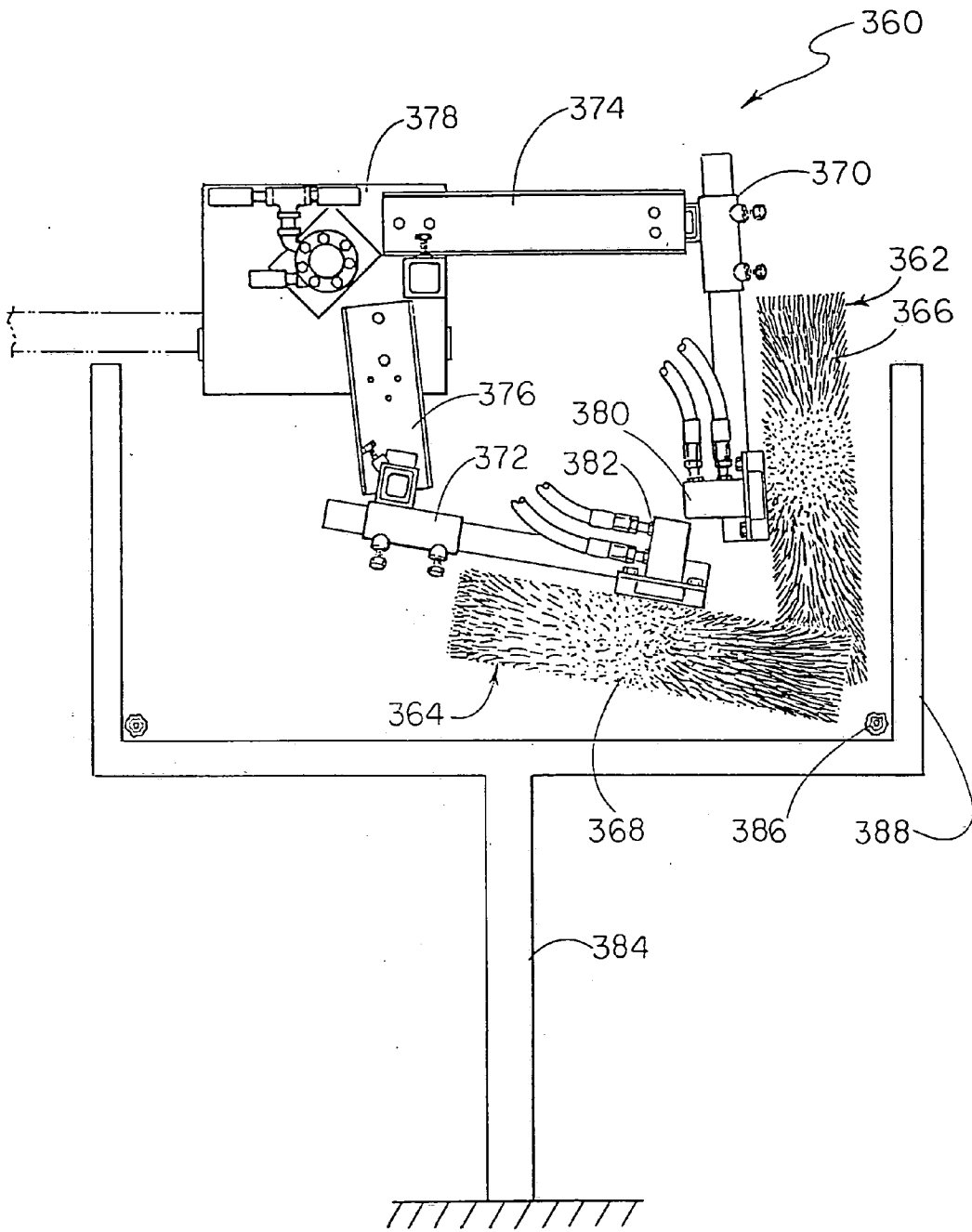


FIG. 22

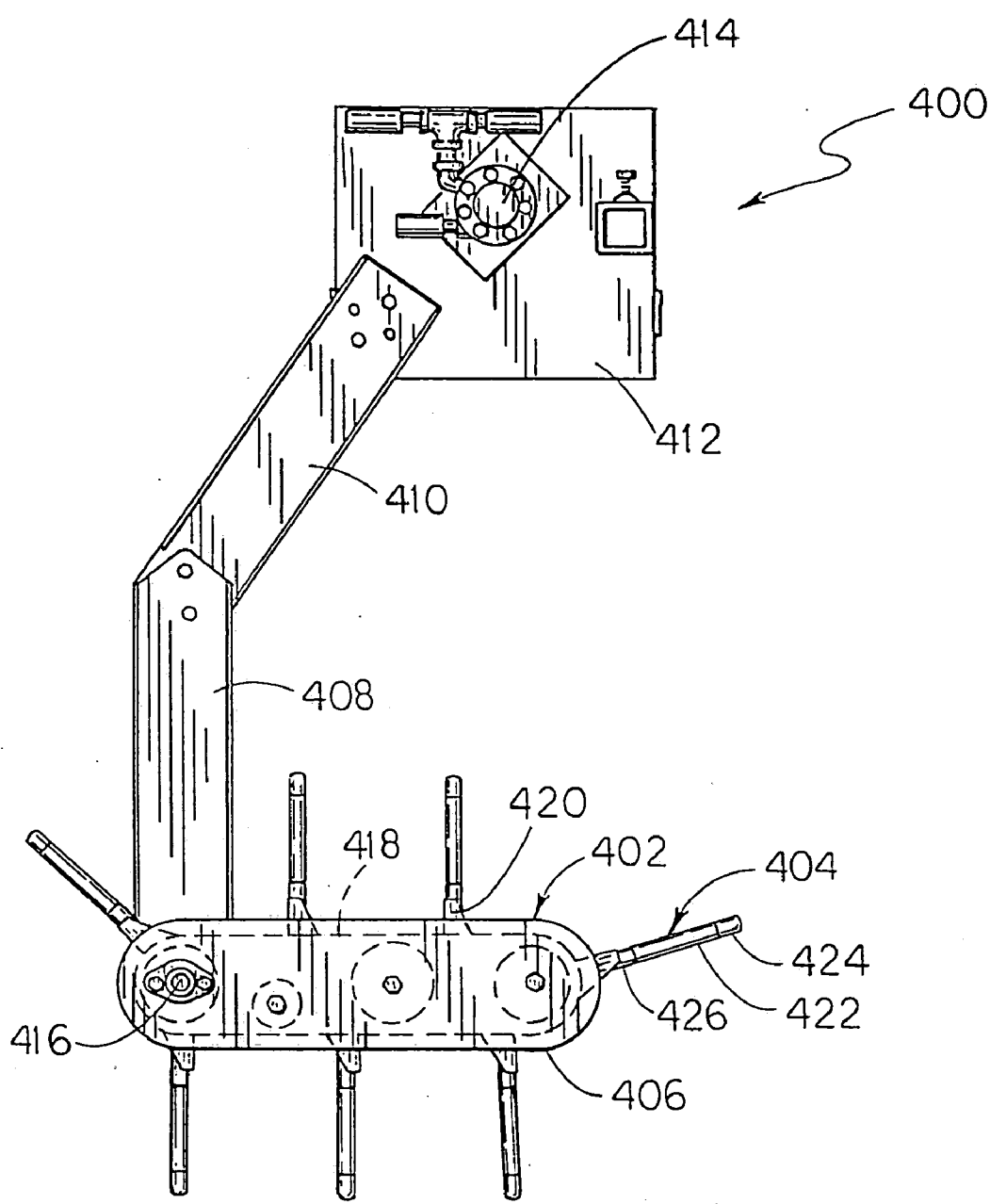


FIG. 23

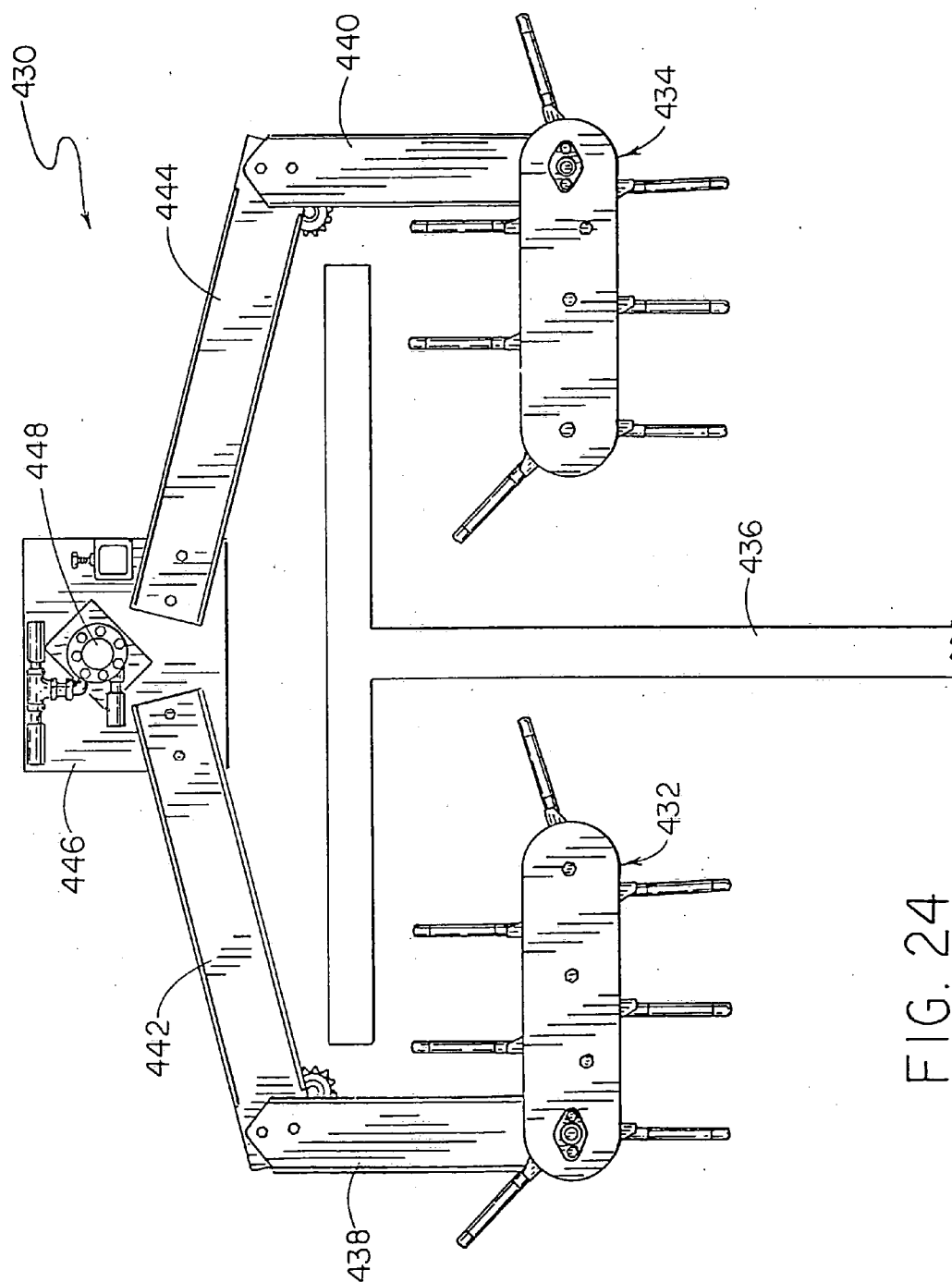


FIG. 24

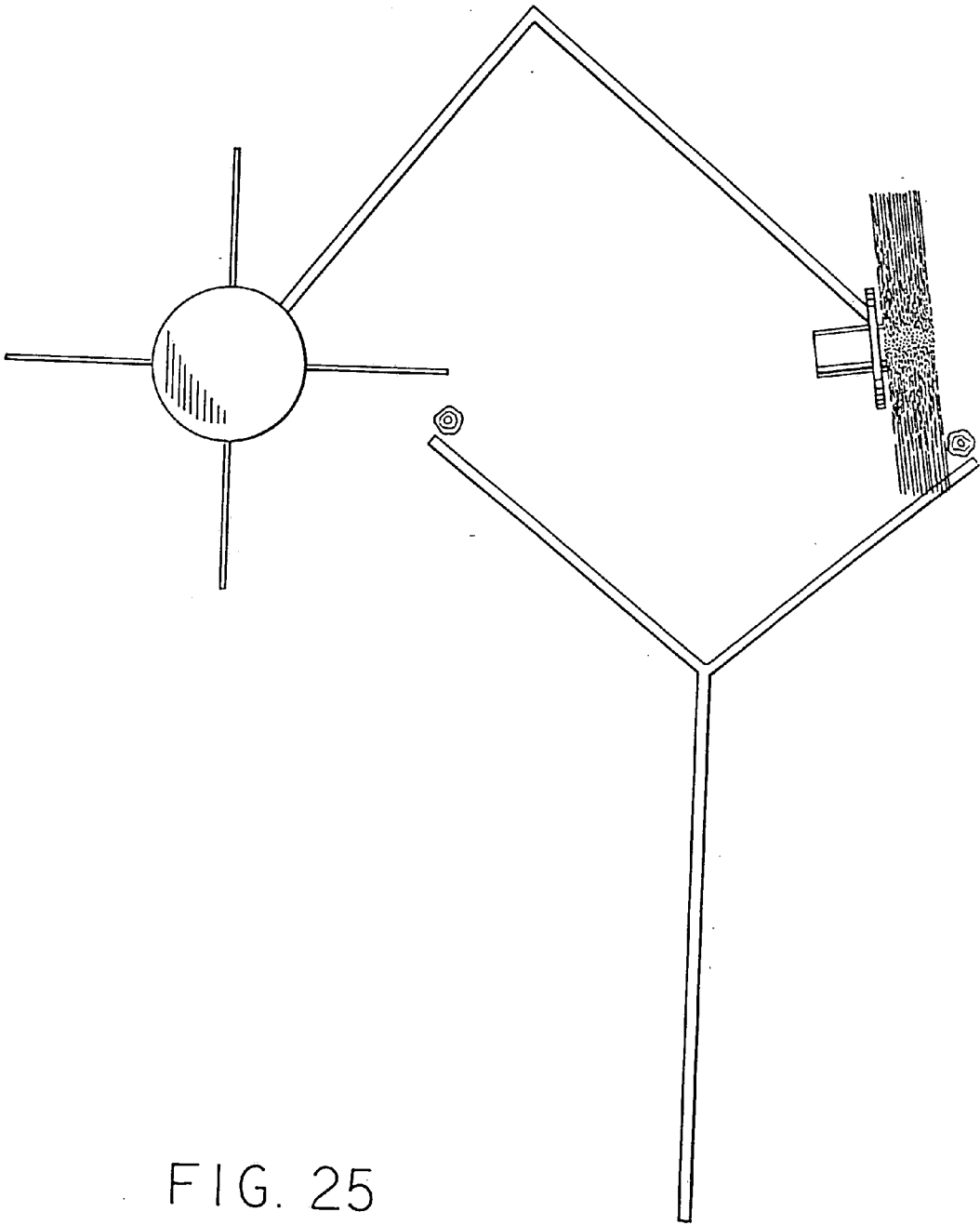


FIG. 25

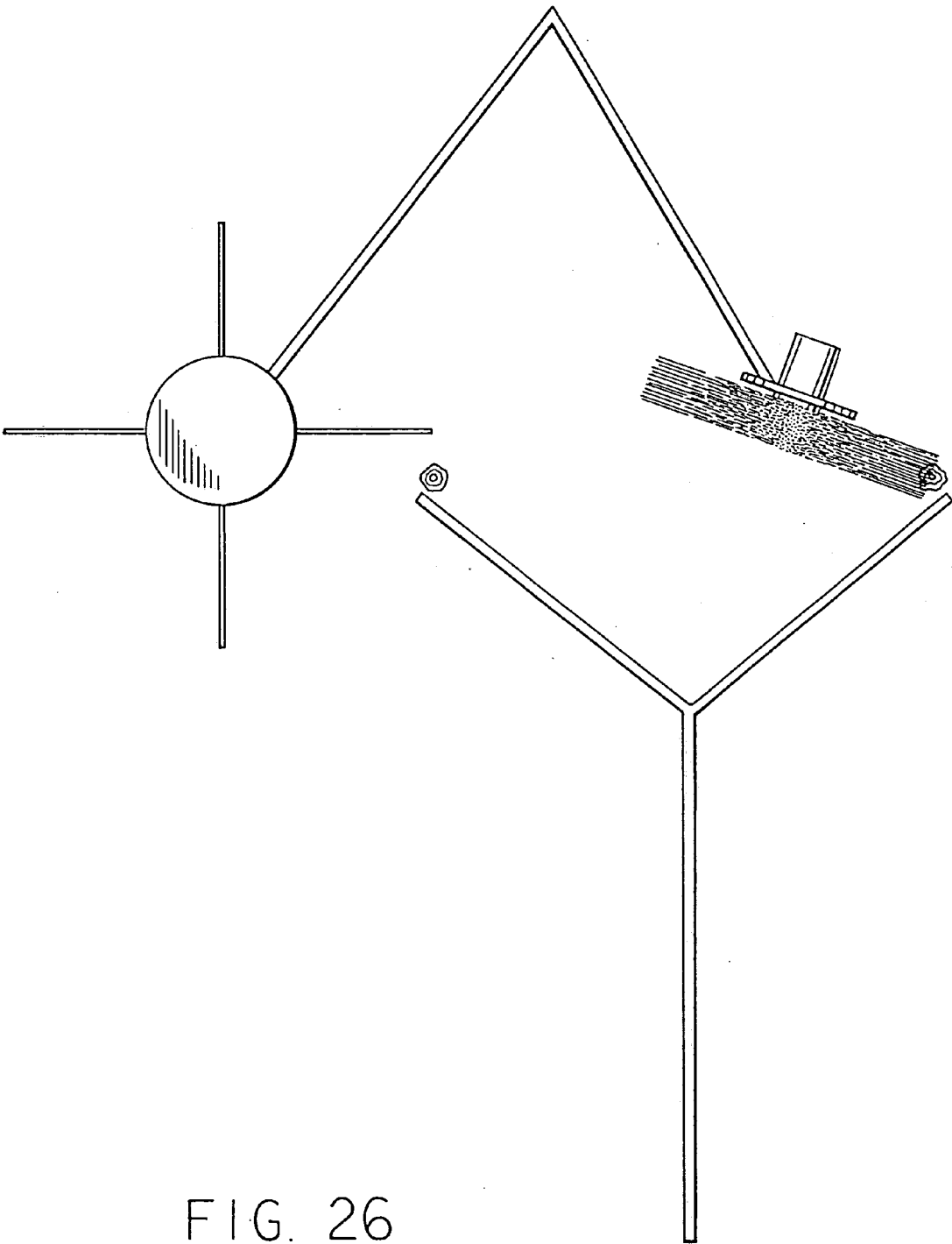


FIG. 26

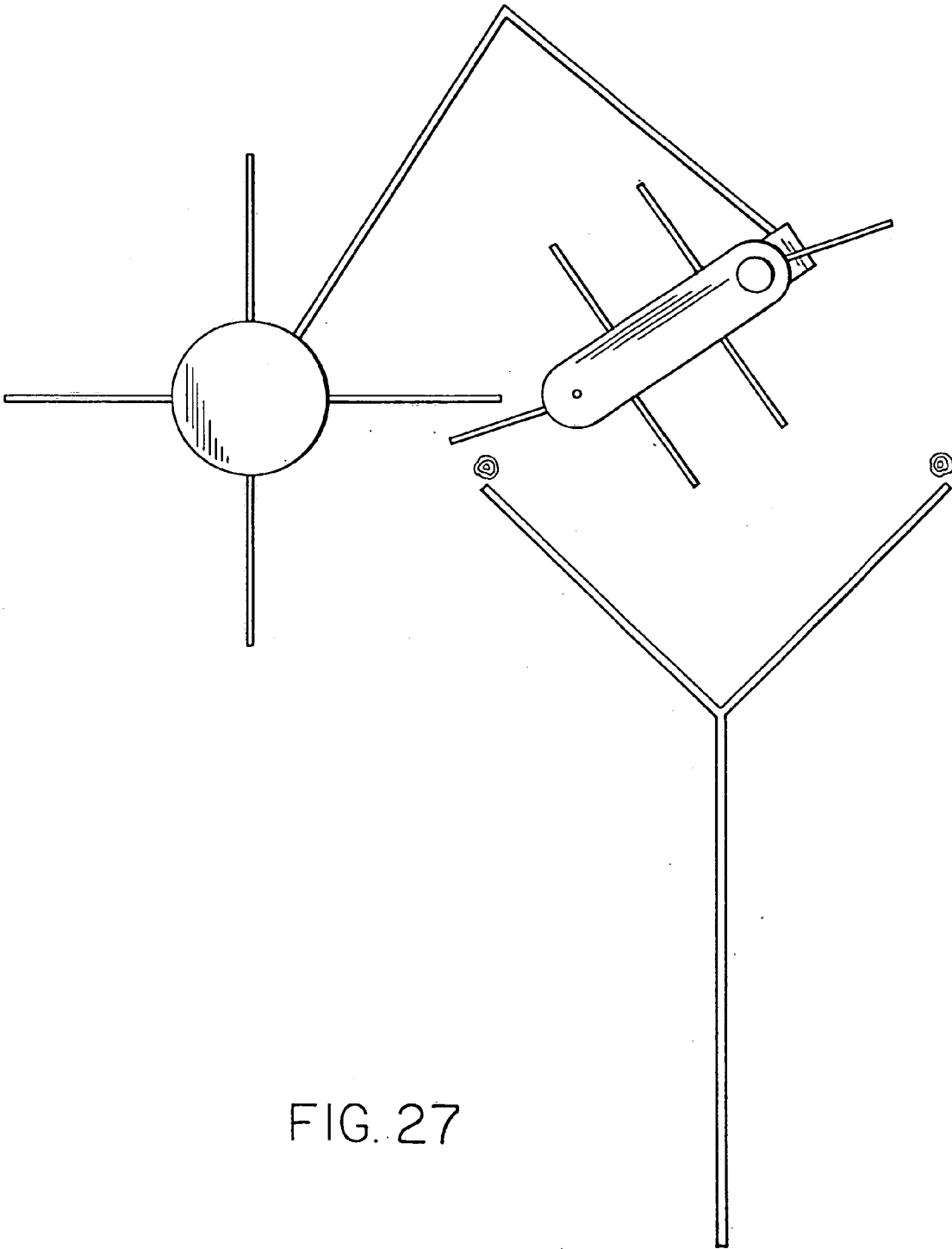


FIG. 27

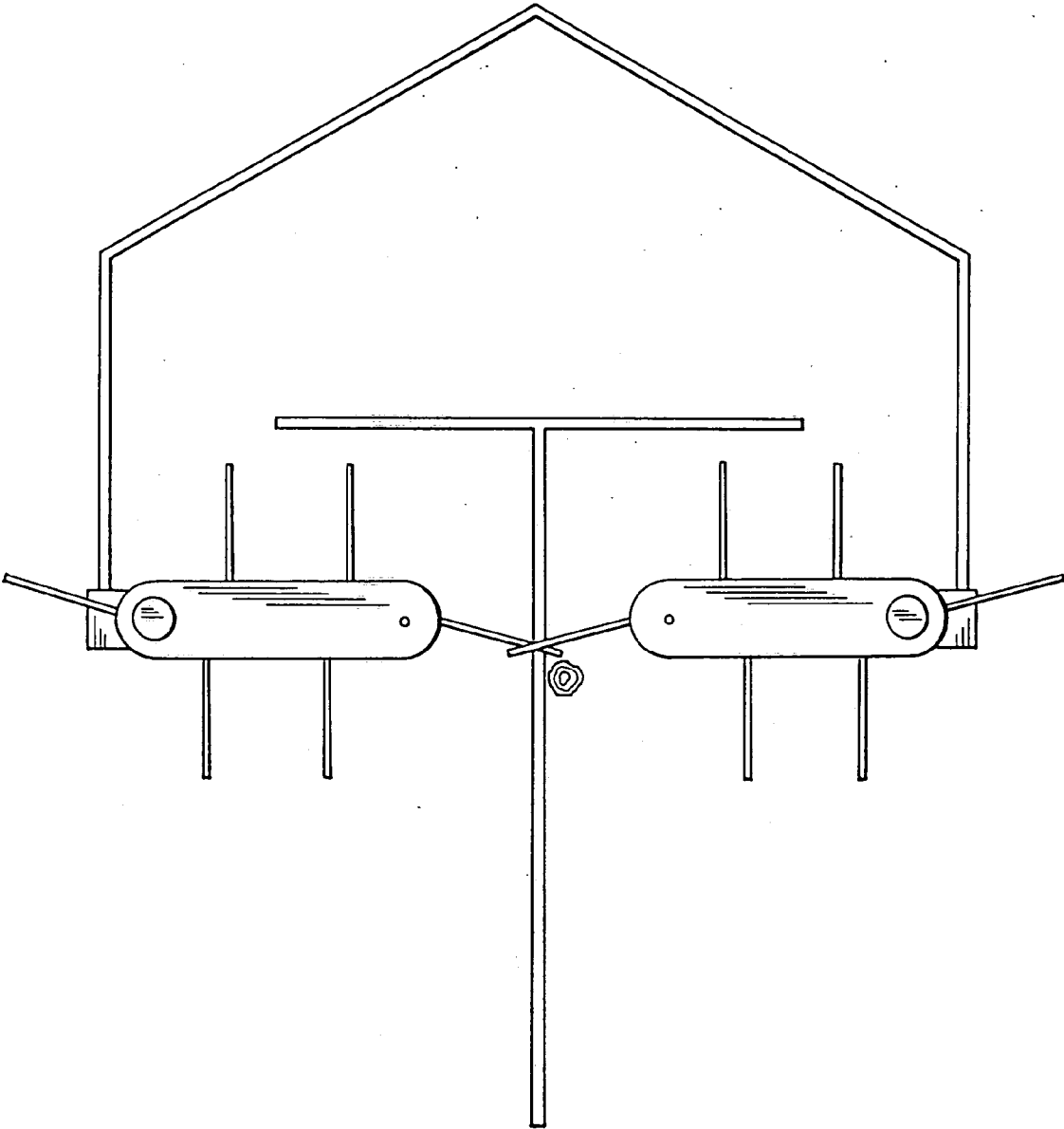


FIG. 28

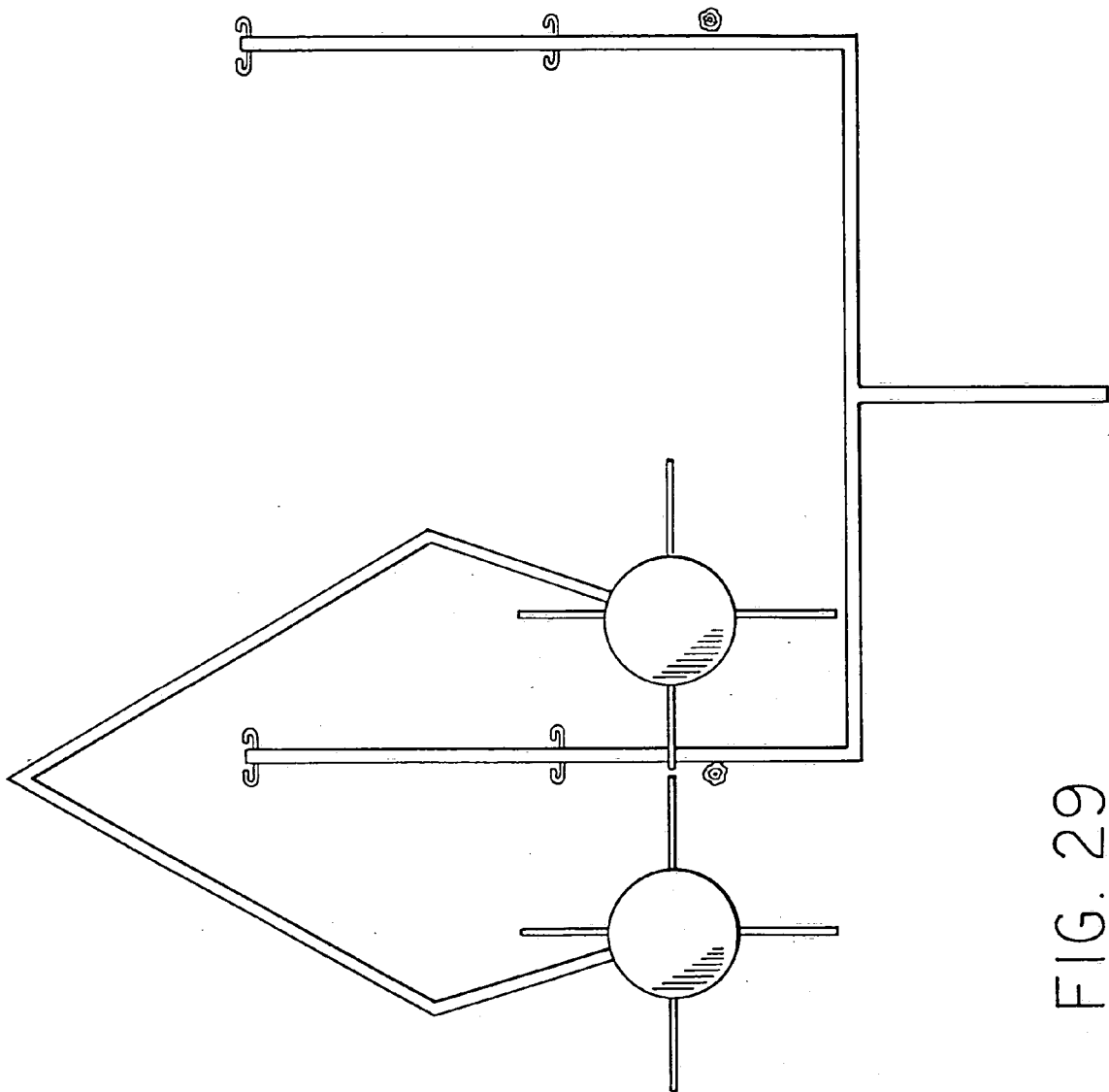


FIG. 29

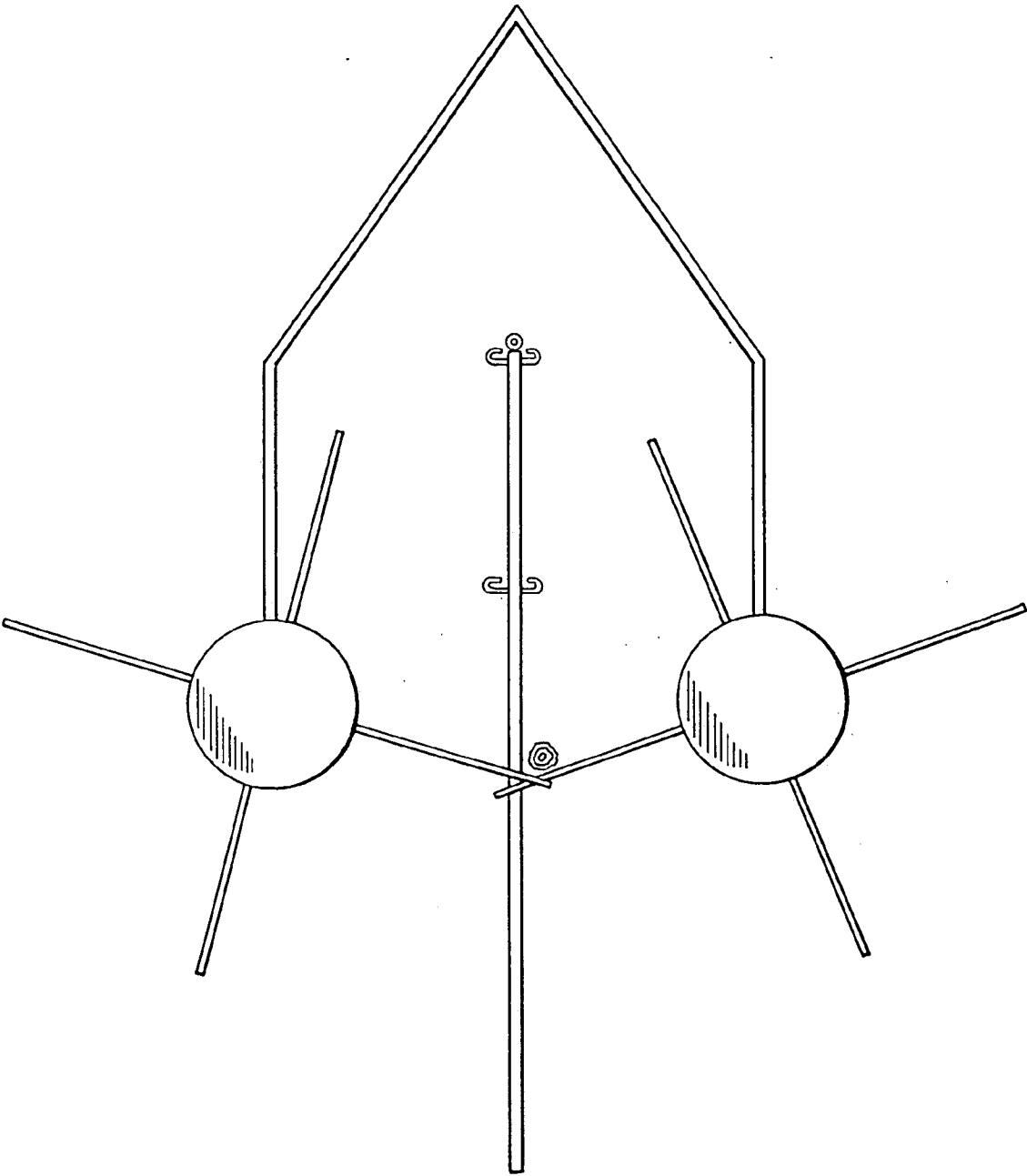


FIG. 30

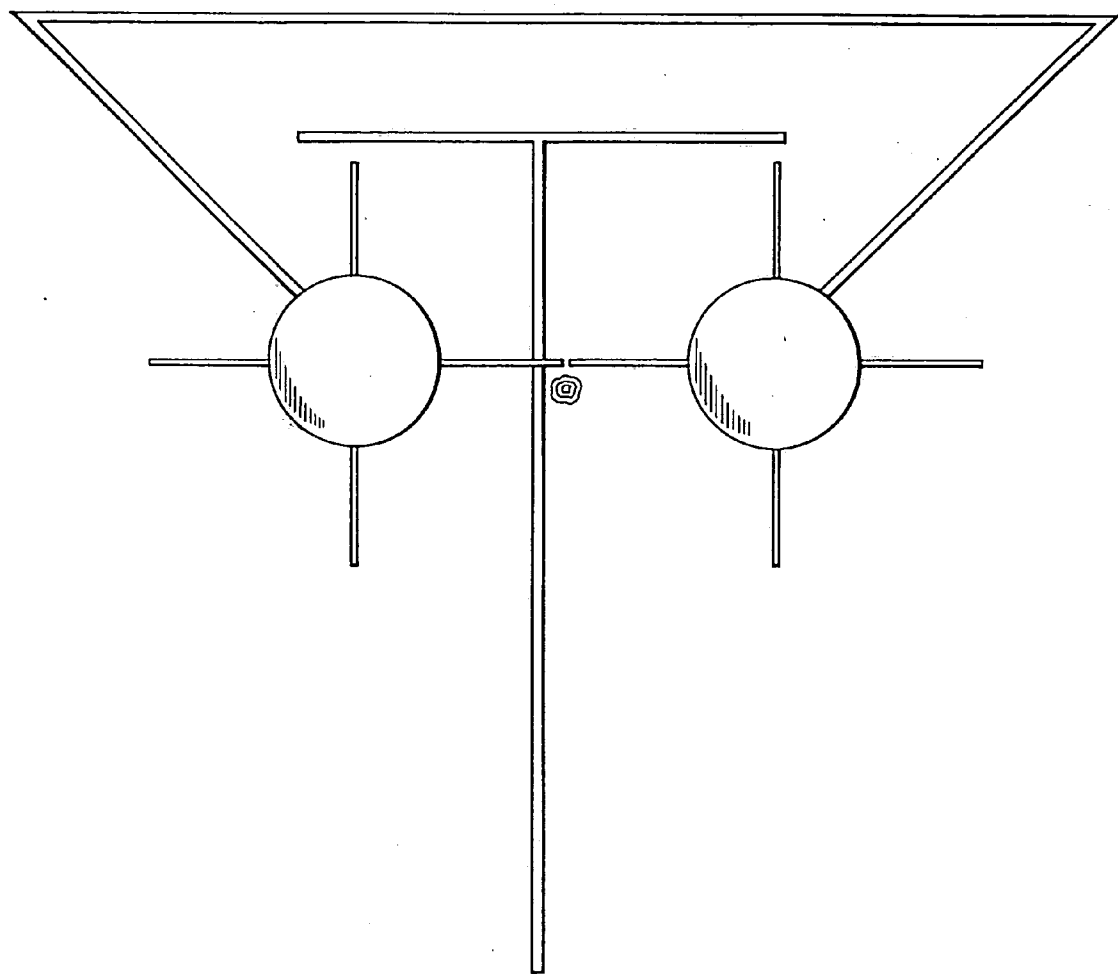


FIG. 31

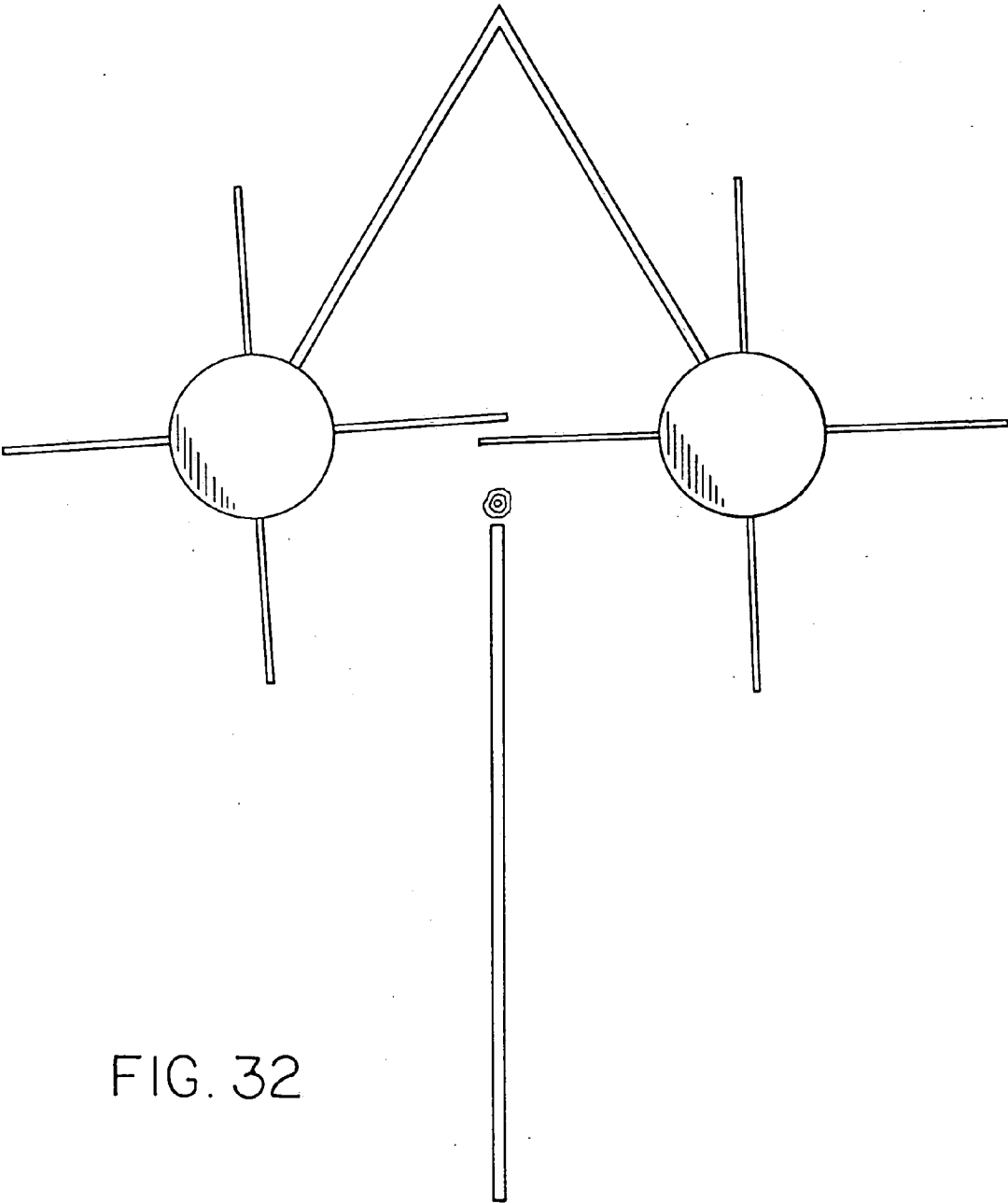


FIG. 32

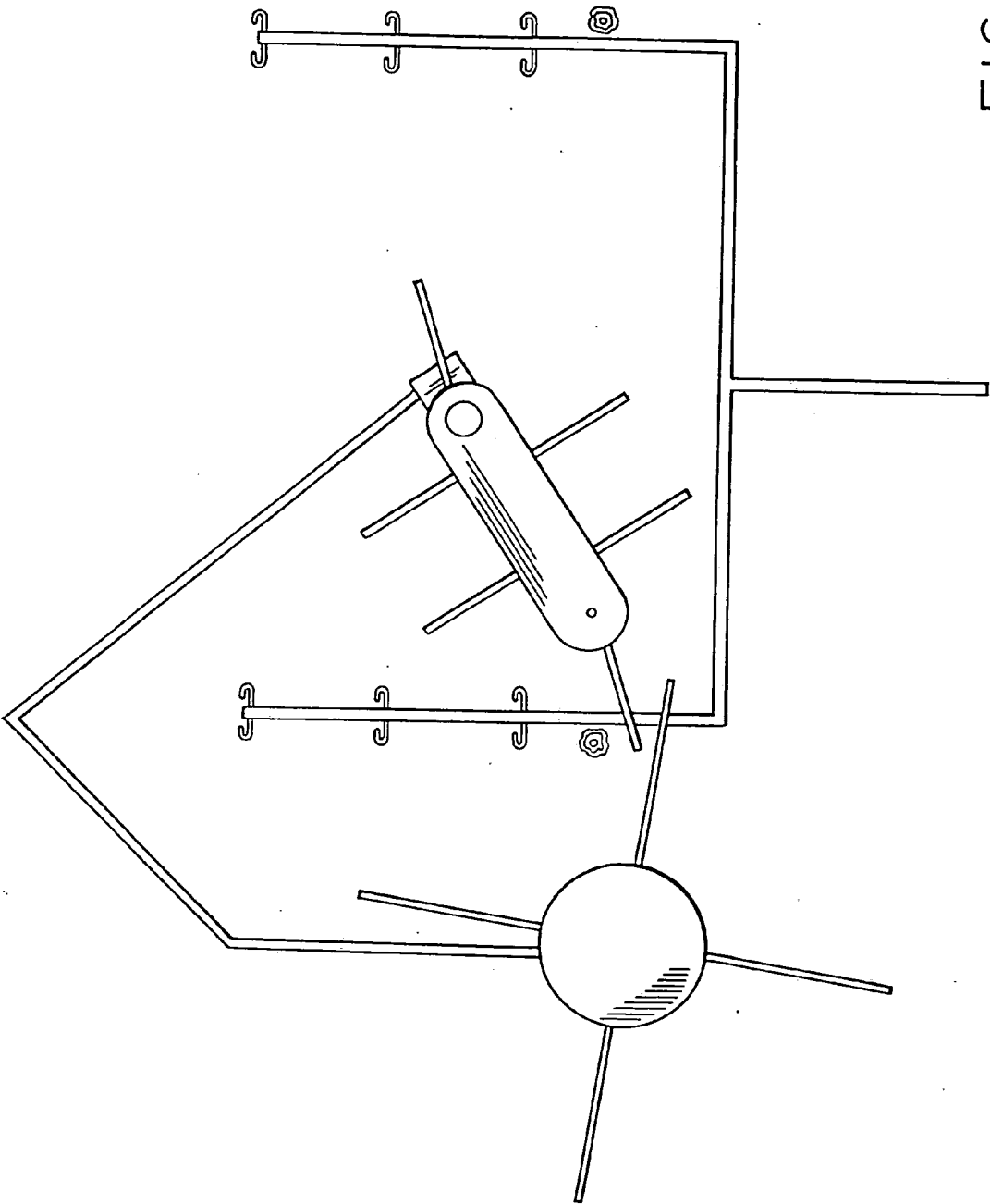


FIG. 33

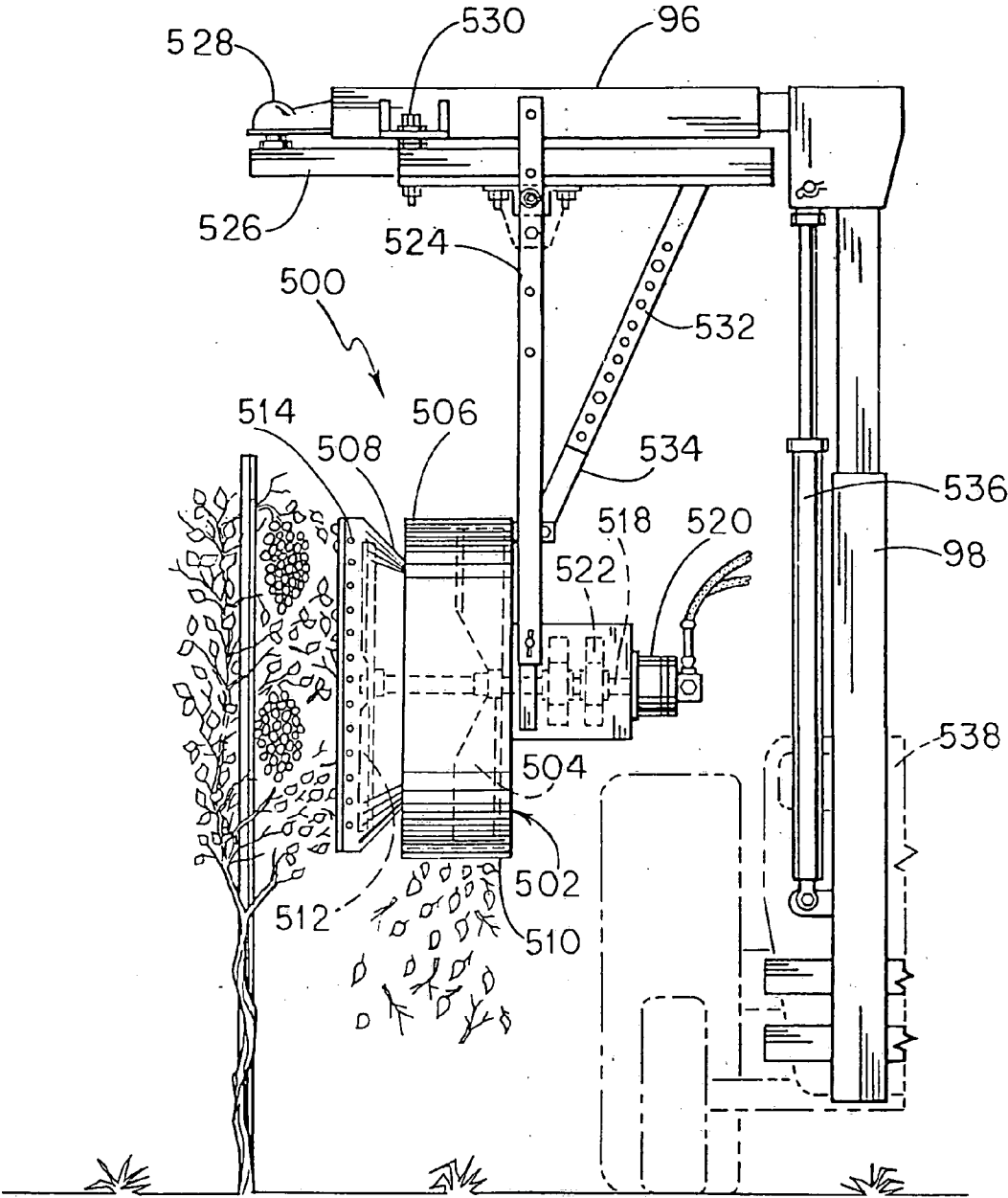


FIG. 34

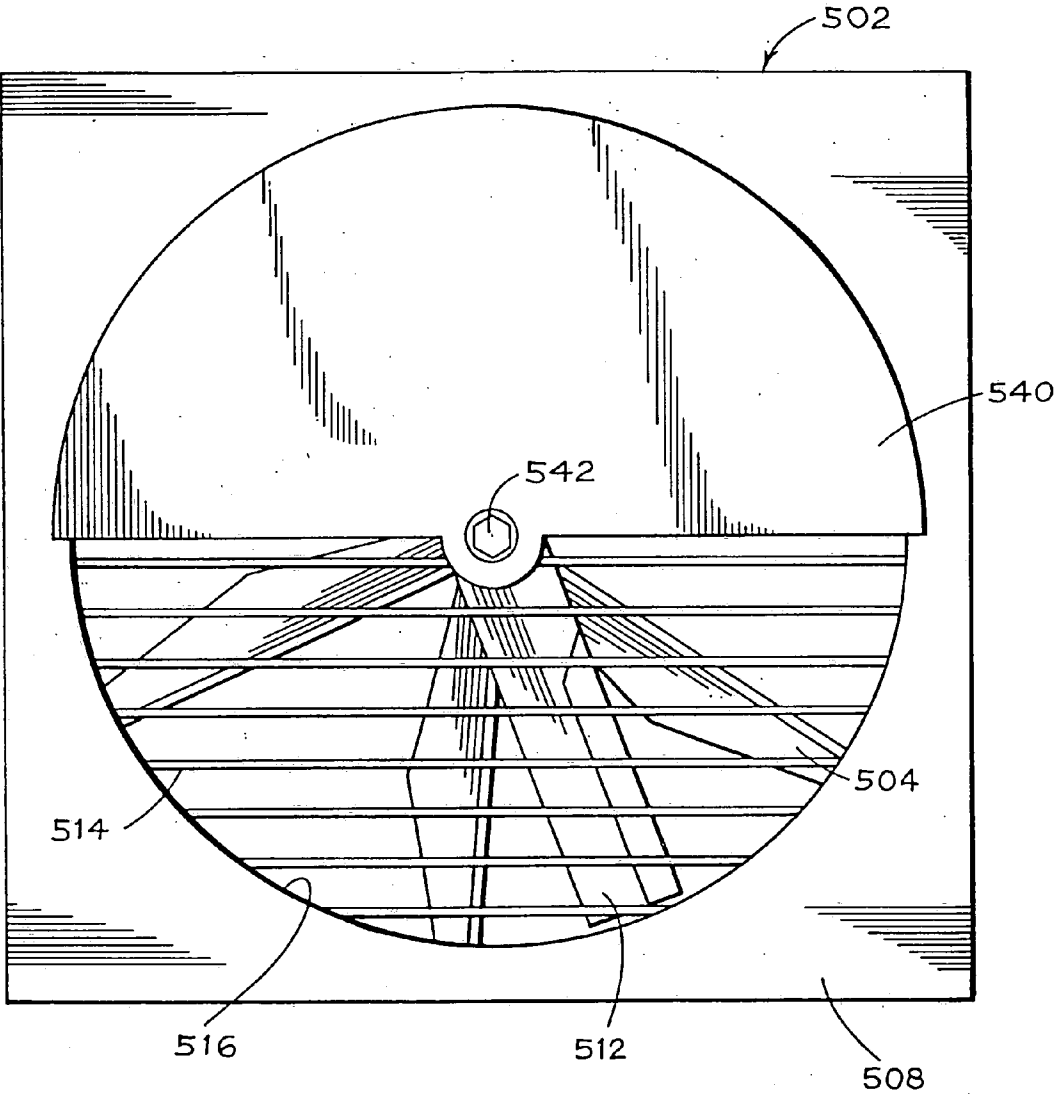


FIG. 35

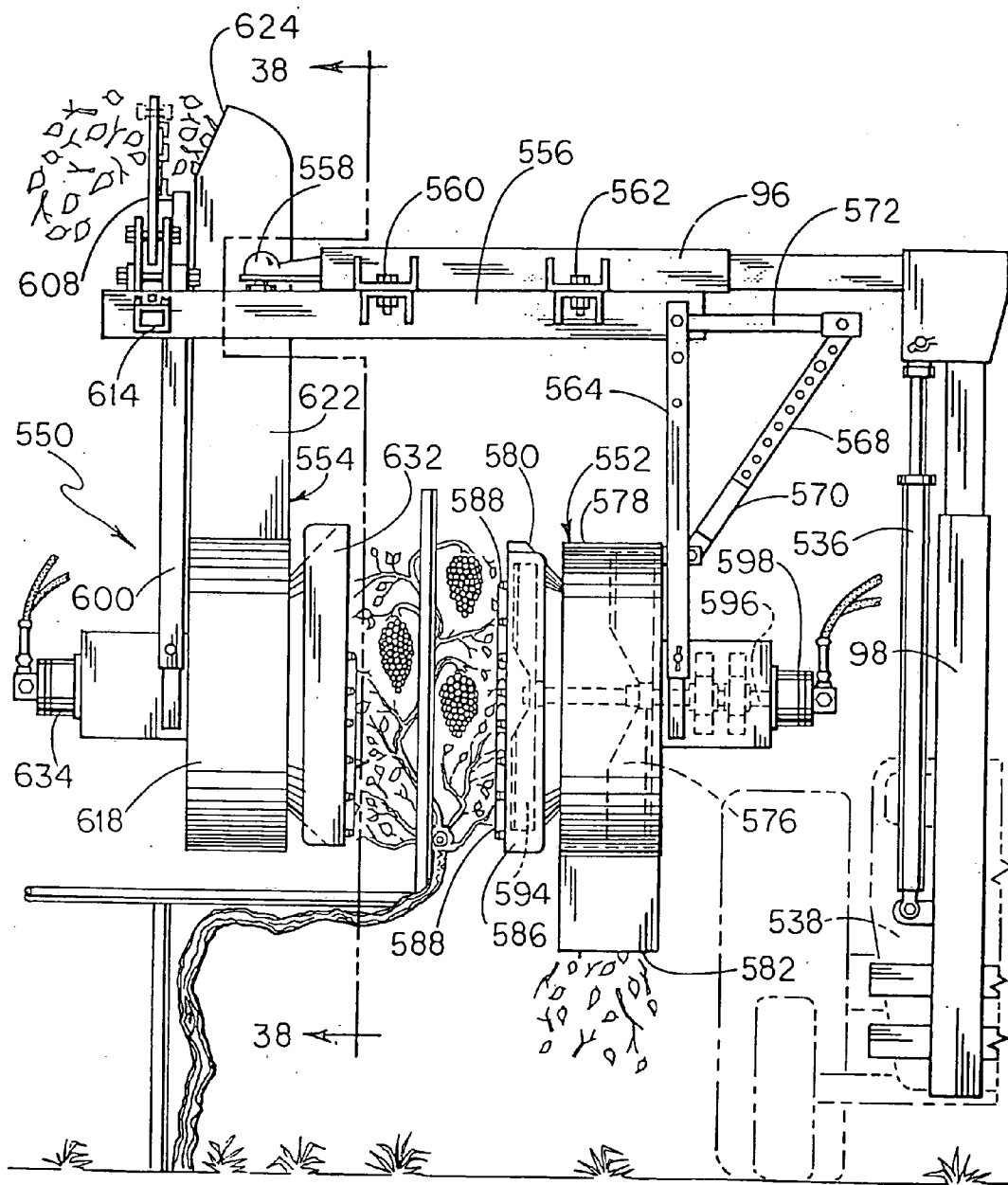
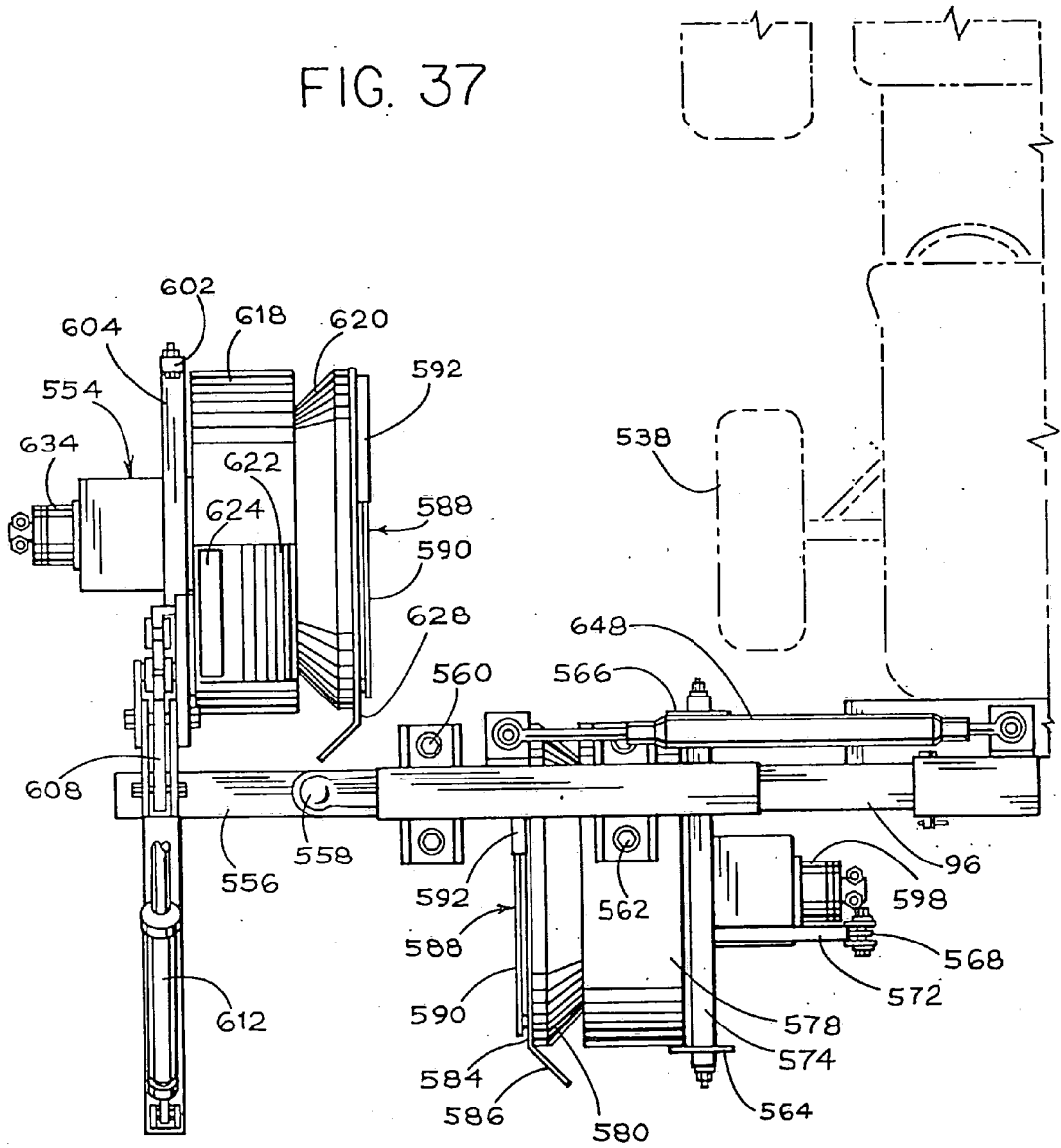
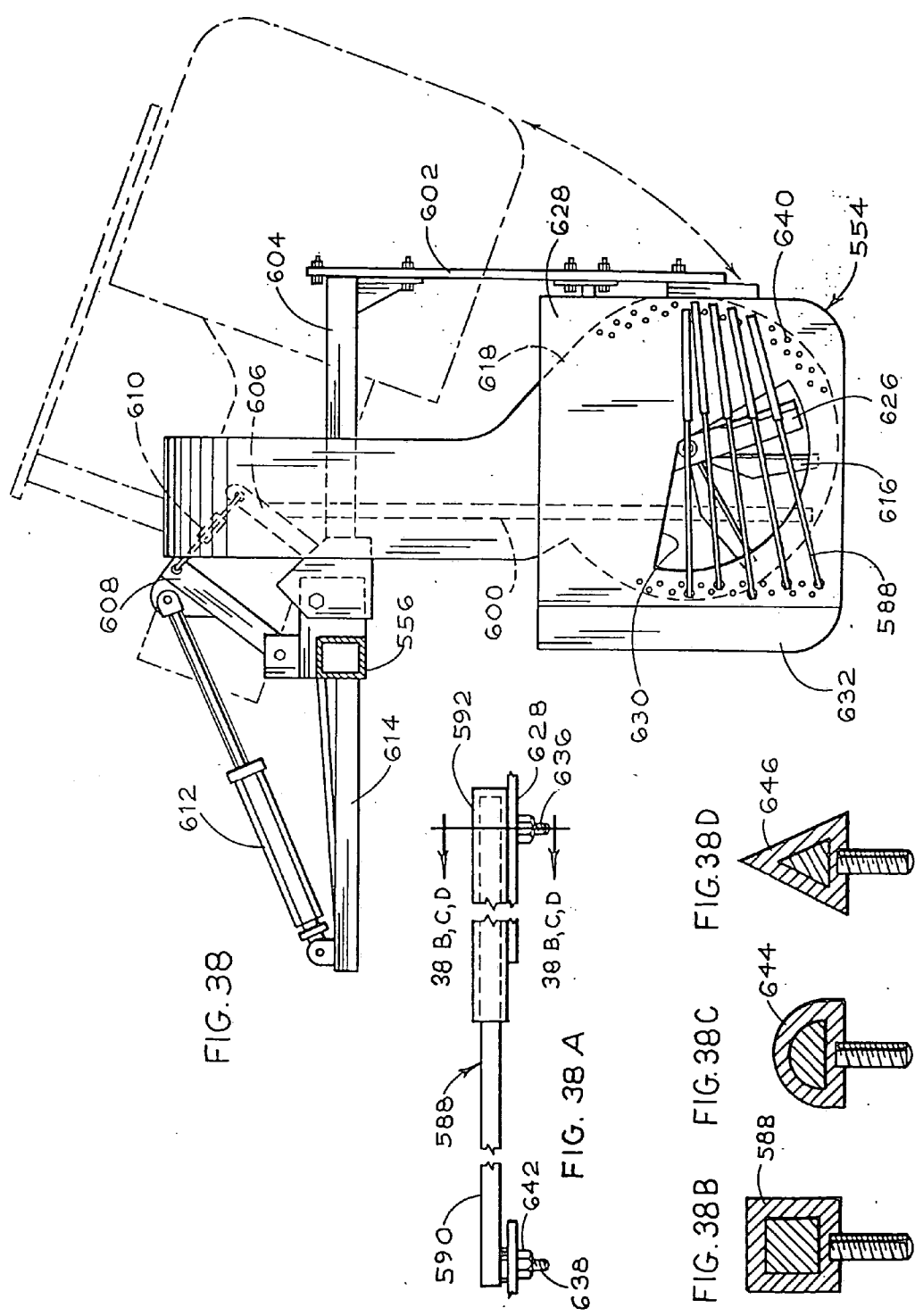
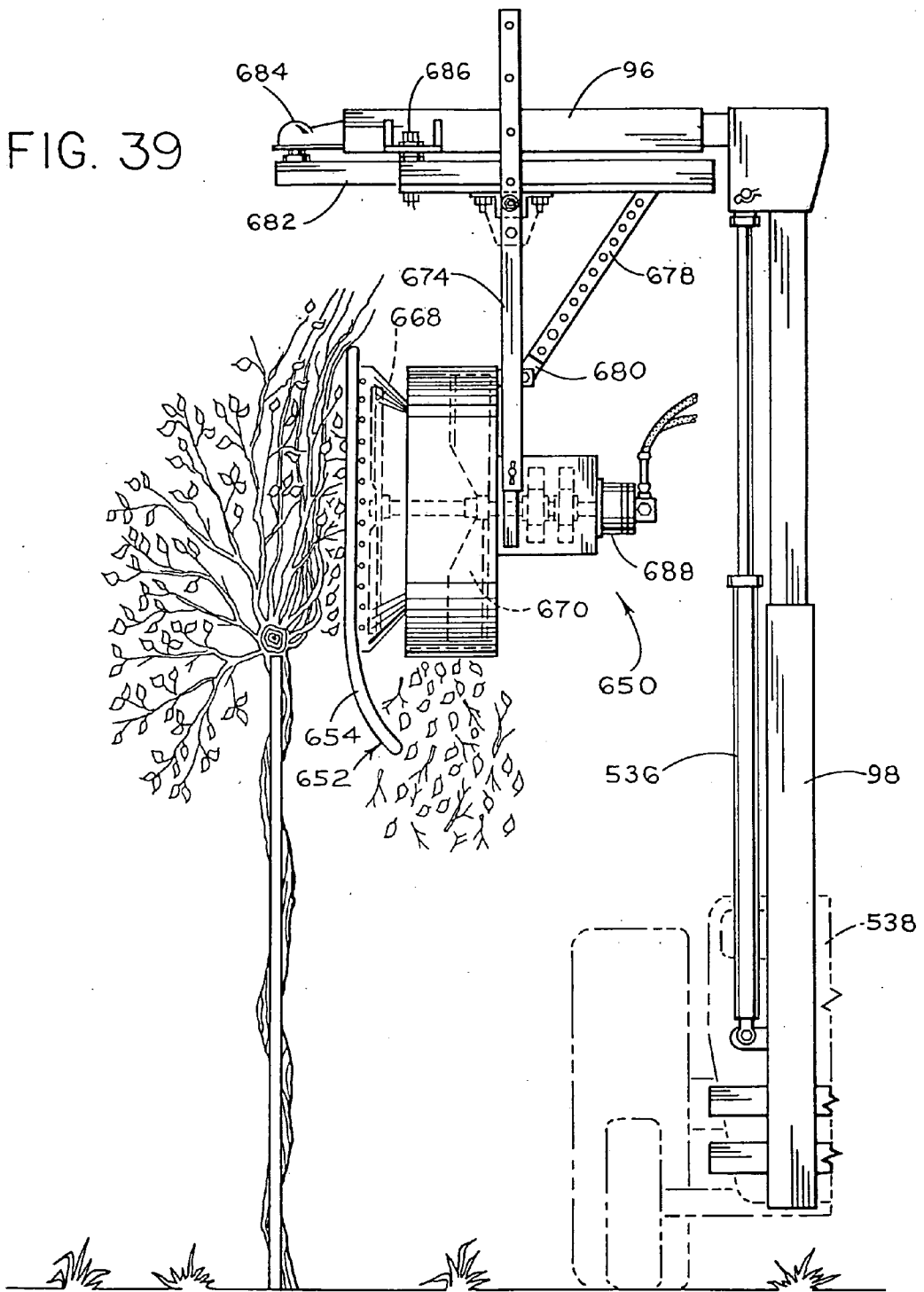


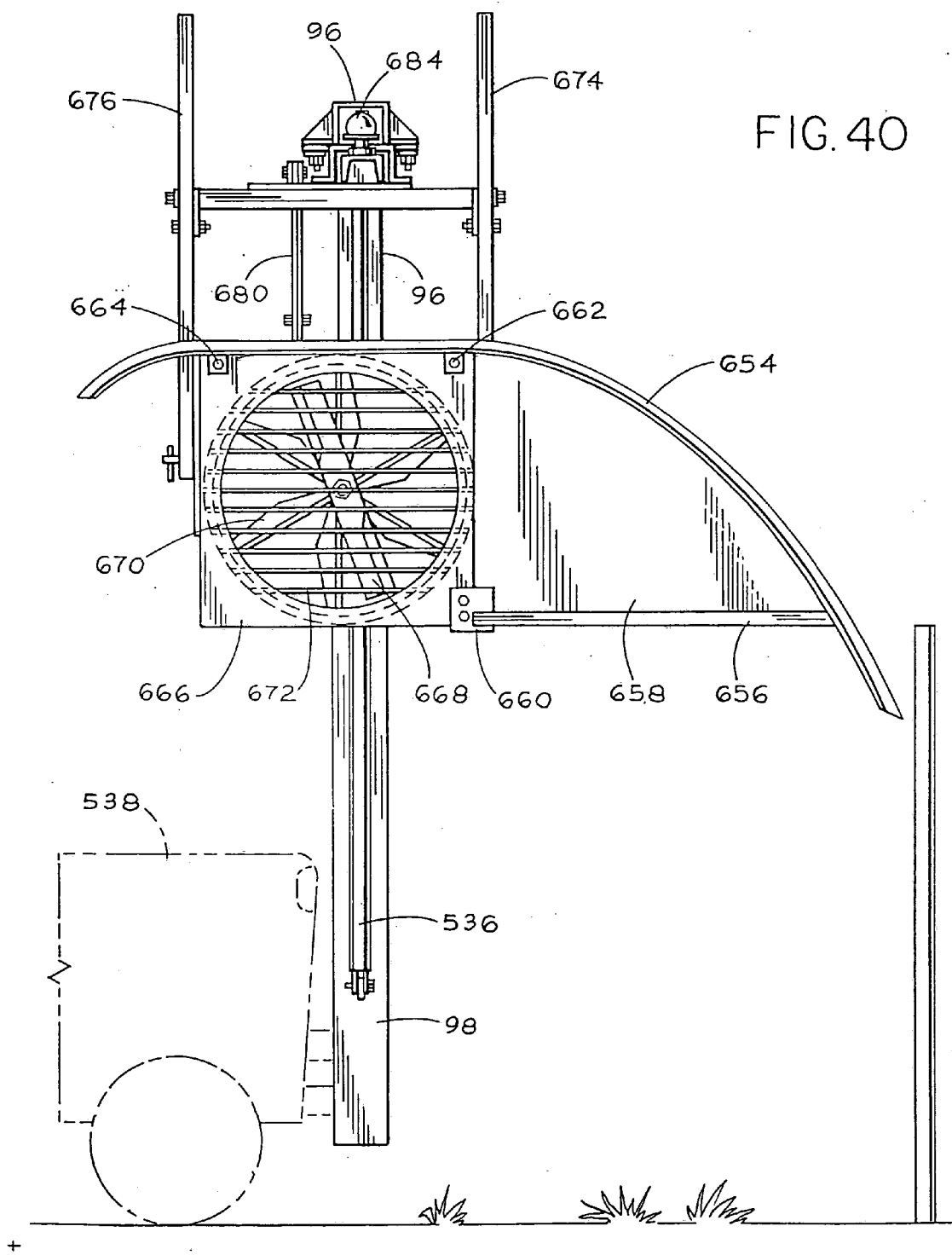
FIG. 36

FIG. 37









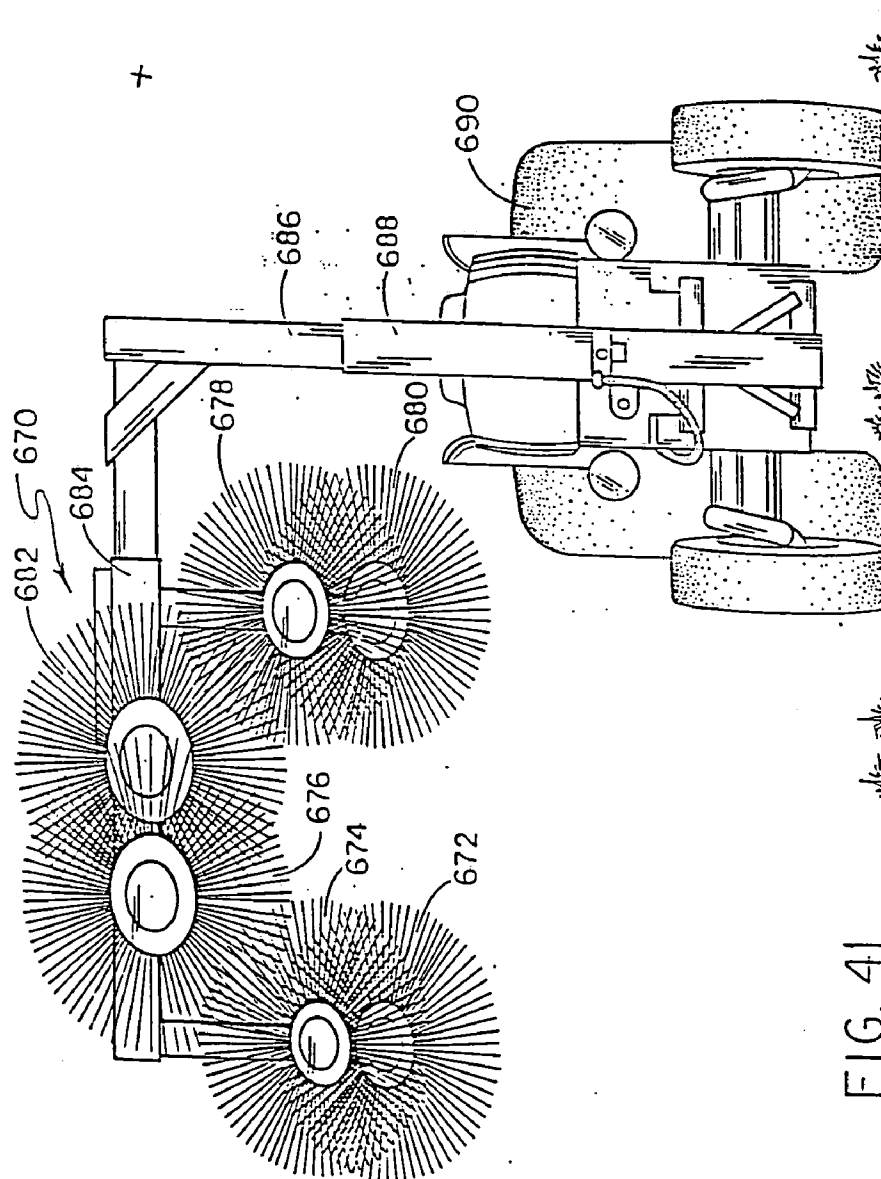


FIG. 41

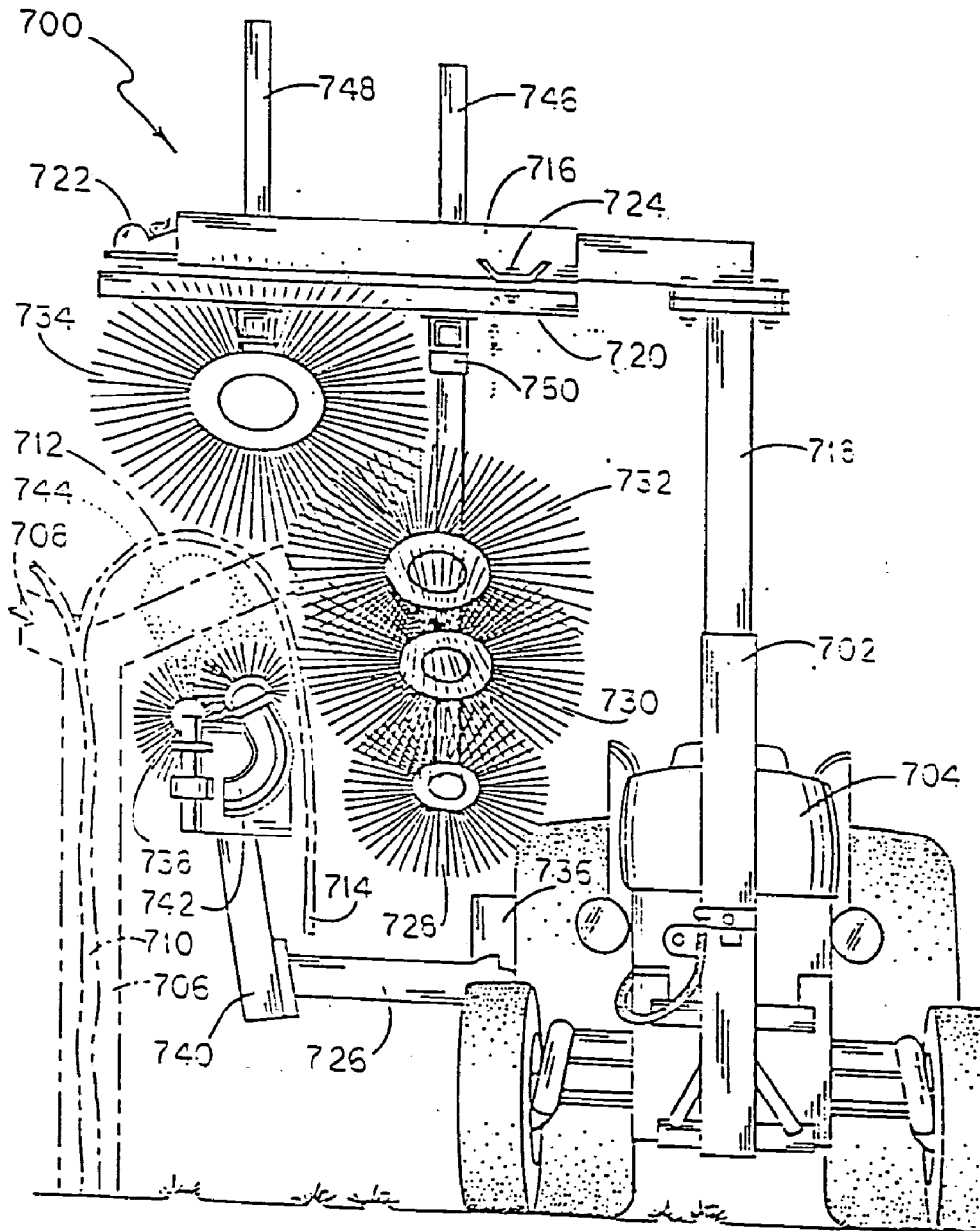


FIG. 42

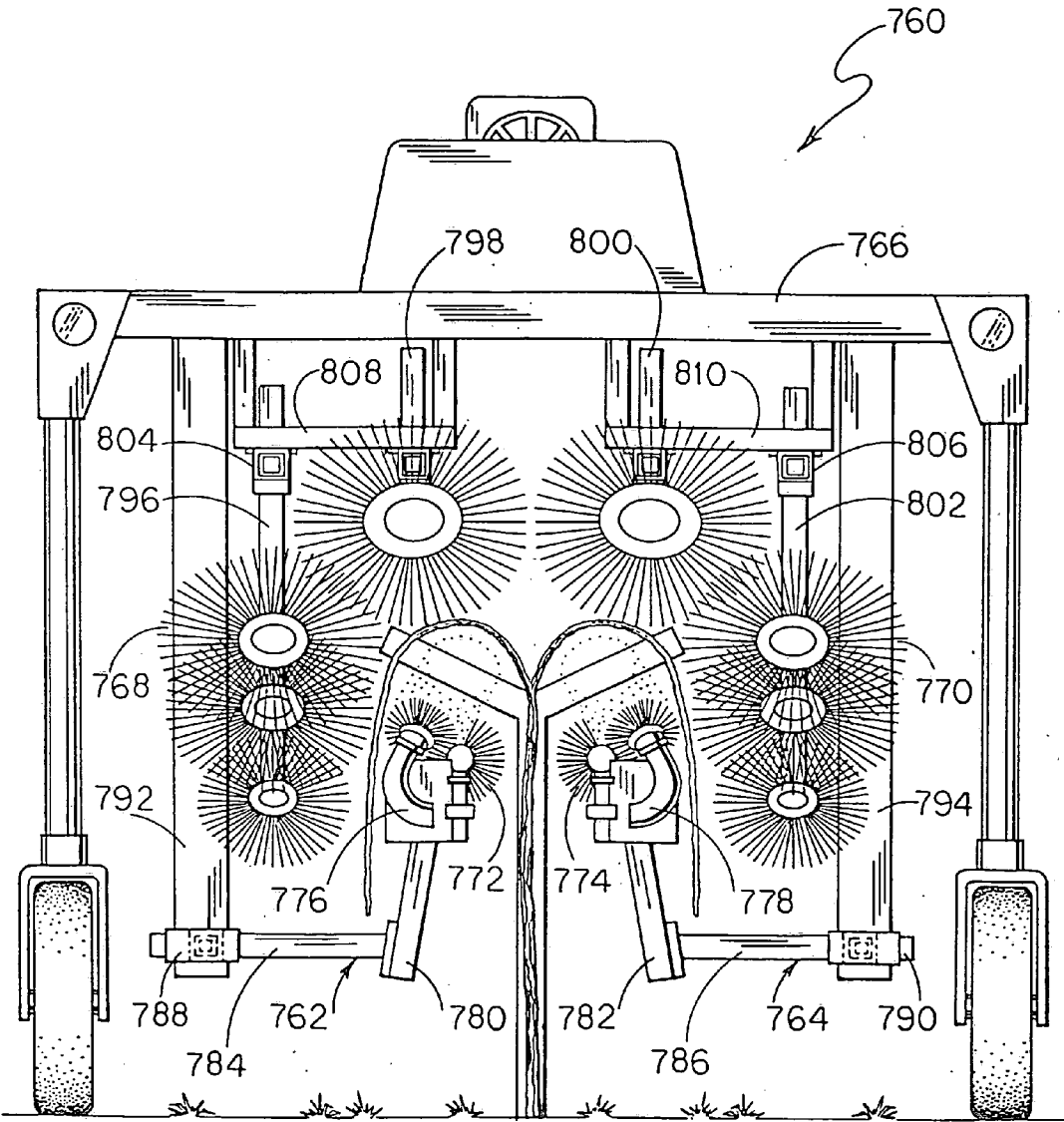


FIG. 42A

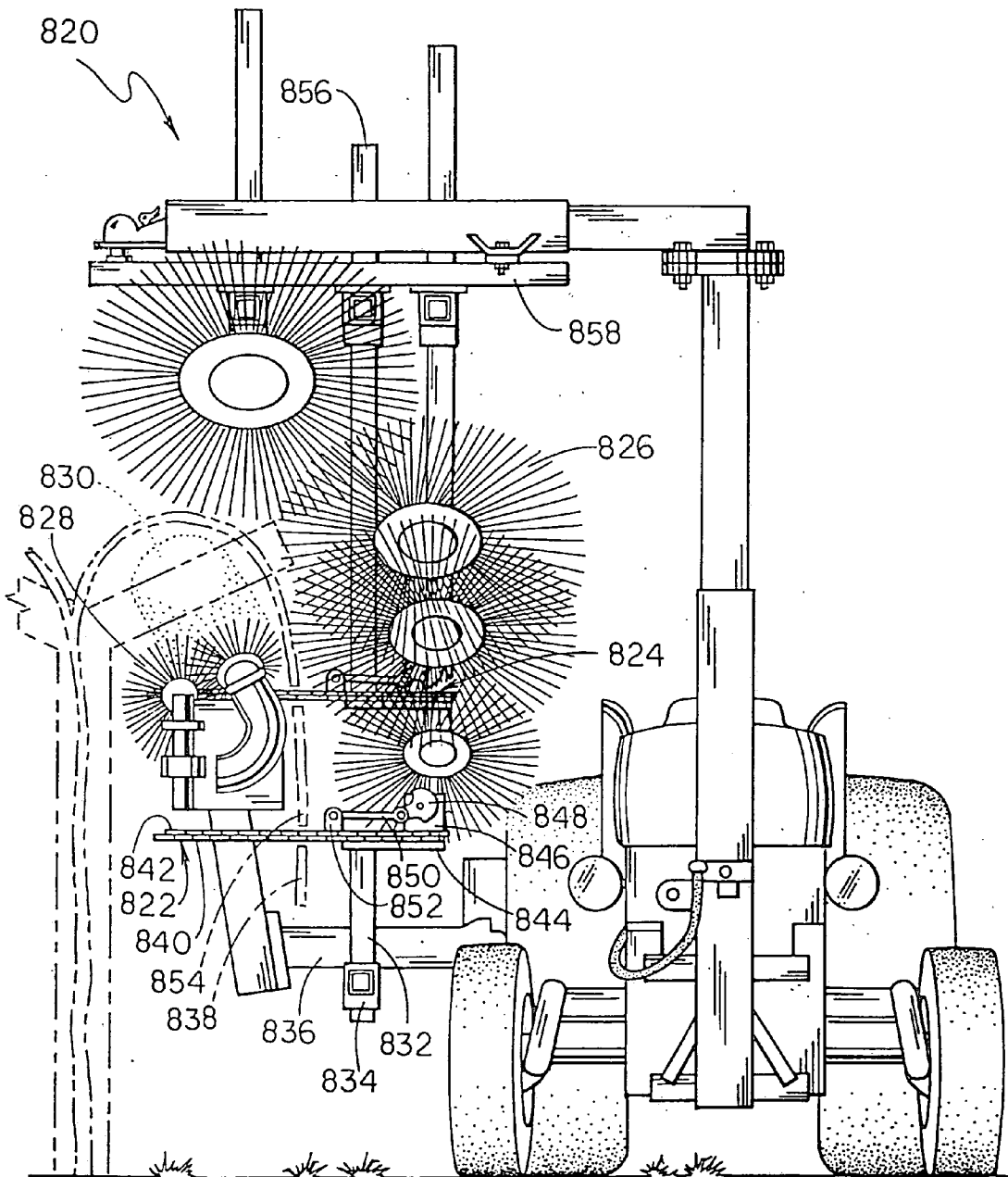


FIG. 43

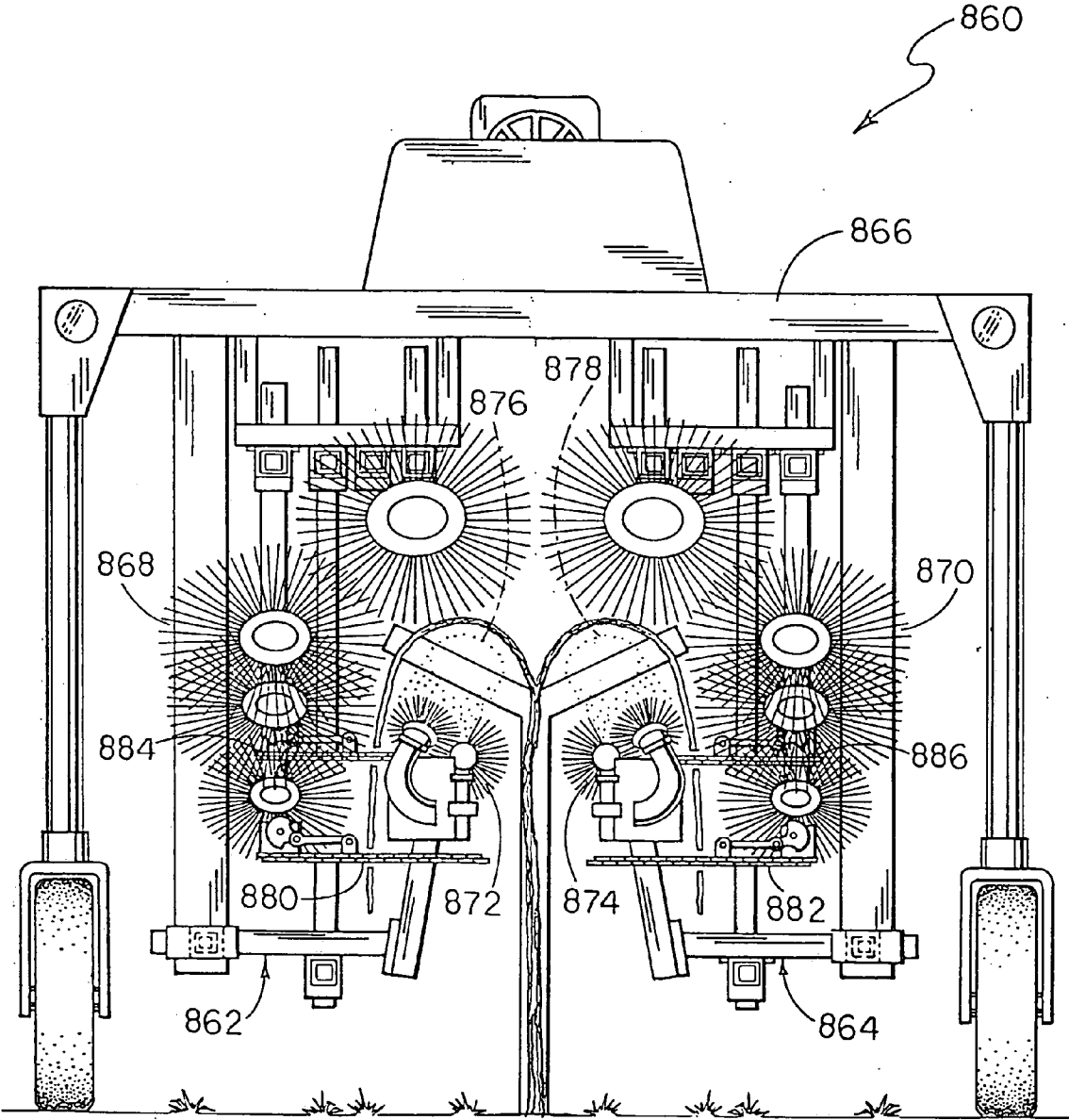


FIG. 43A

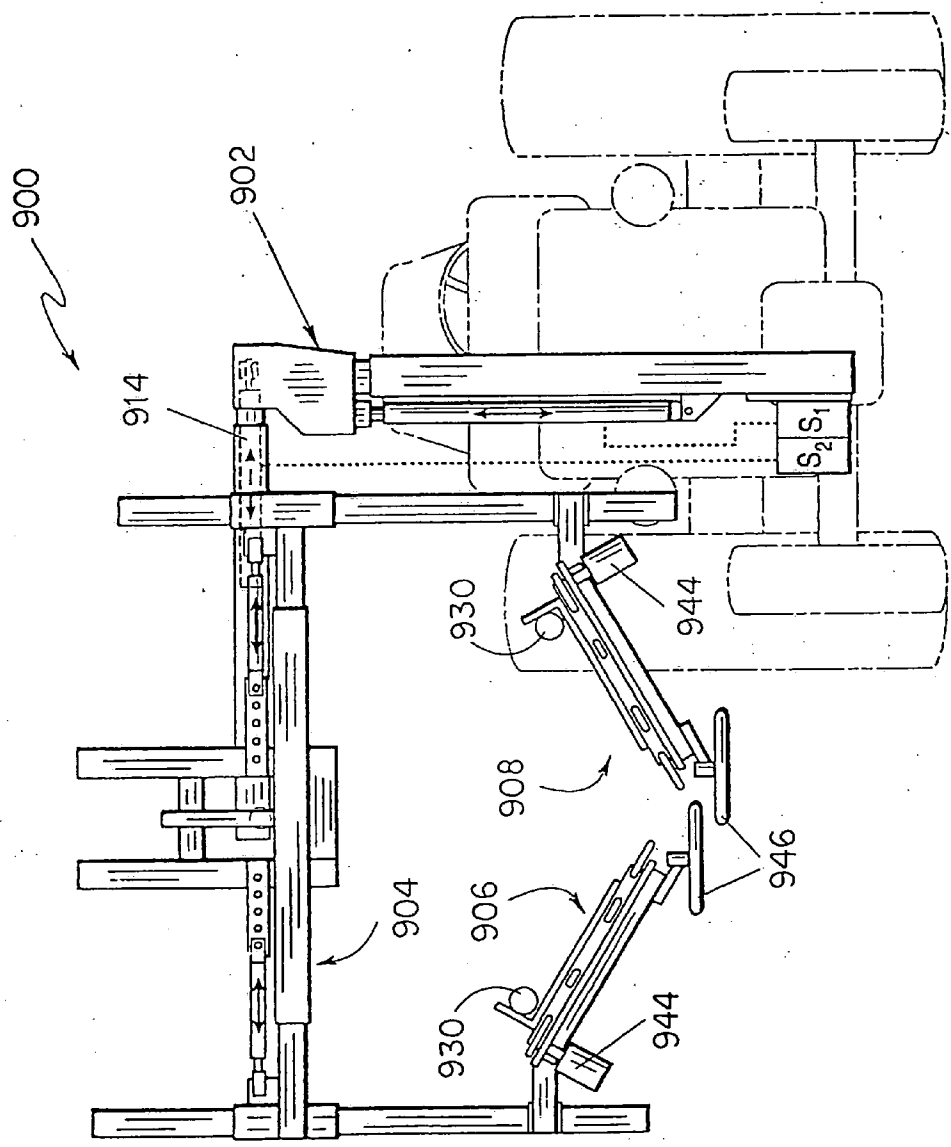
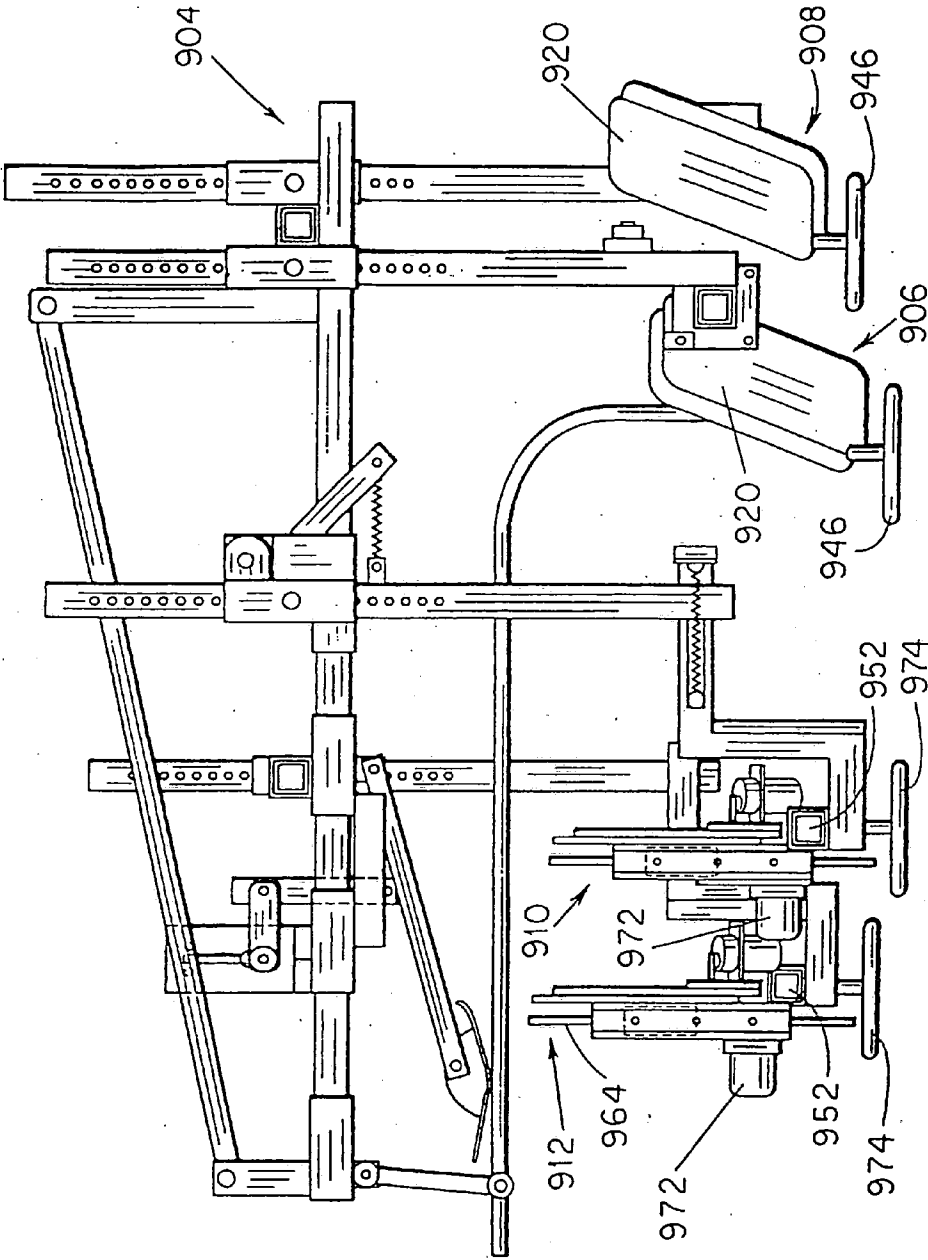


FIG. 44

FIG. 45



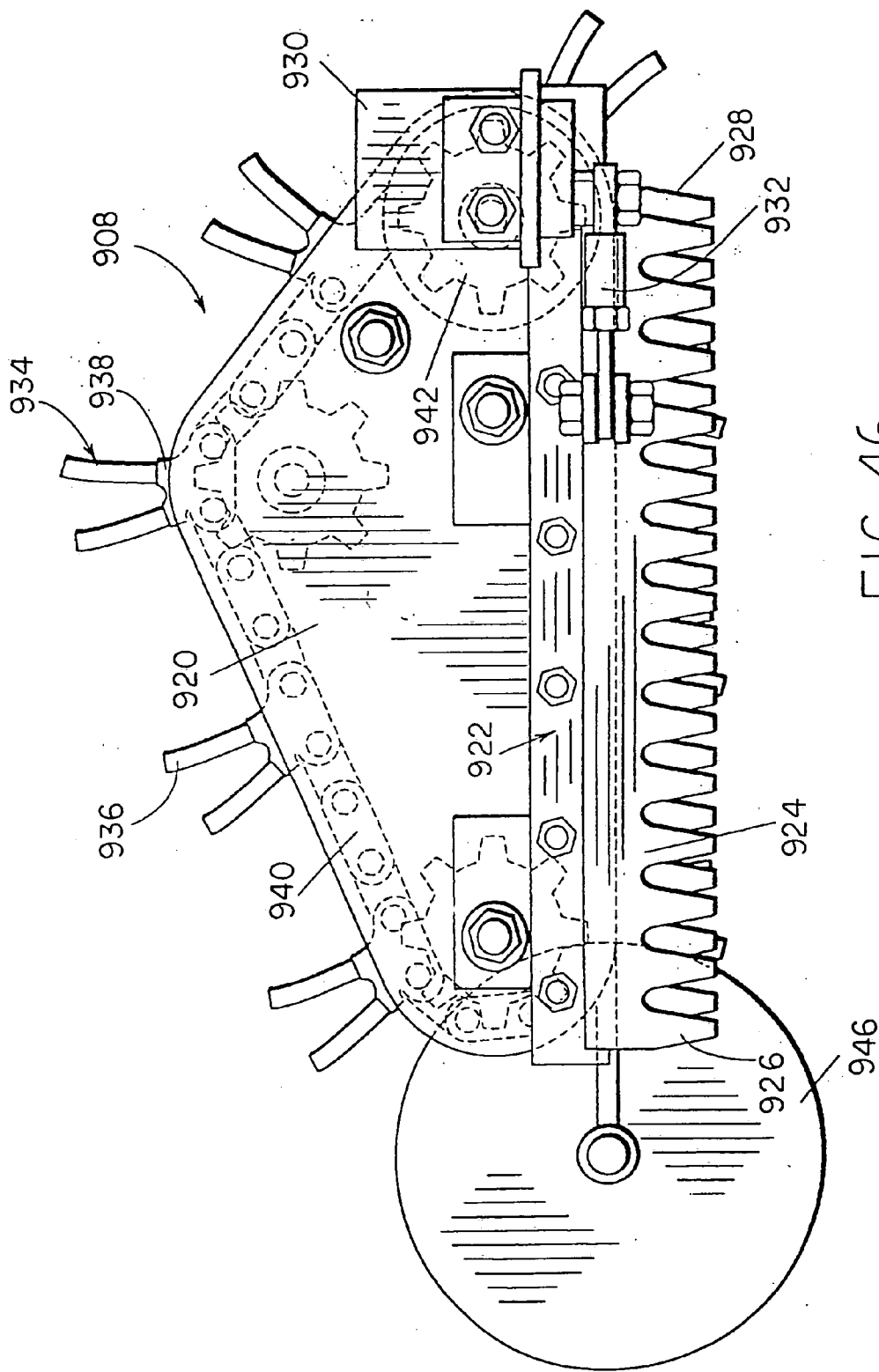


FIG. 46

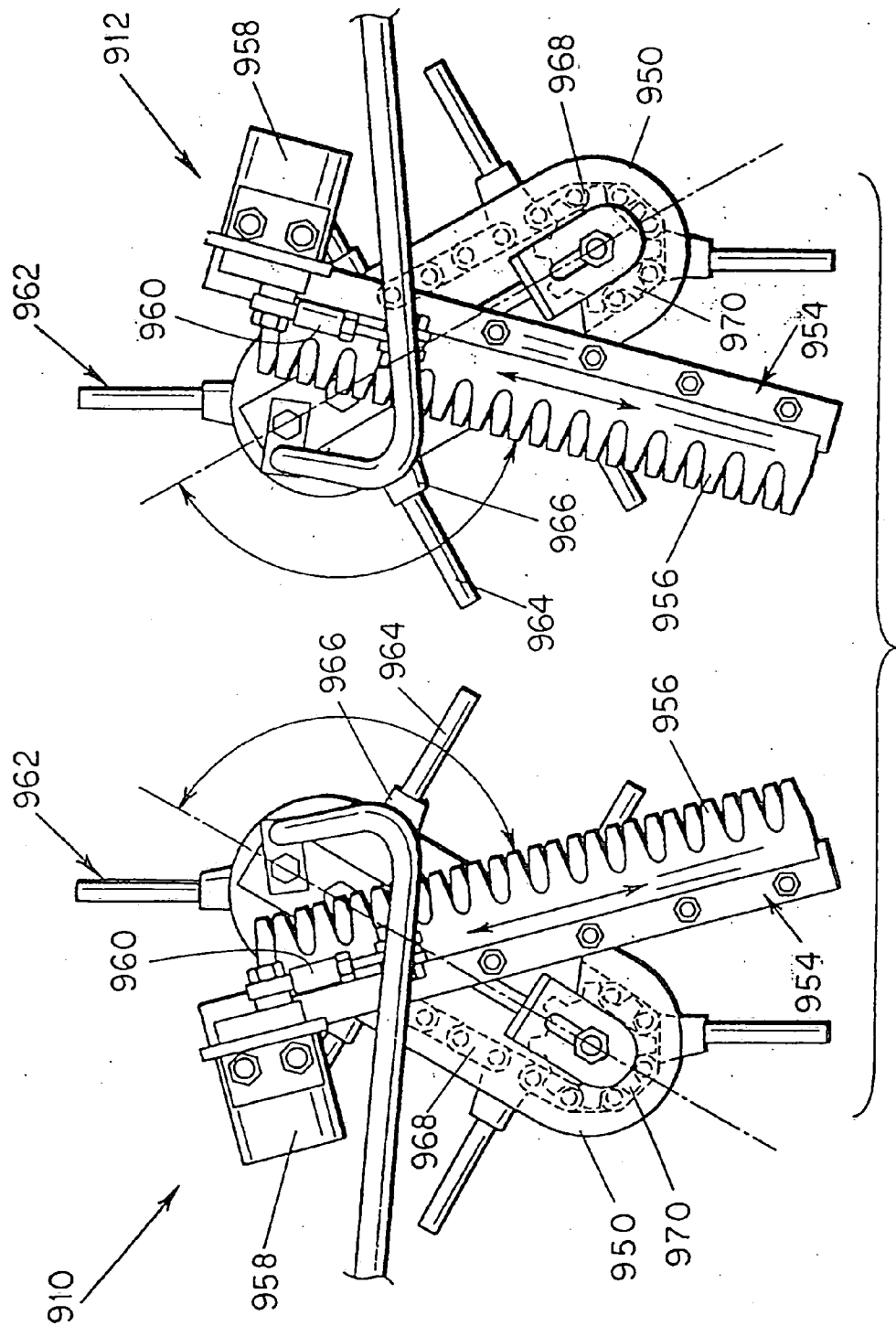
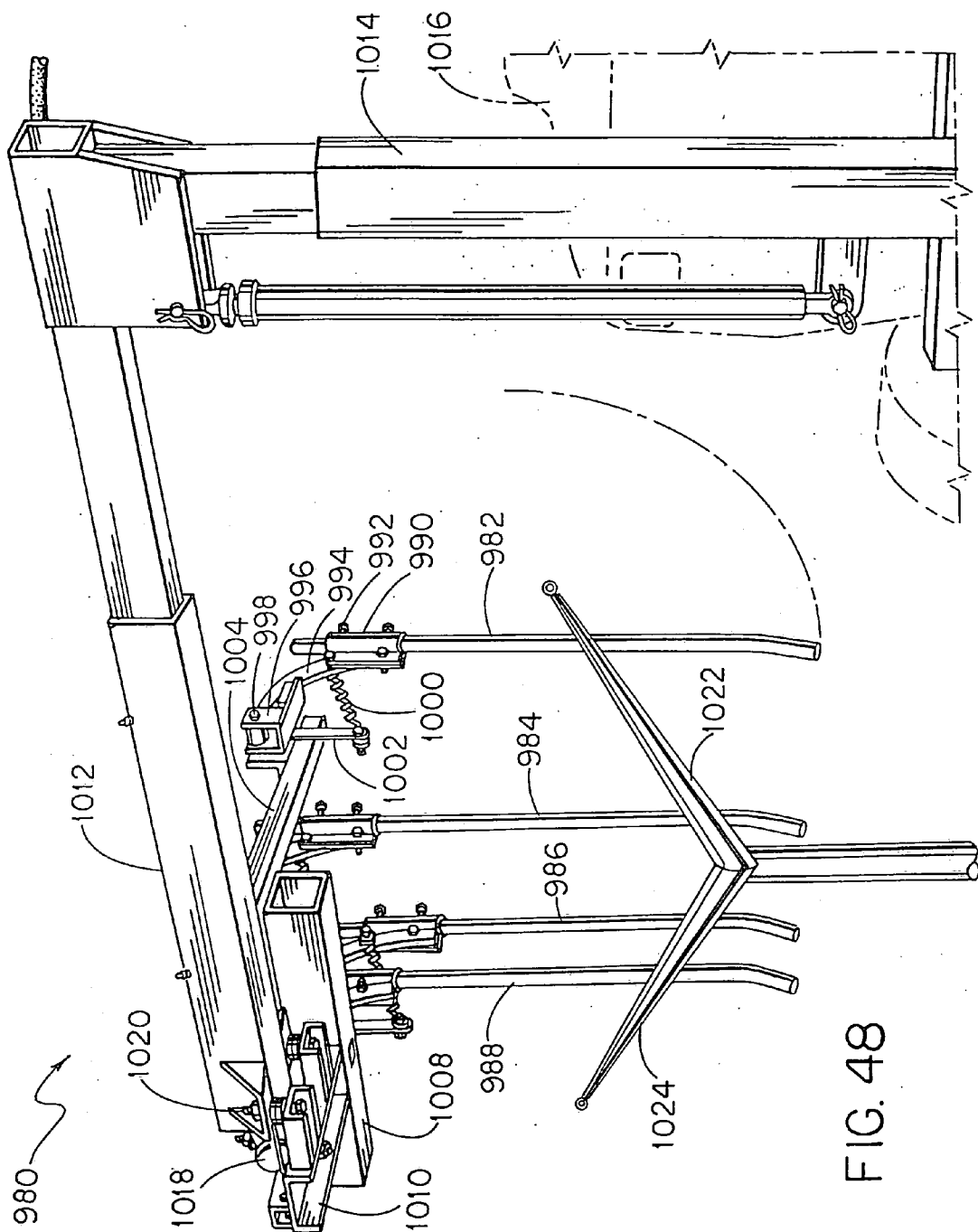


FIG. 47



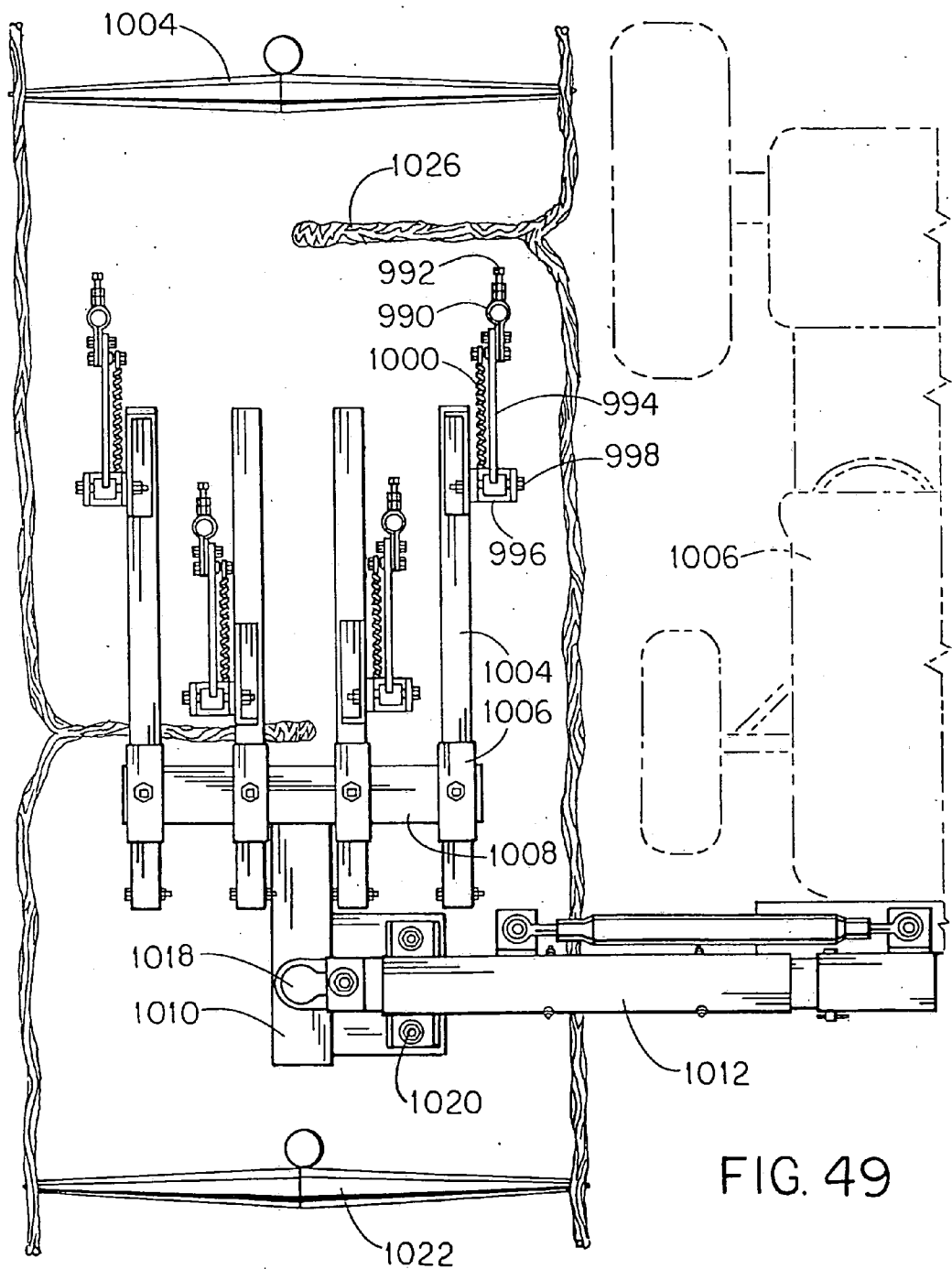


FIG. 49

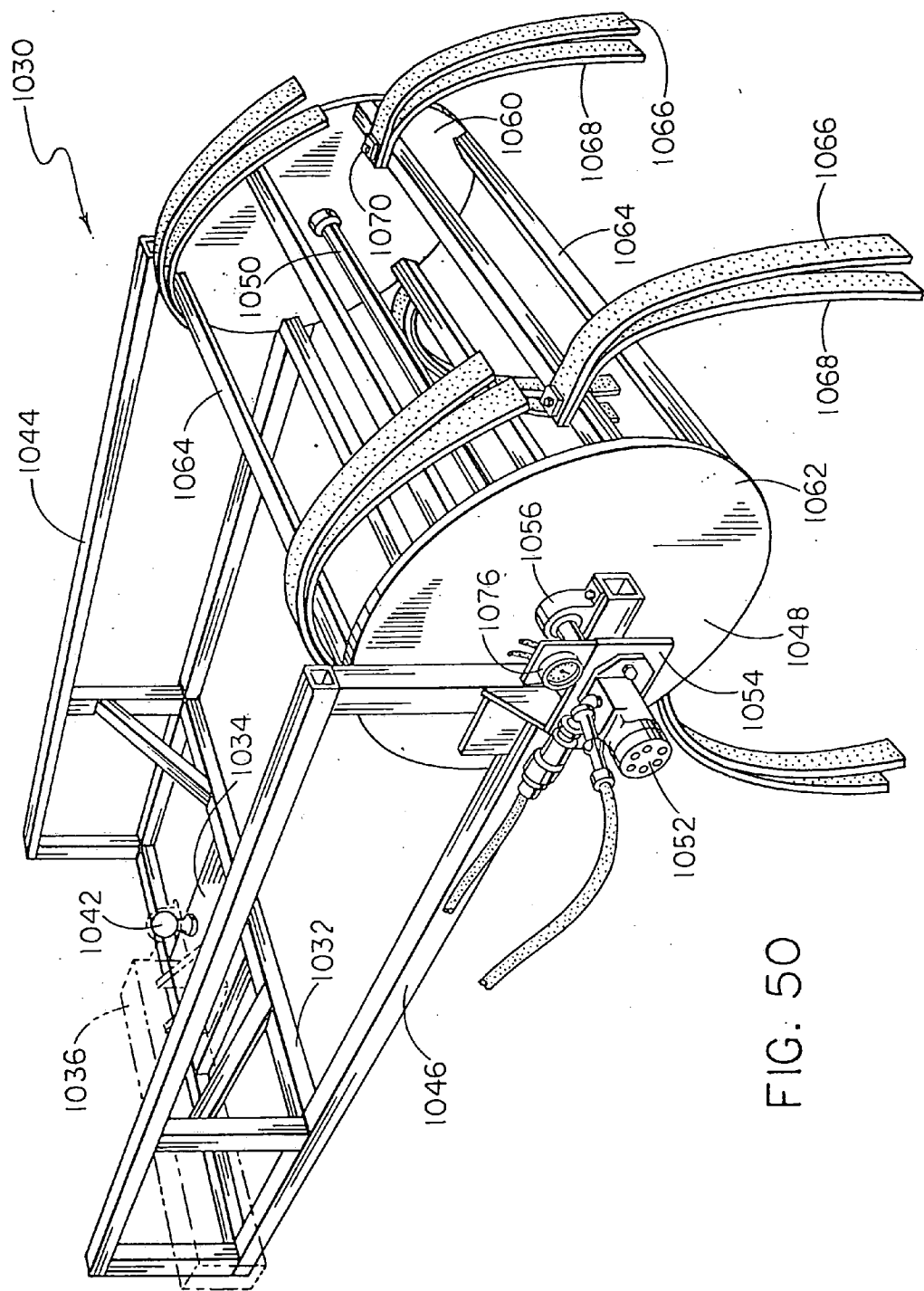


FIG. 50

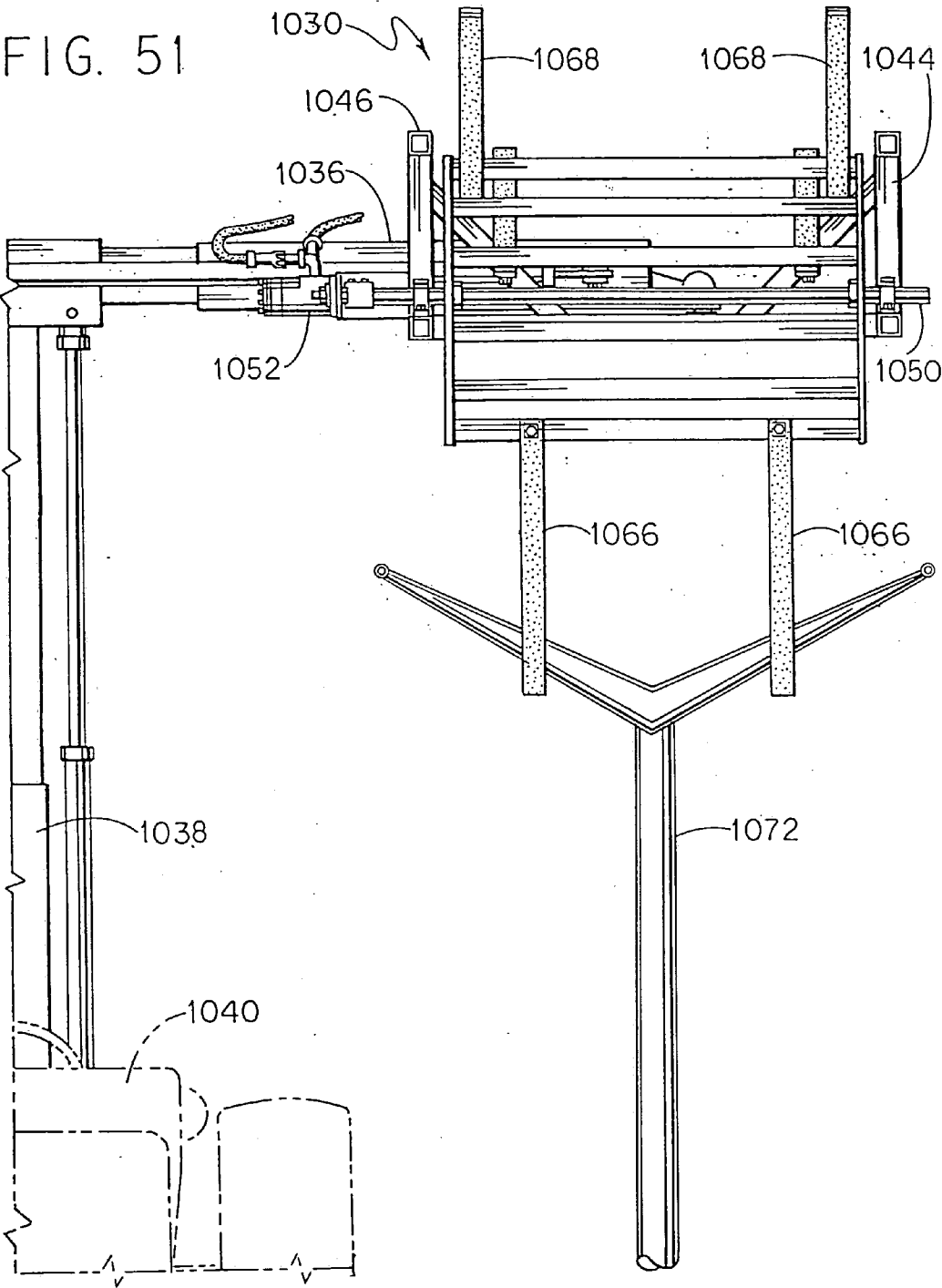
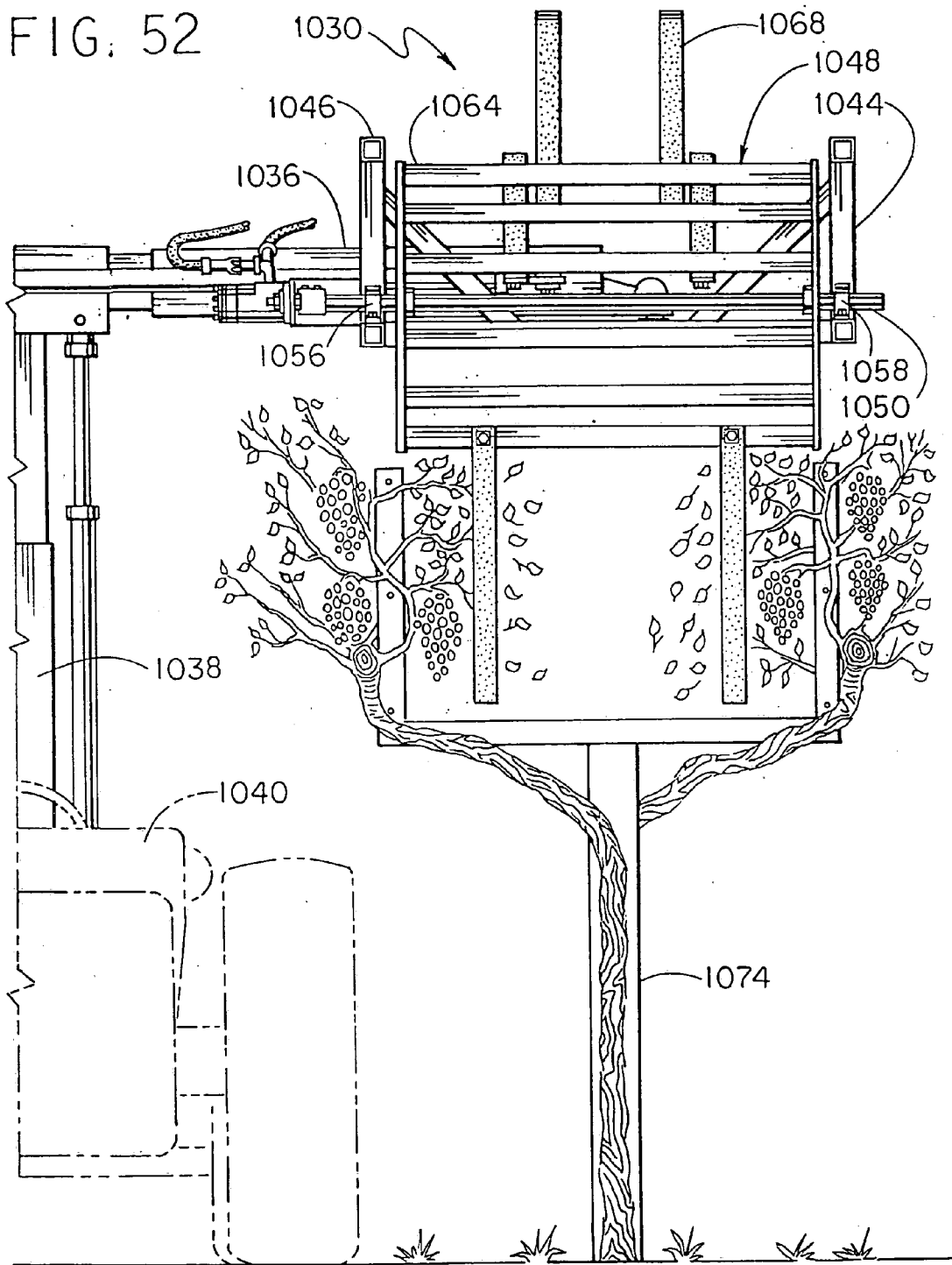


FIG. 52



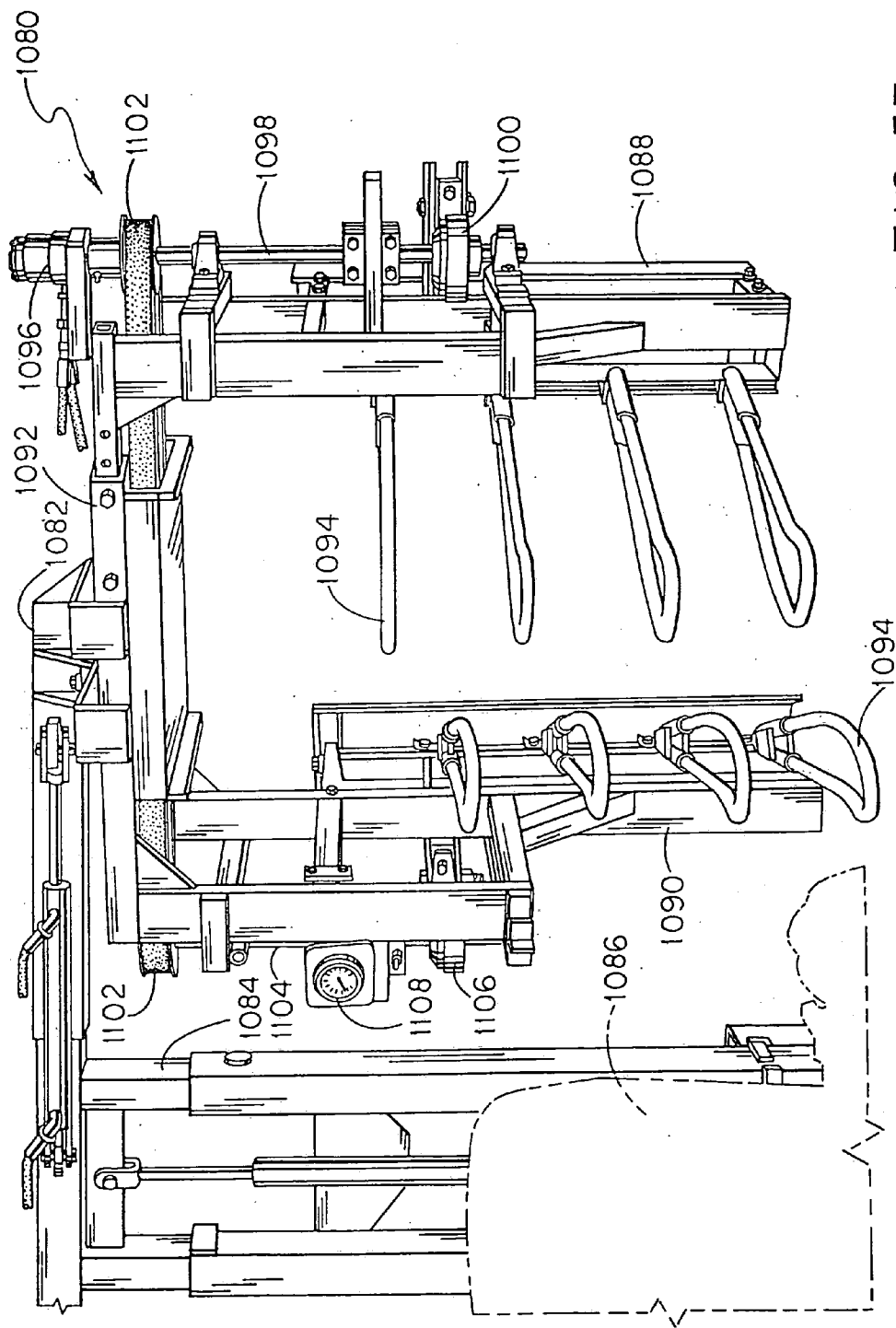


FIG. 53

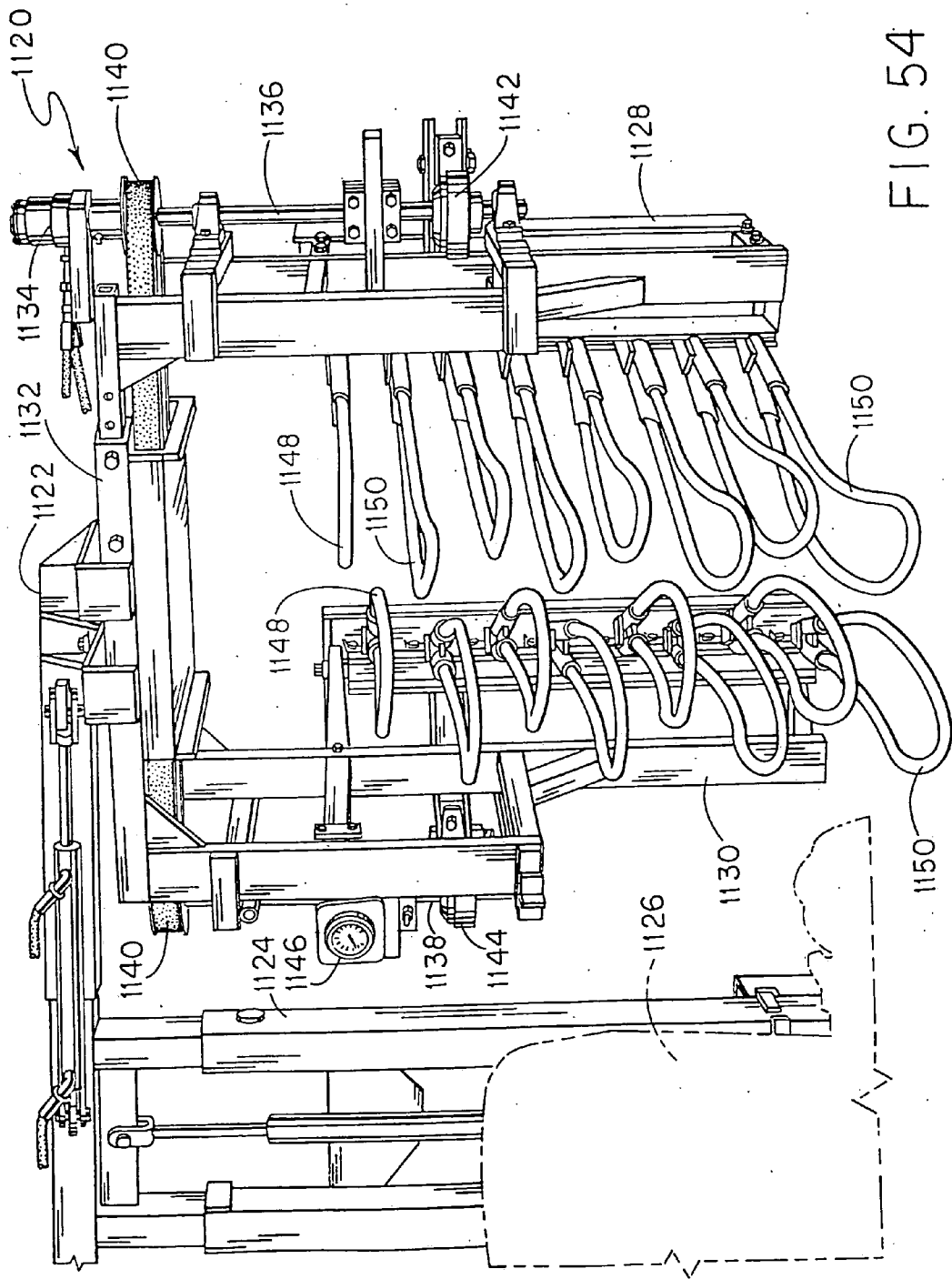


FIG. 54

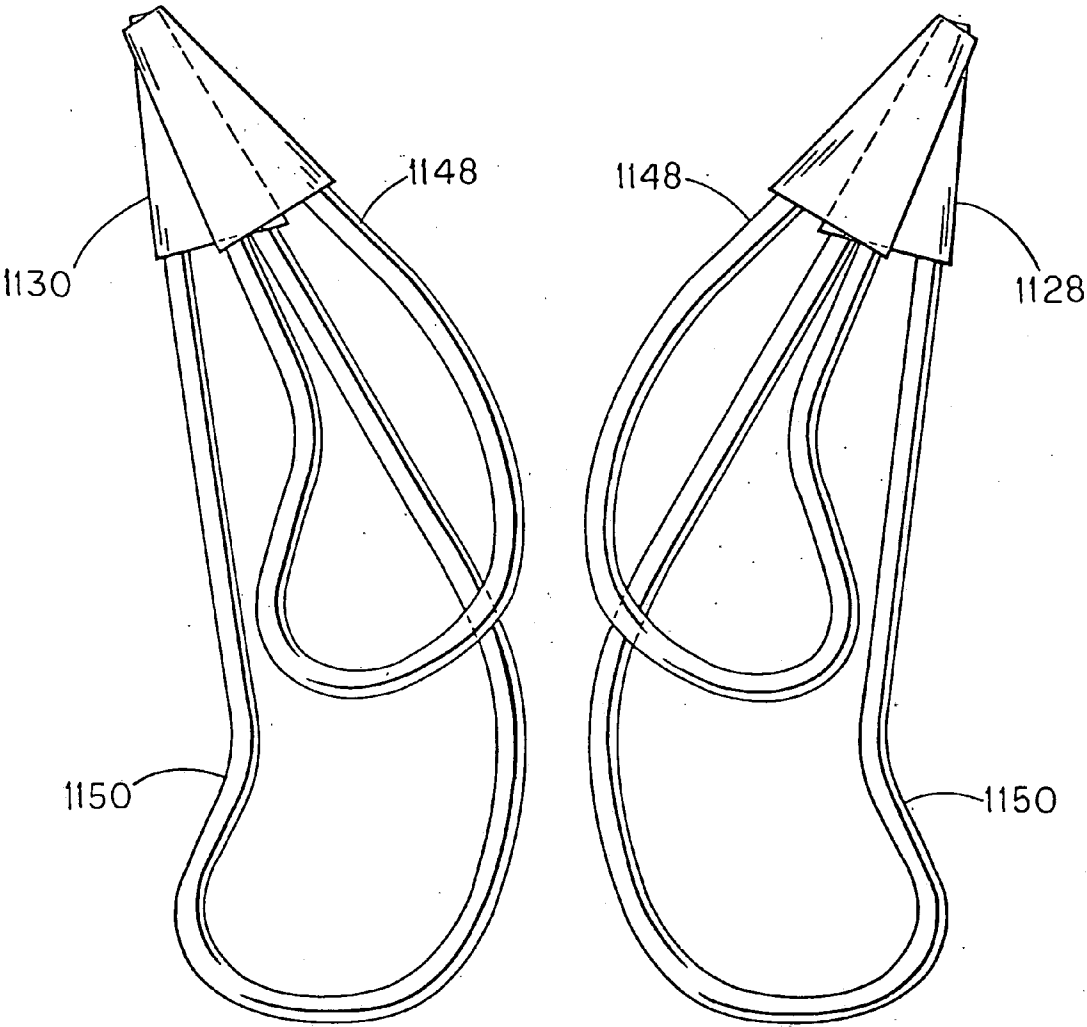
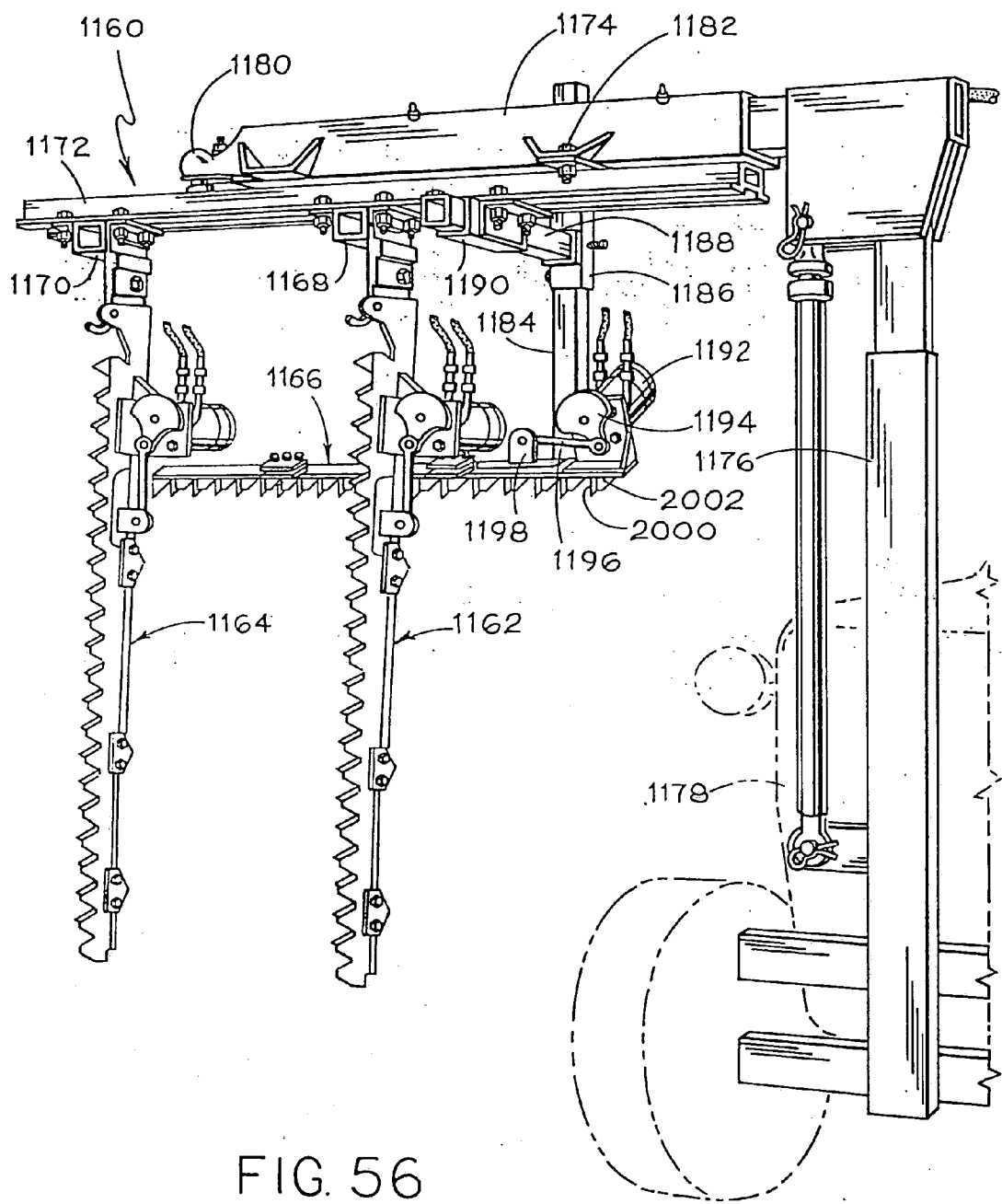


FIG. 55



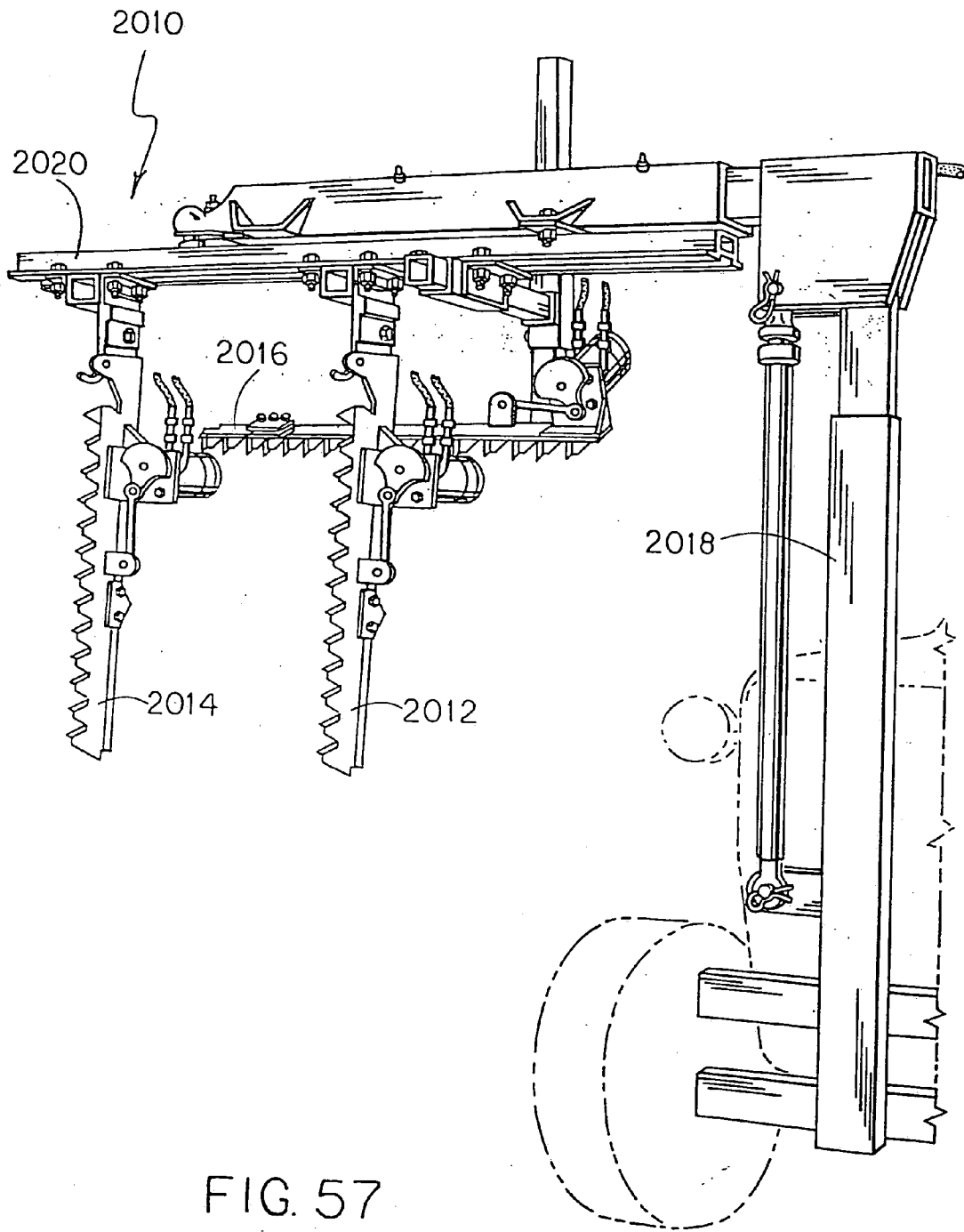
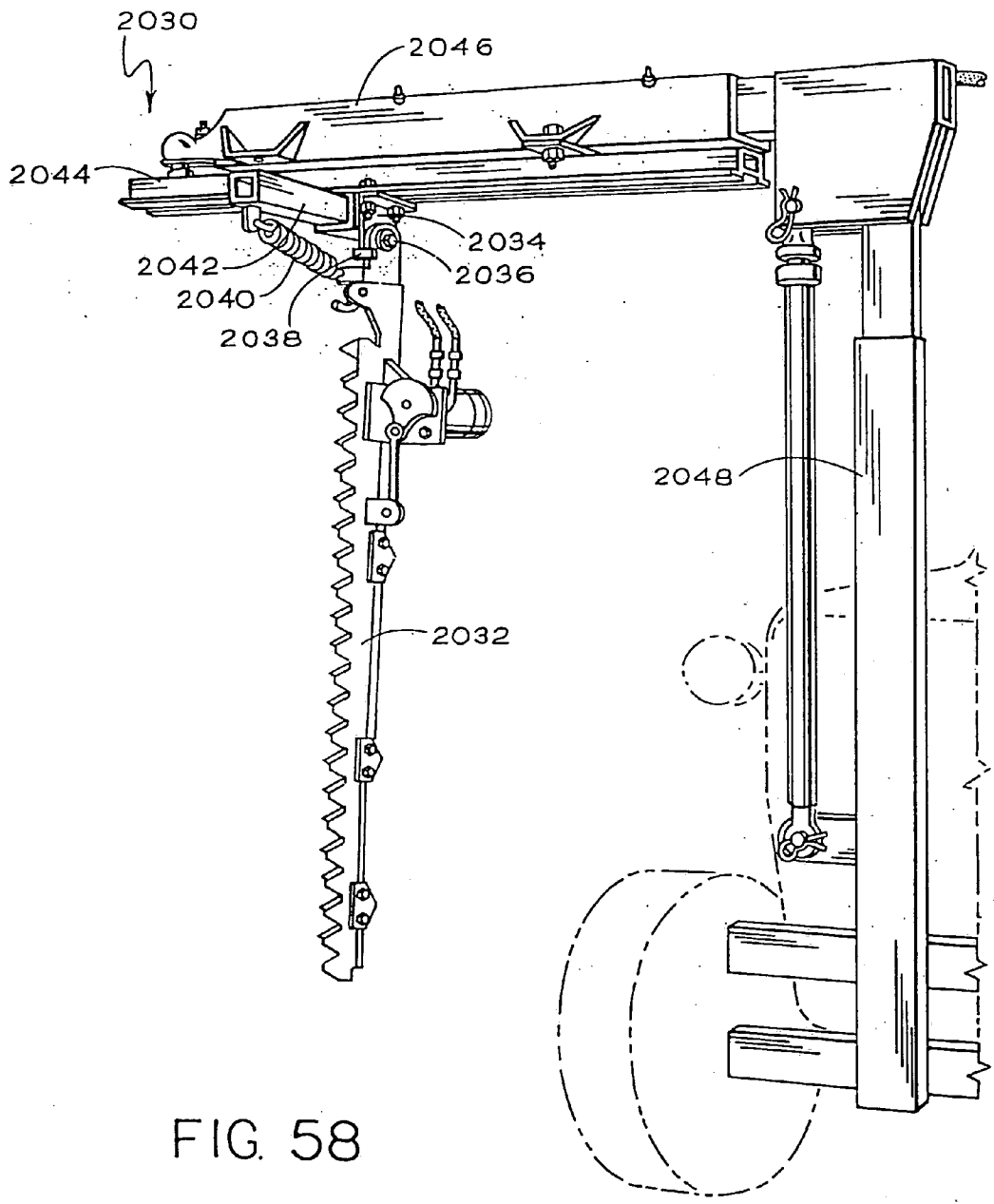


FIG. 57



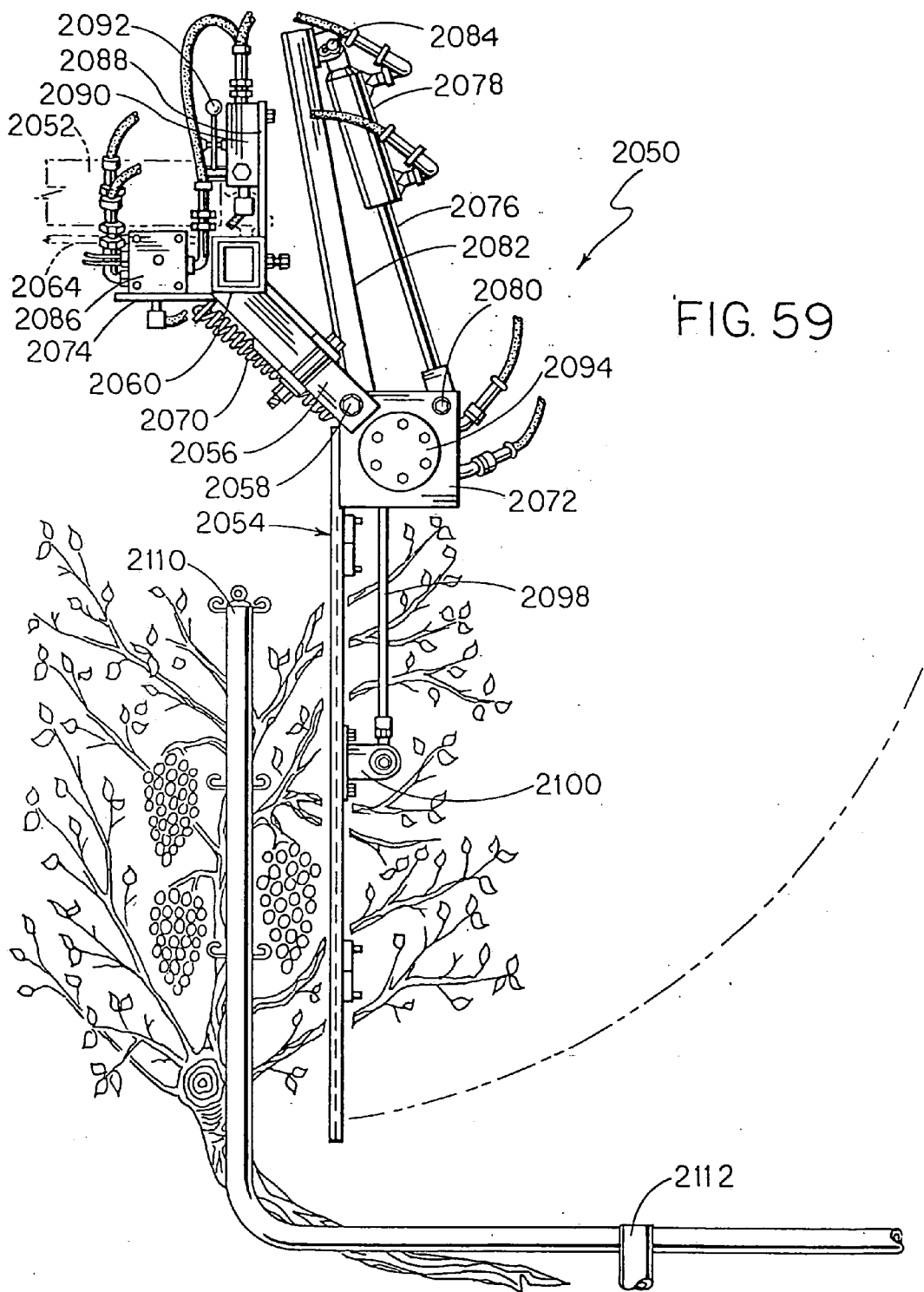


FIG. 60

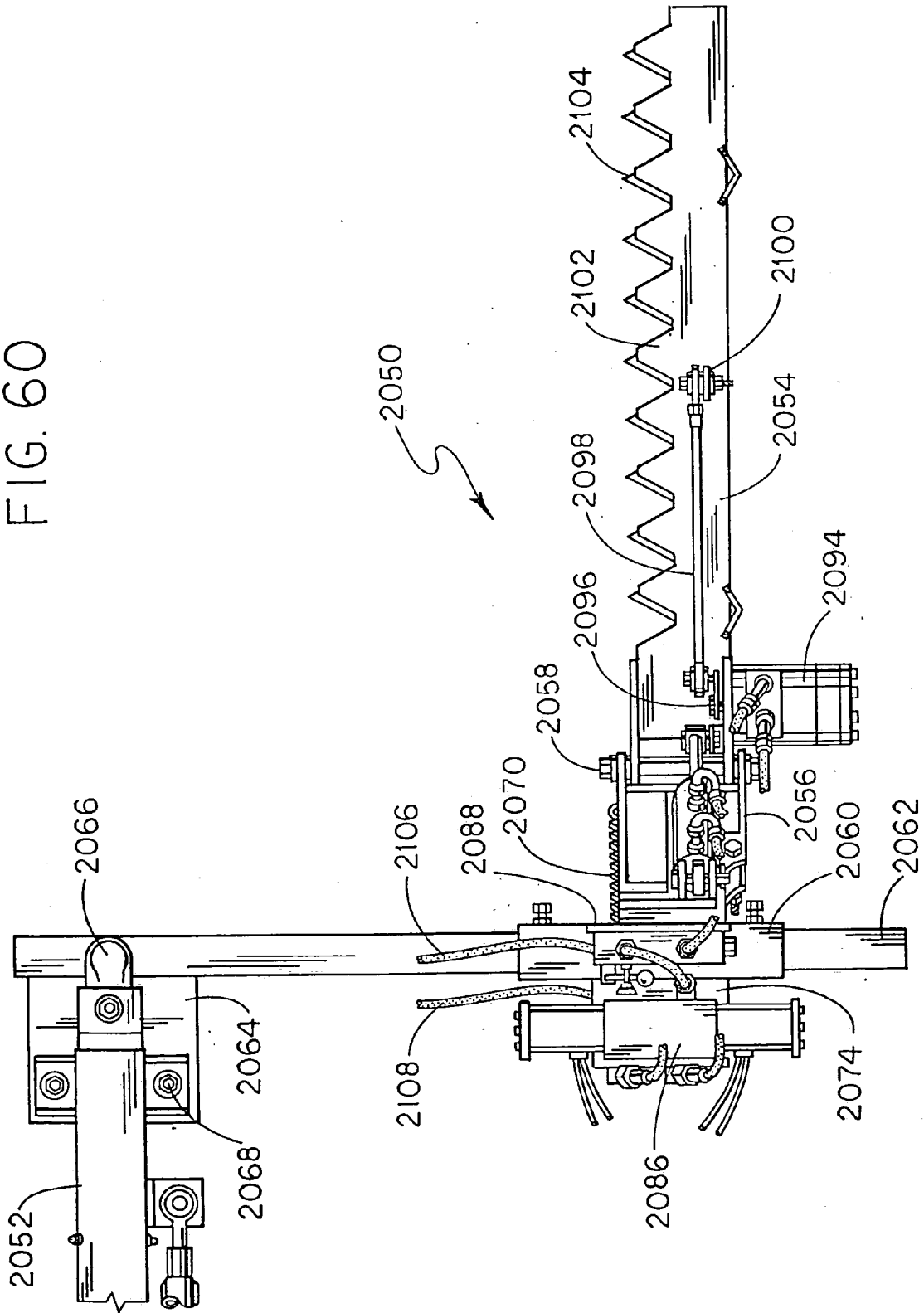


FIG. 62

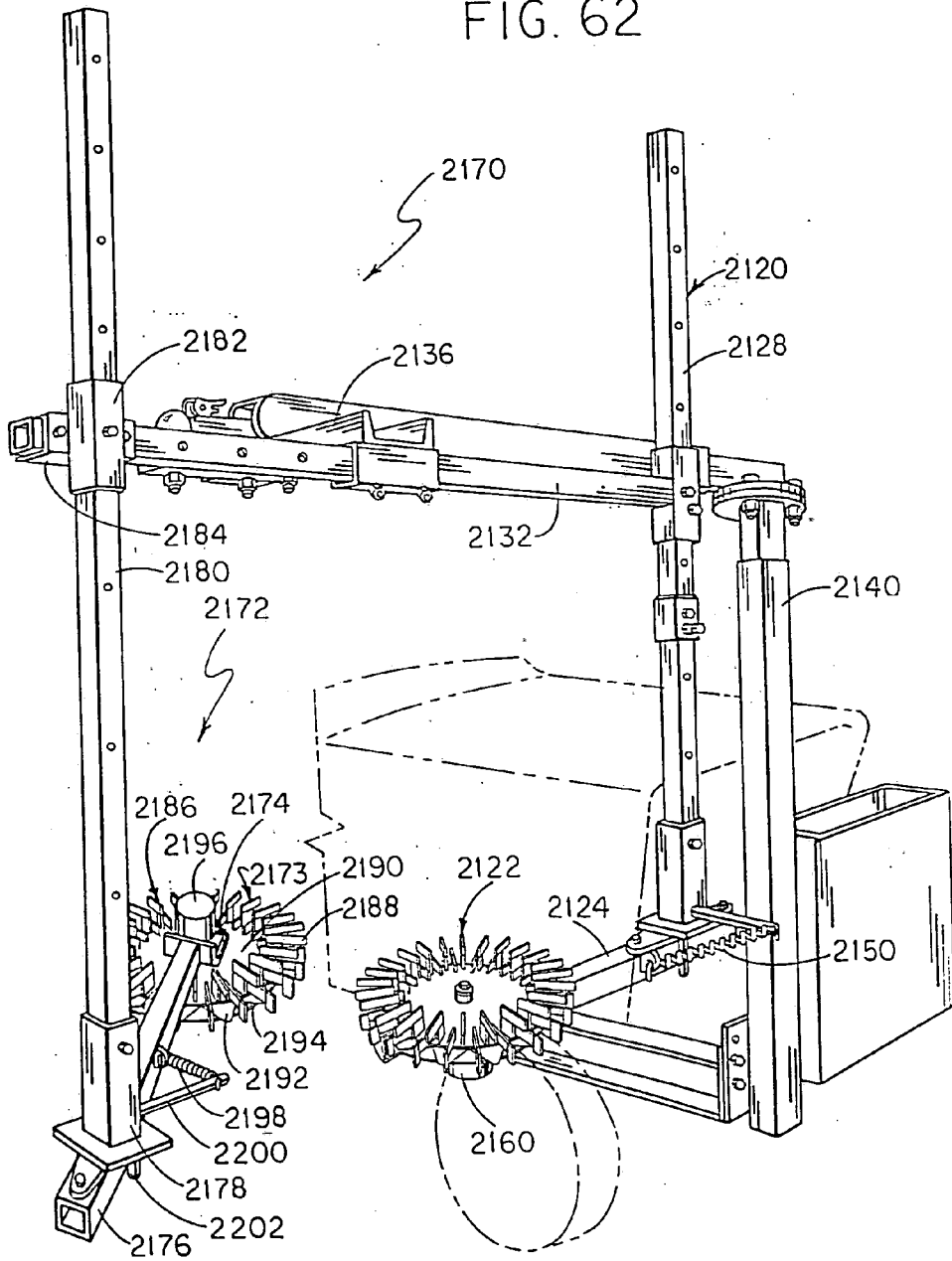
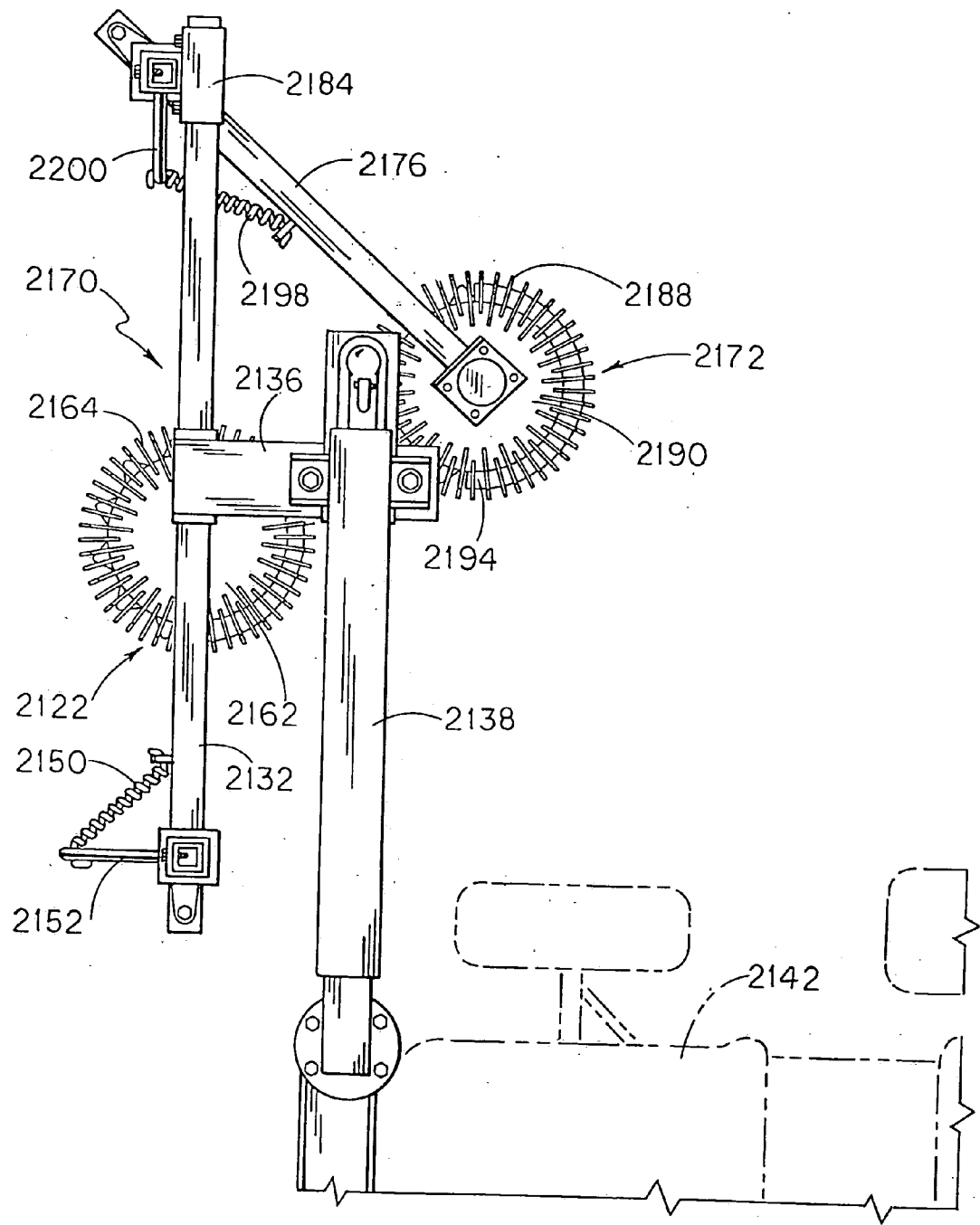


FIG. 63



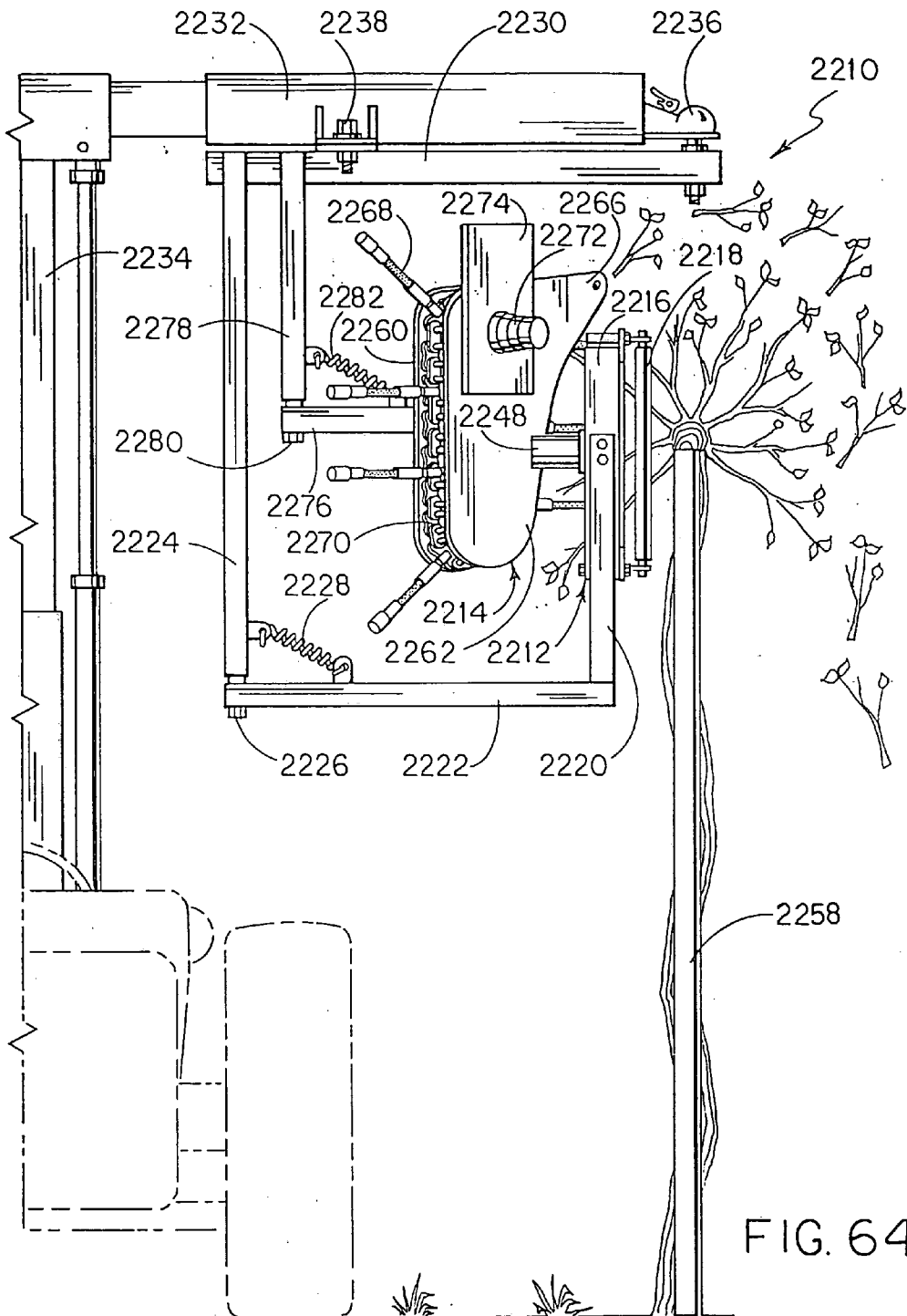
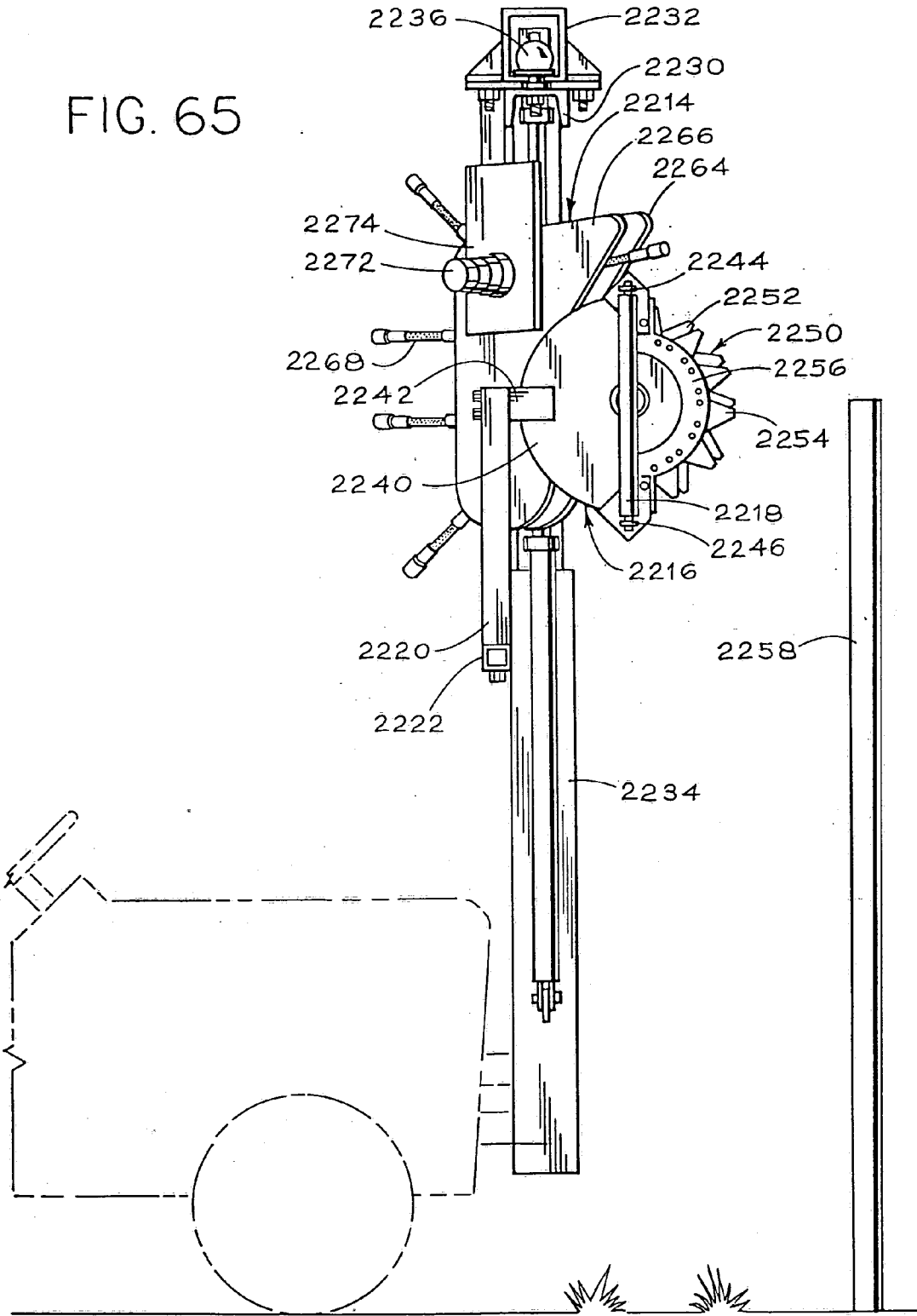


FIG. 65



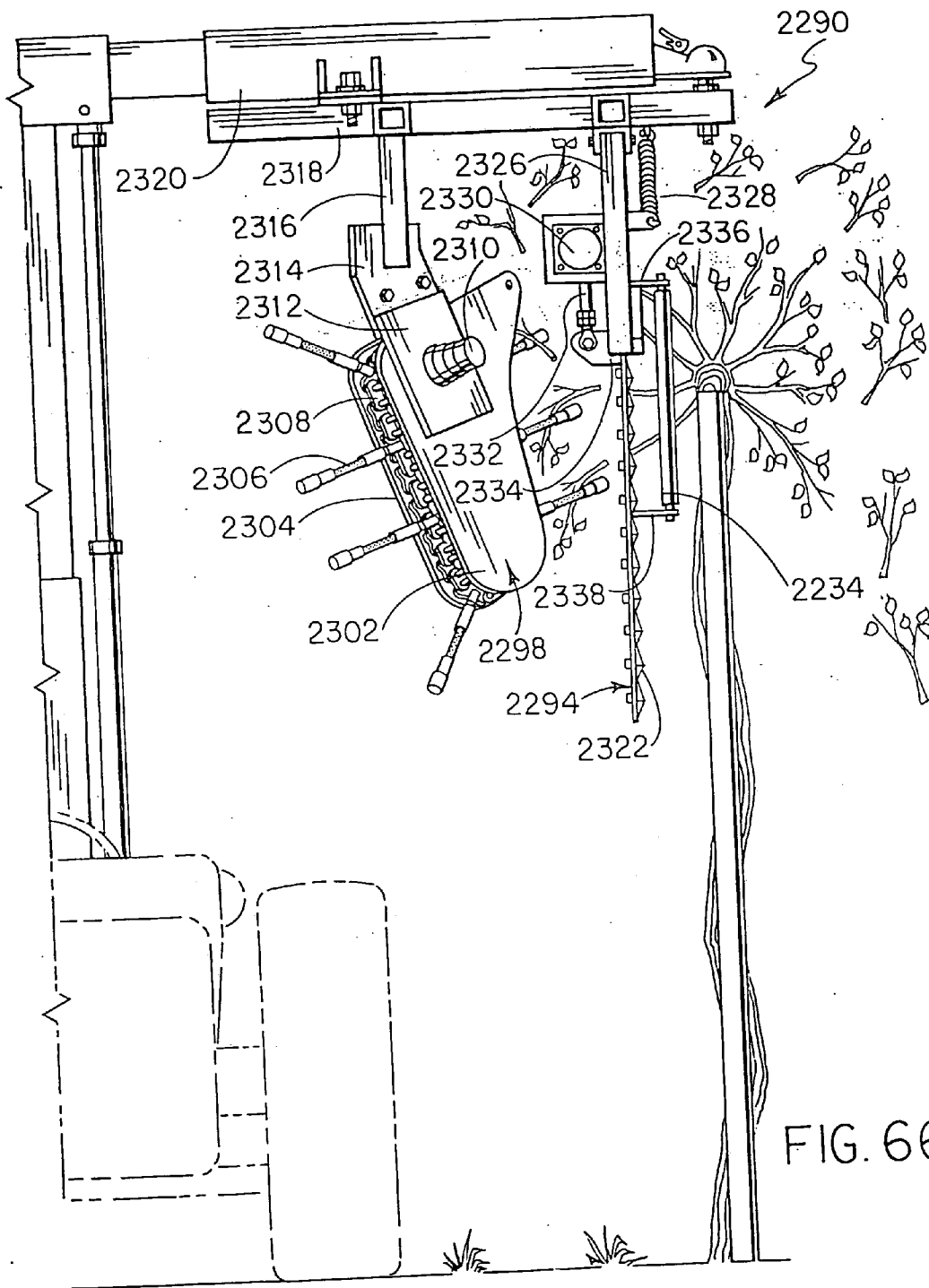


FIG. 66

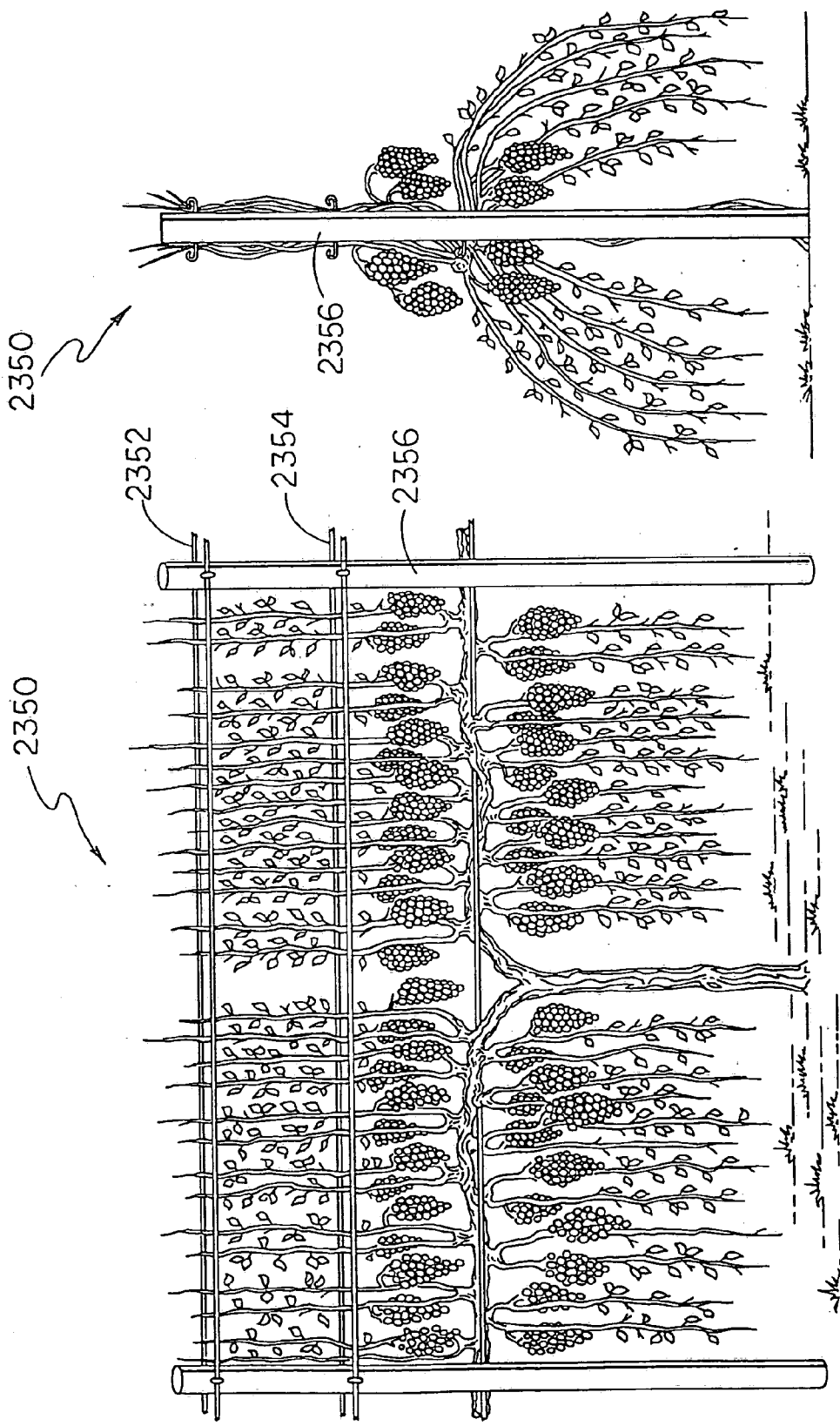


FIG. 68

FIG. 67

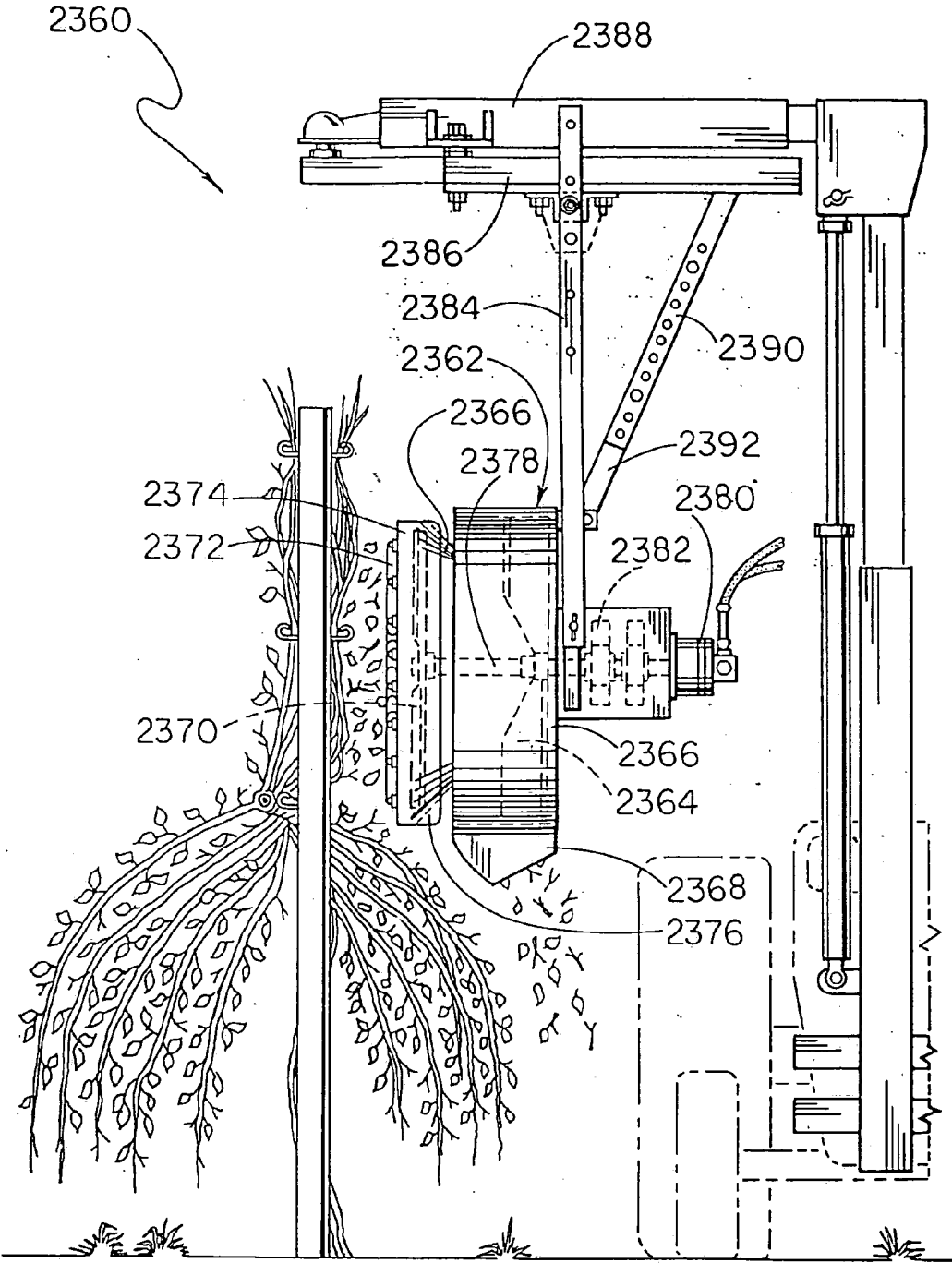


FIG. 69

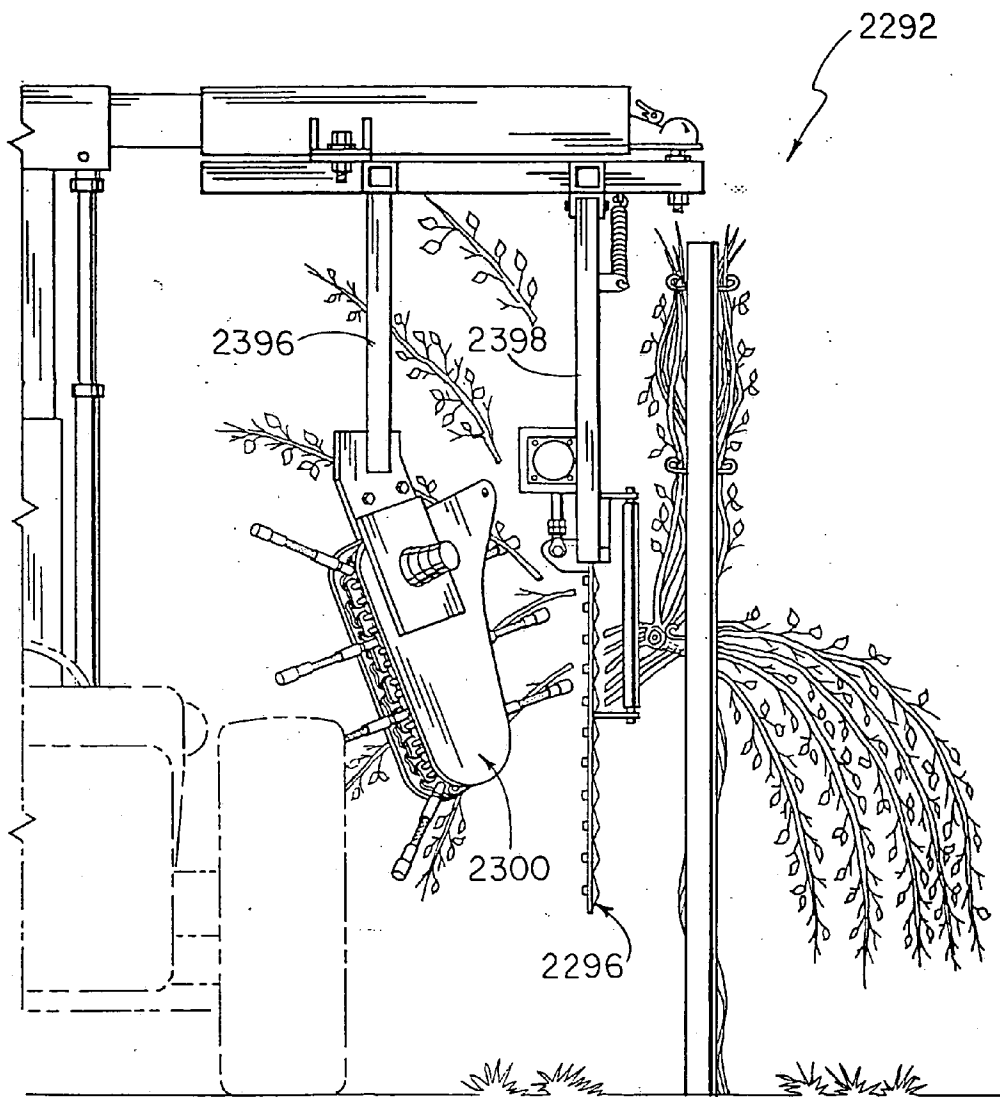
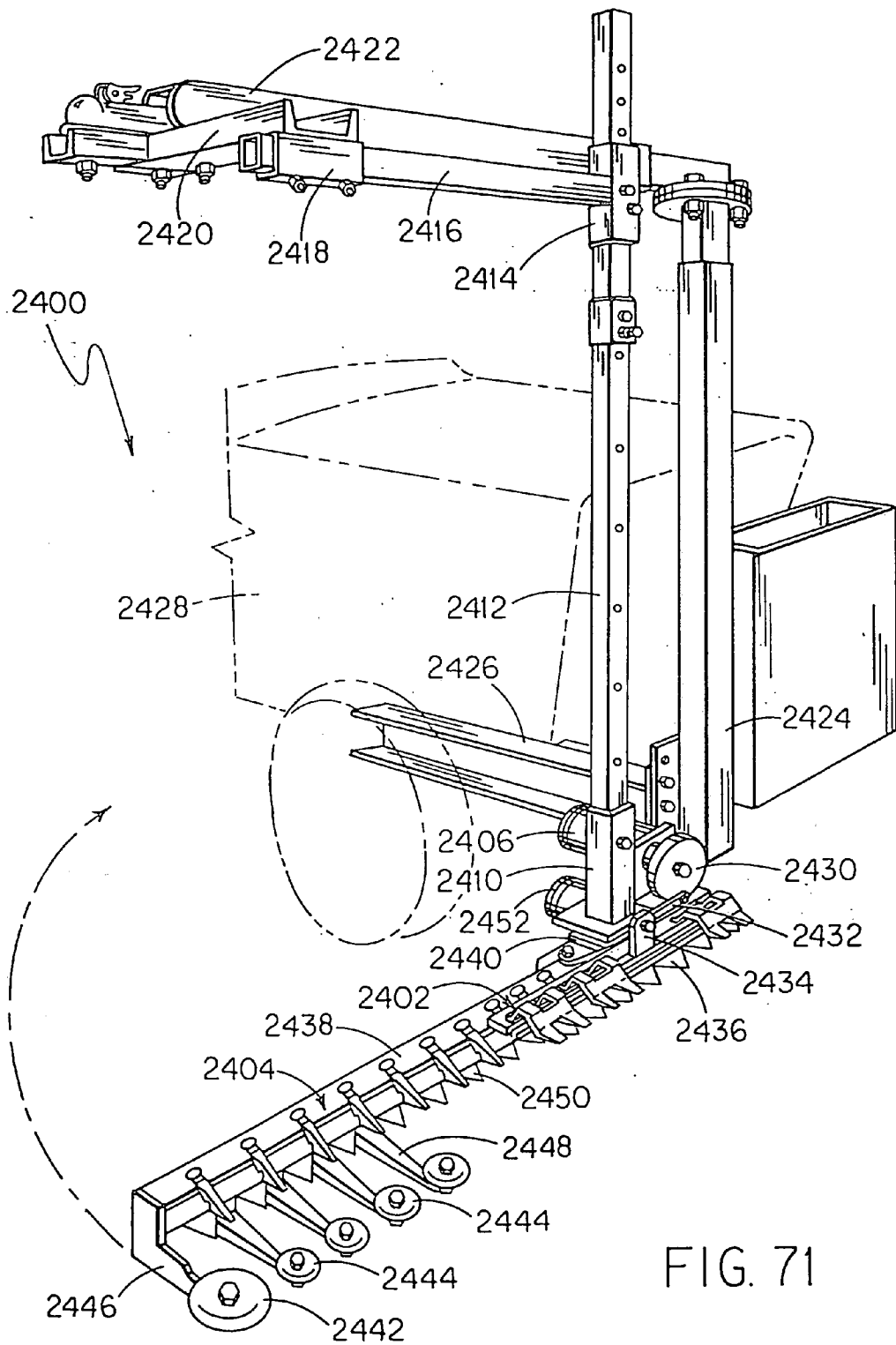


FIG. 70



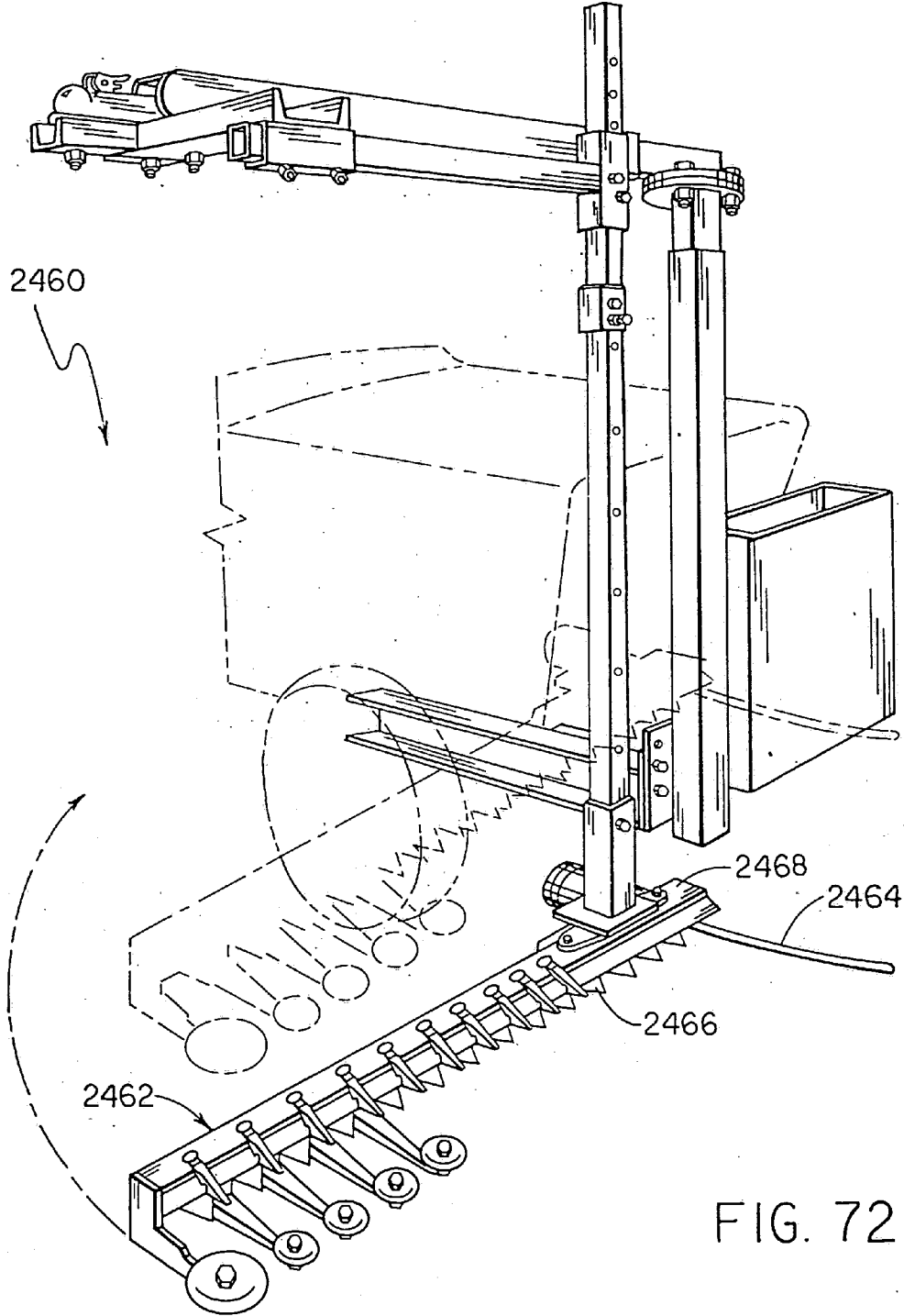
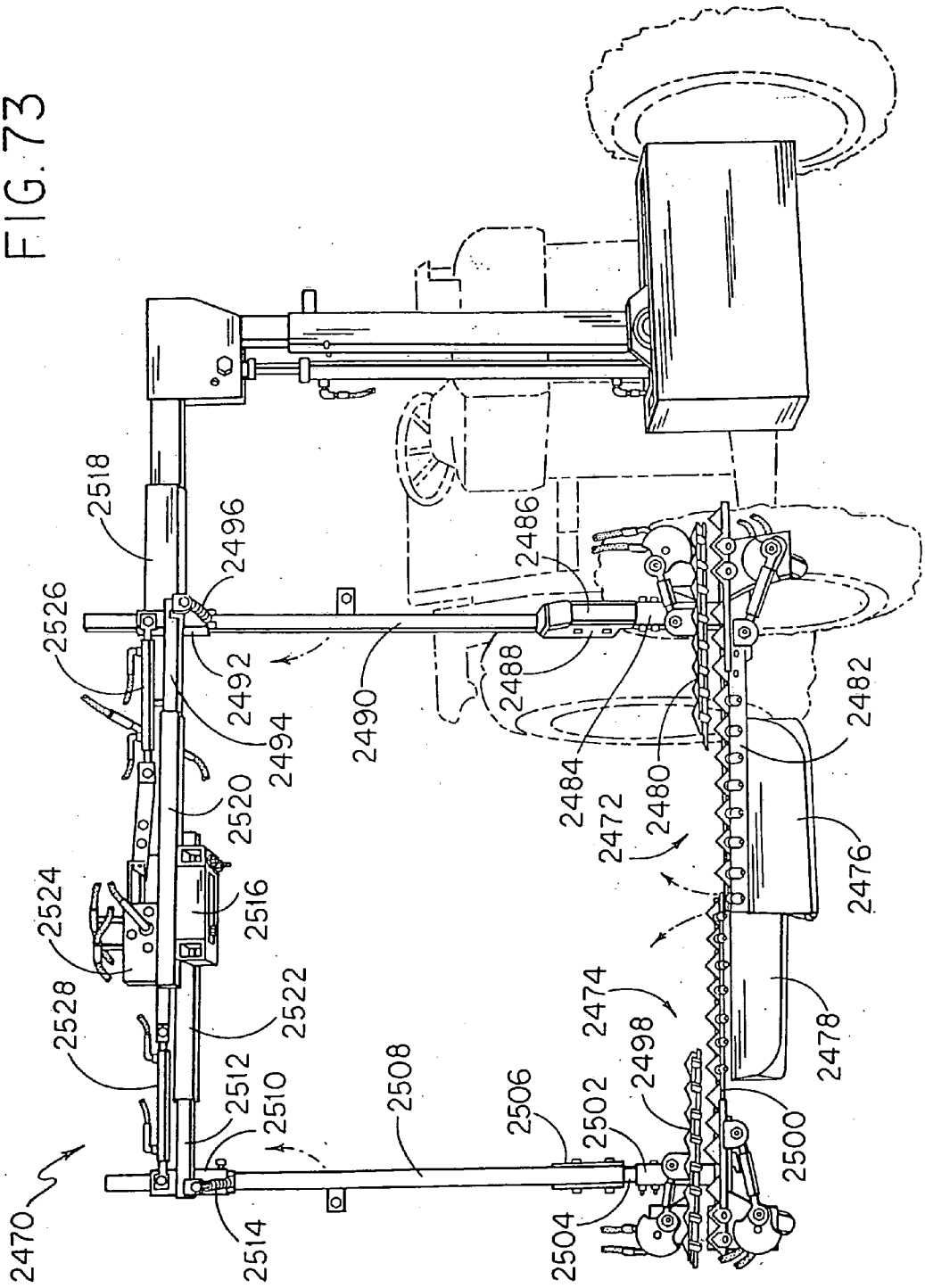
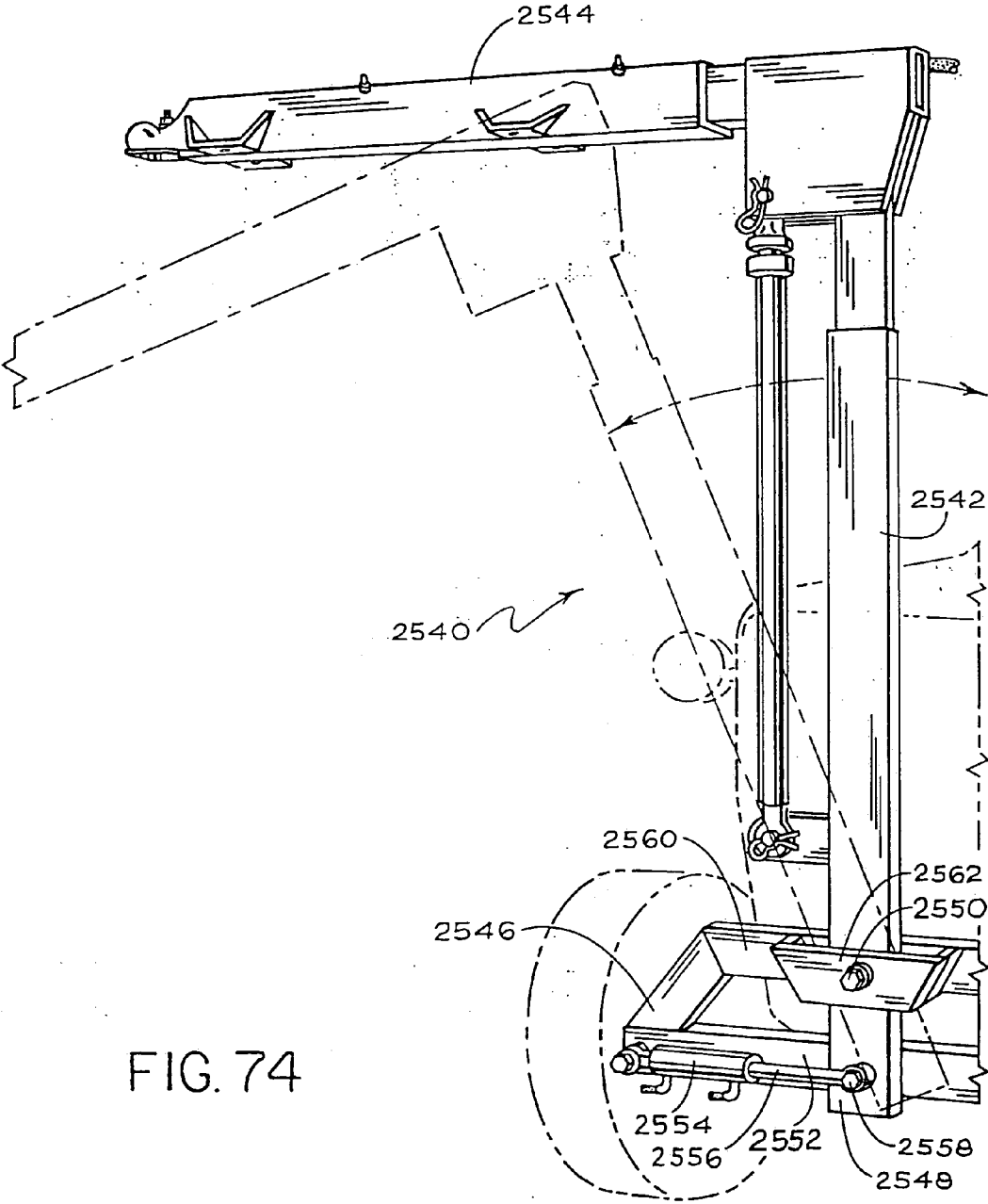


FIG. 73





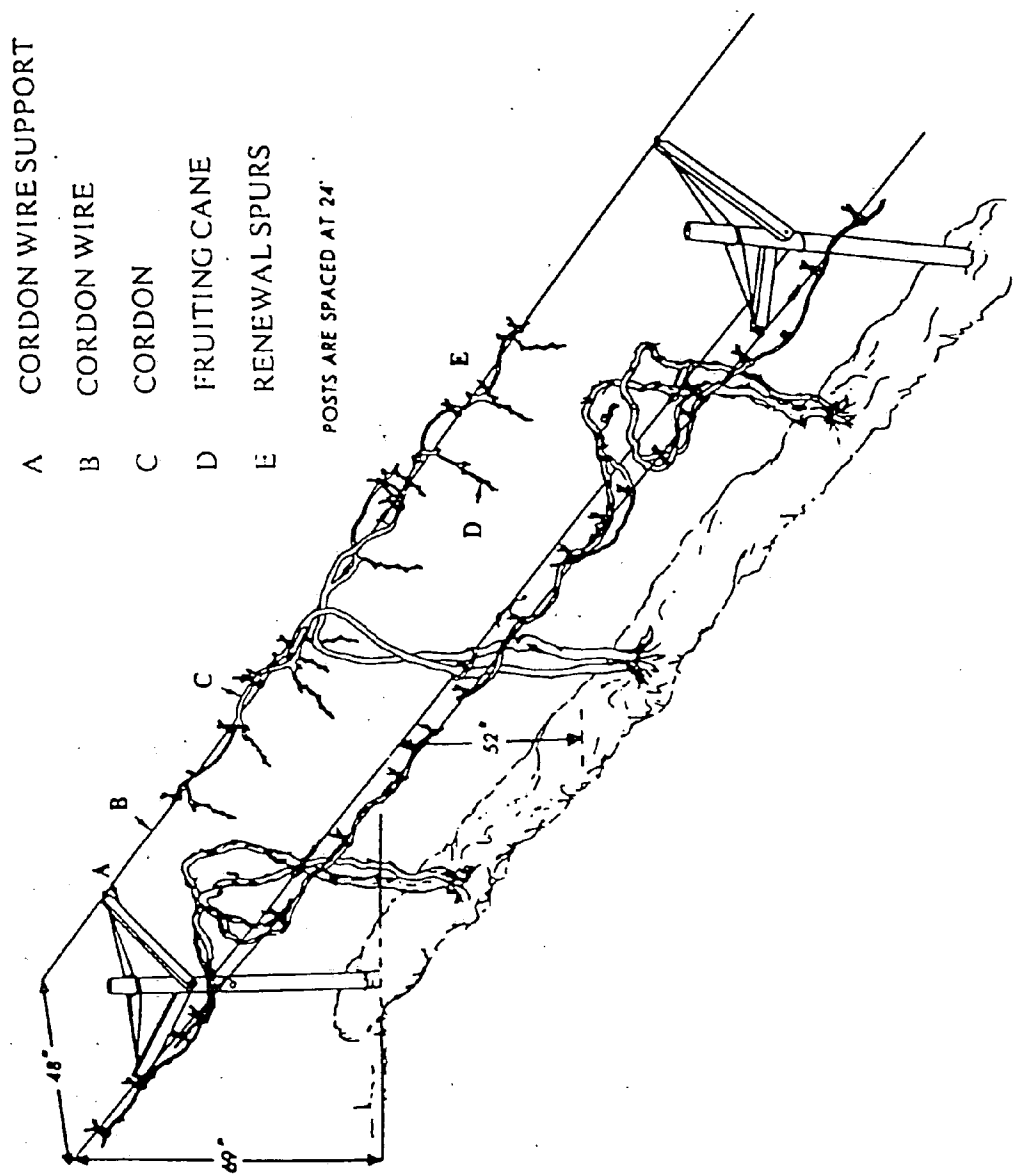


FIG. 75

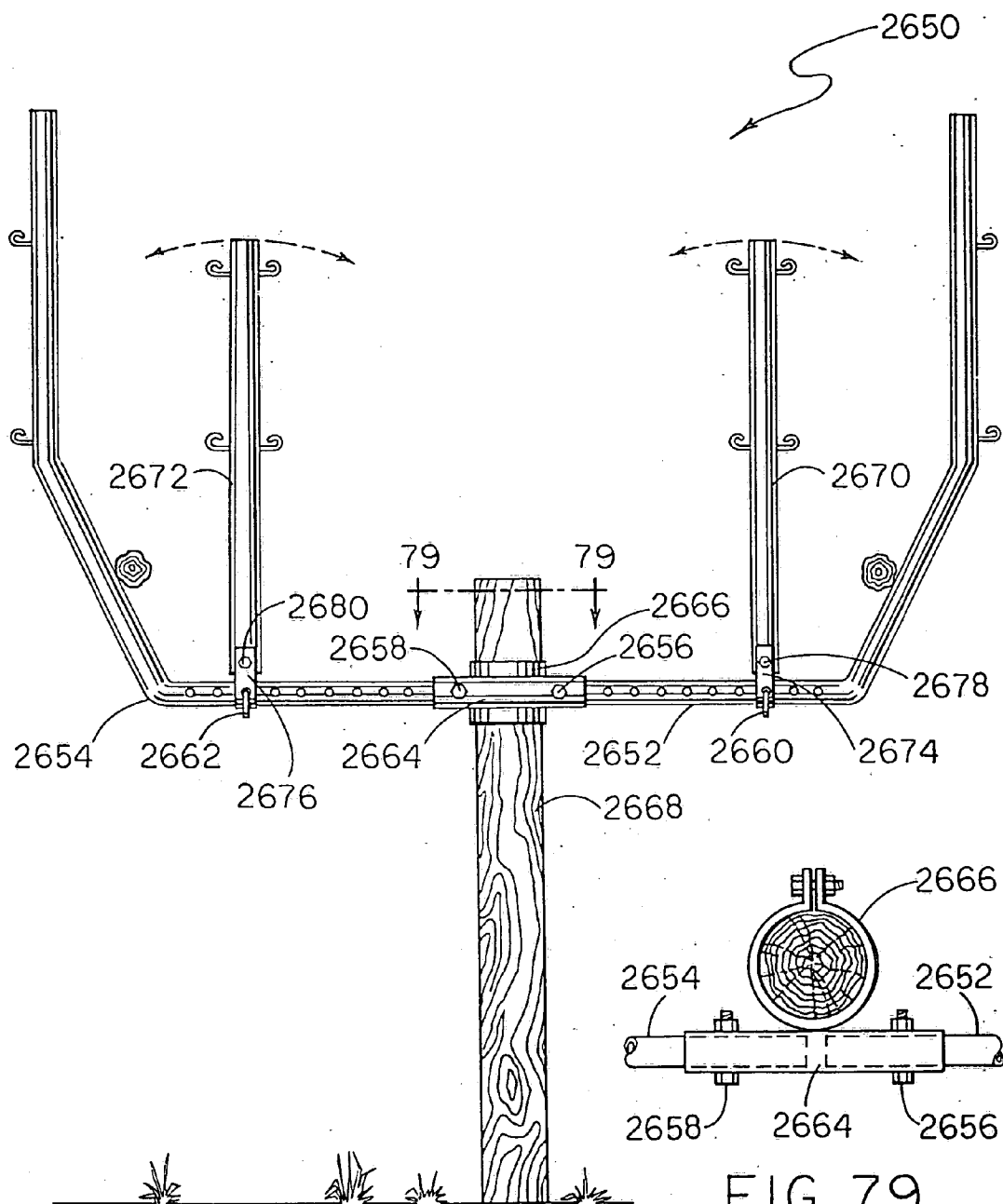


FIG. 78

FIG. 79

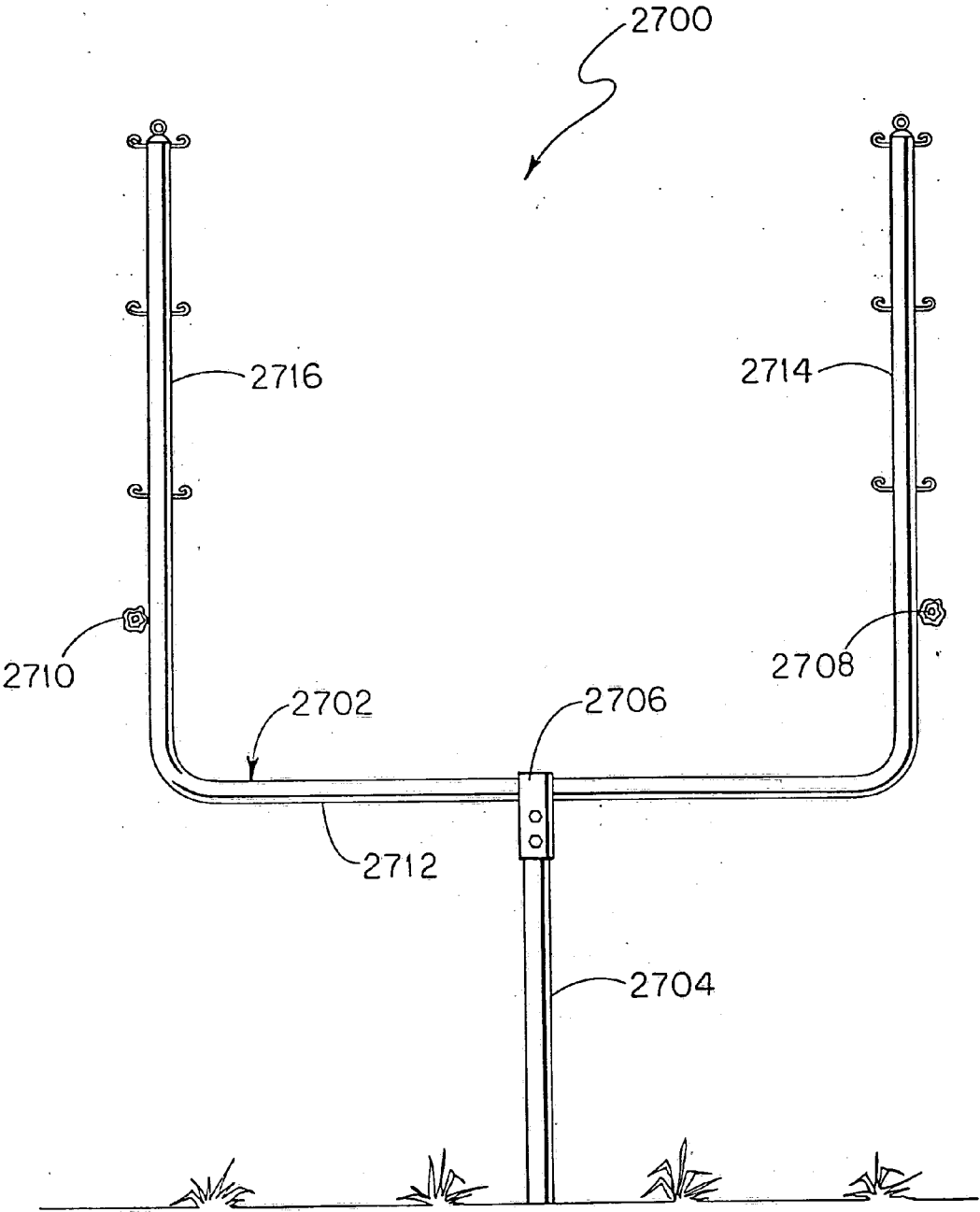


FIG. 80.

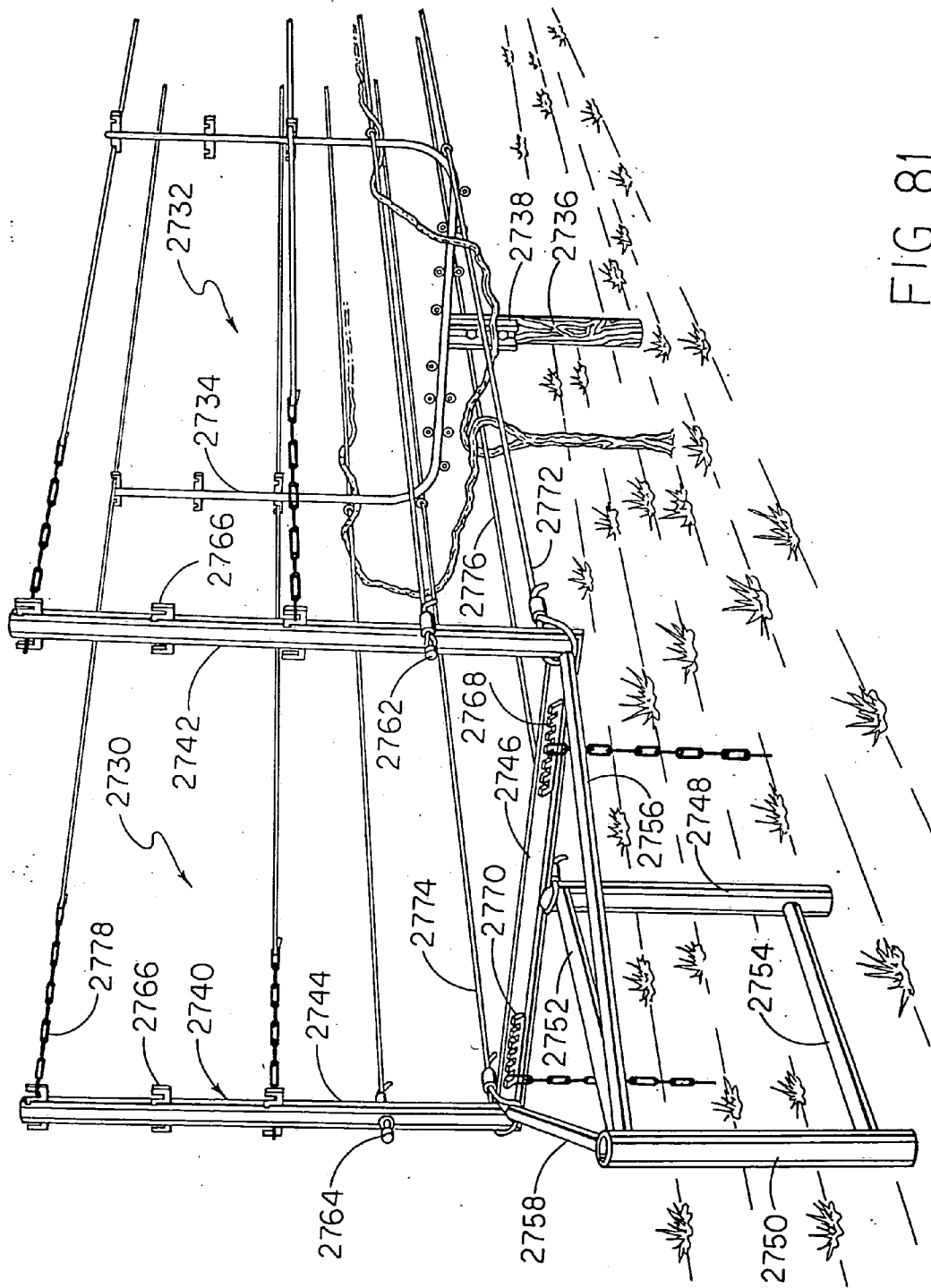


FIG. 81

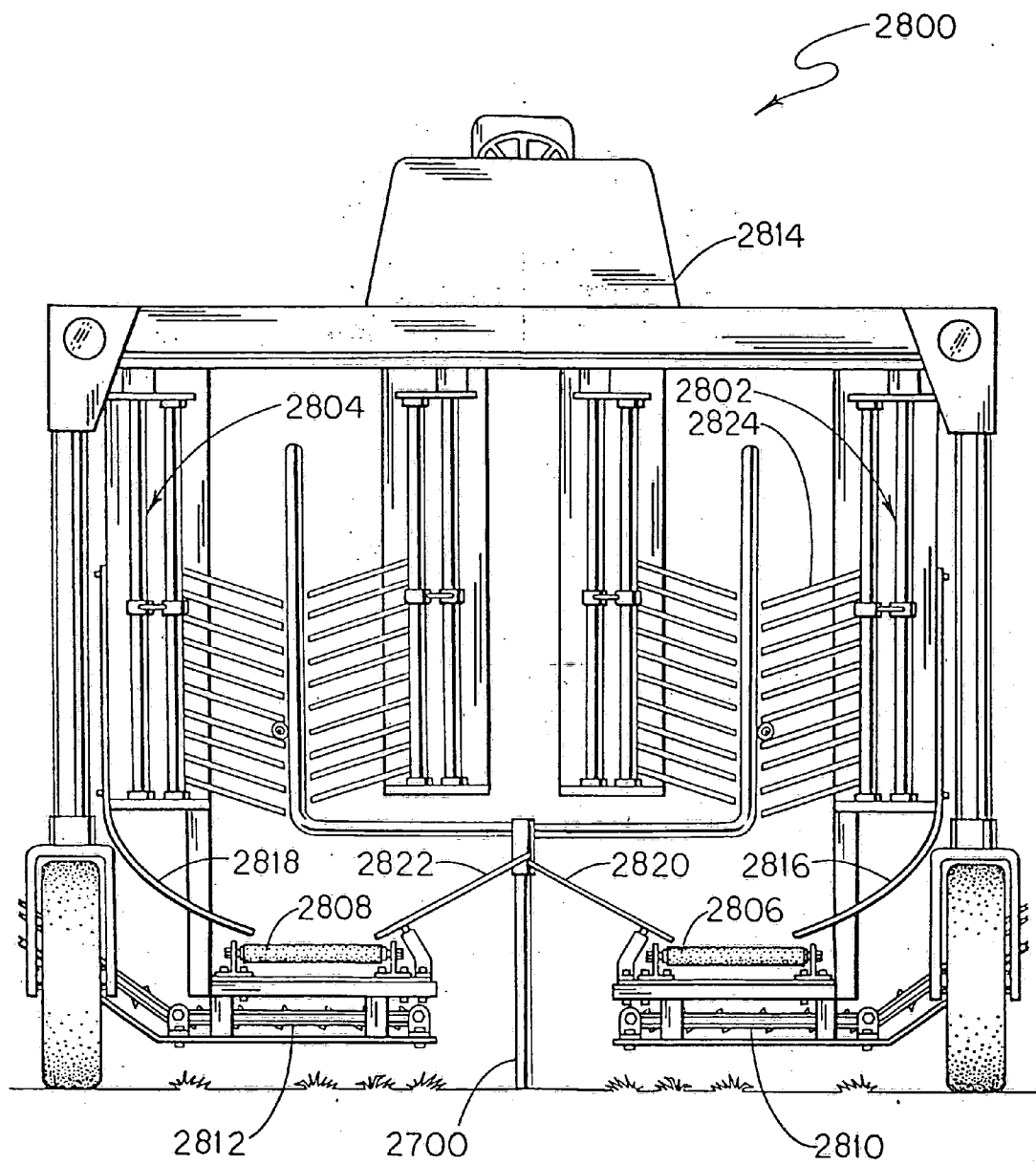


FIG. 83

FIG. 84

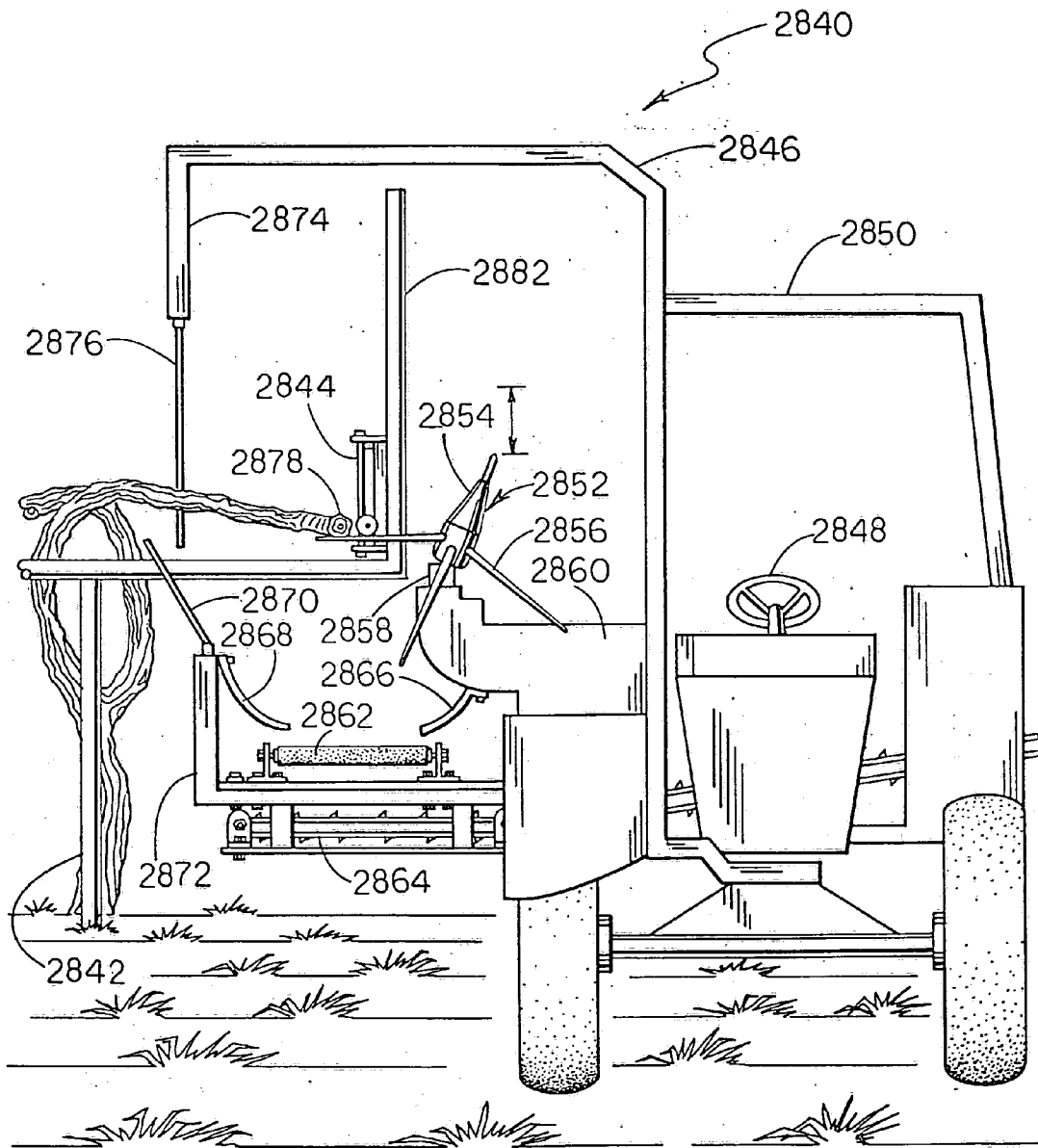


FIG. 84A

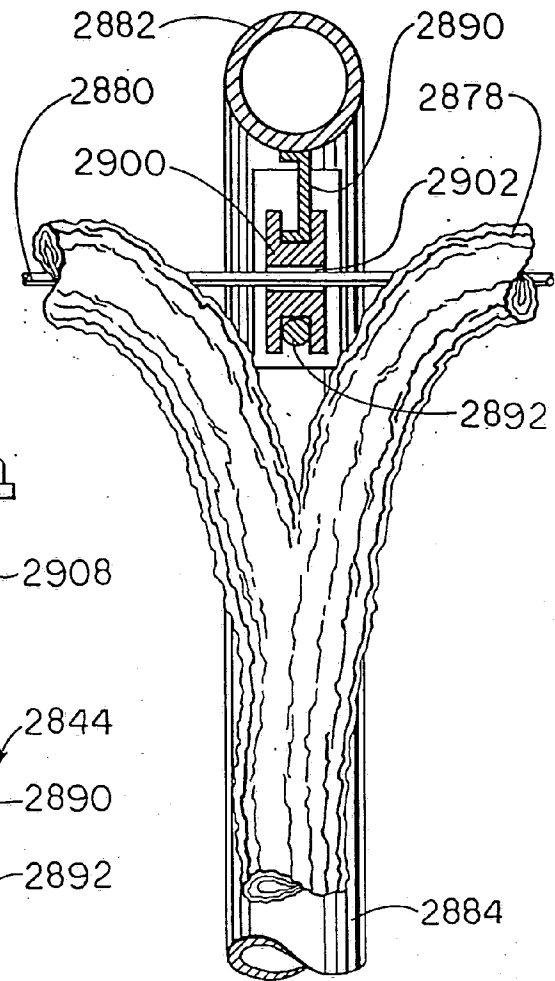
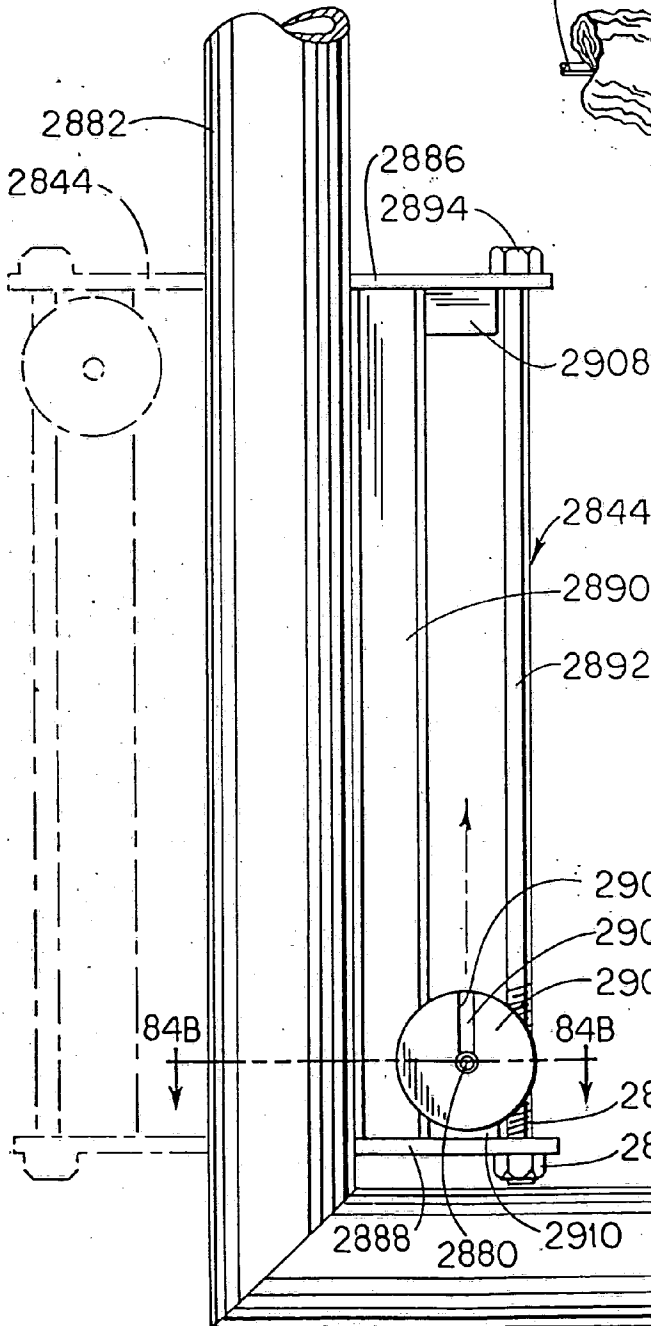


FIG. 84B

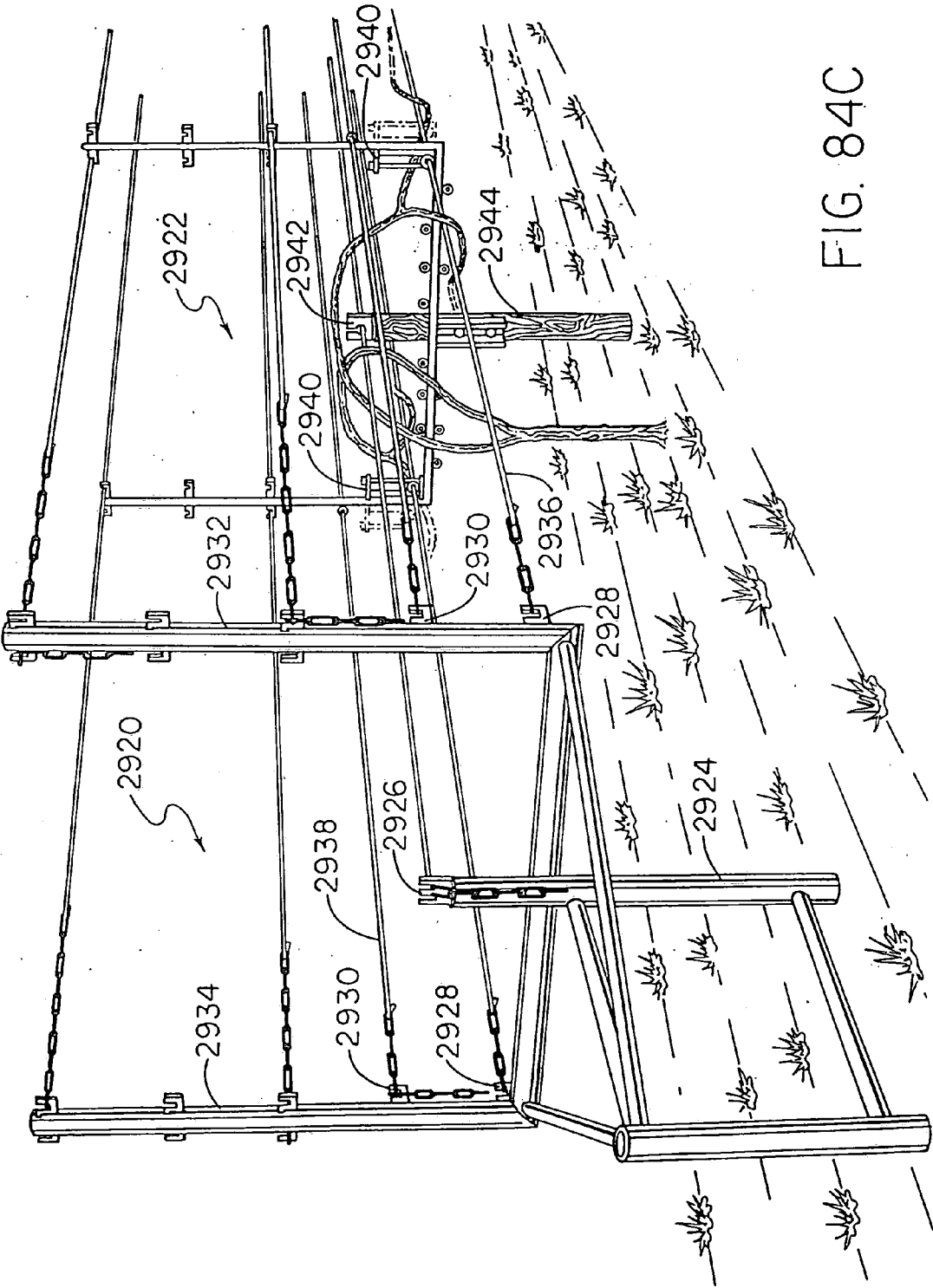


FIG. 84C

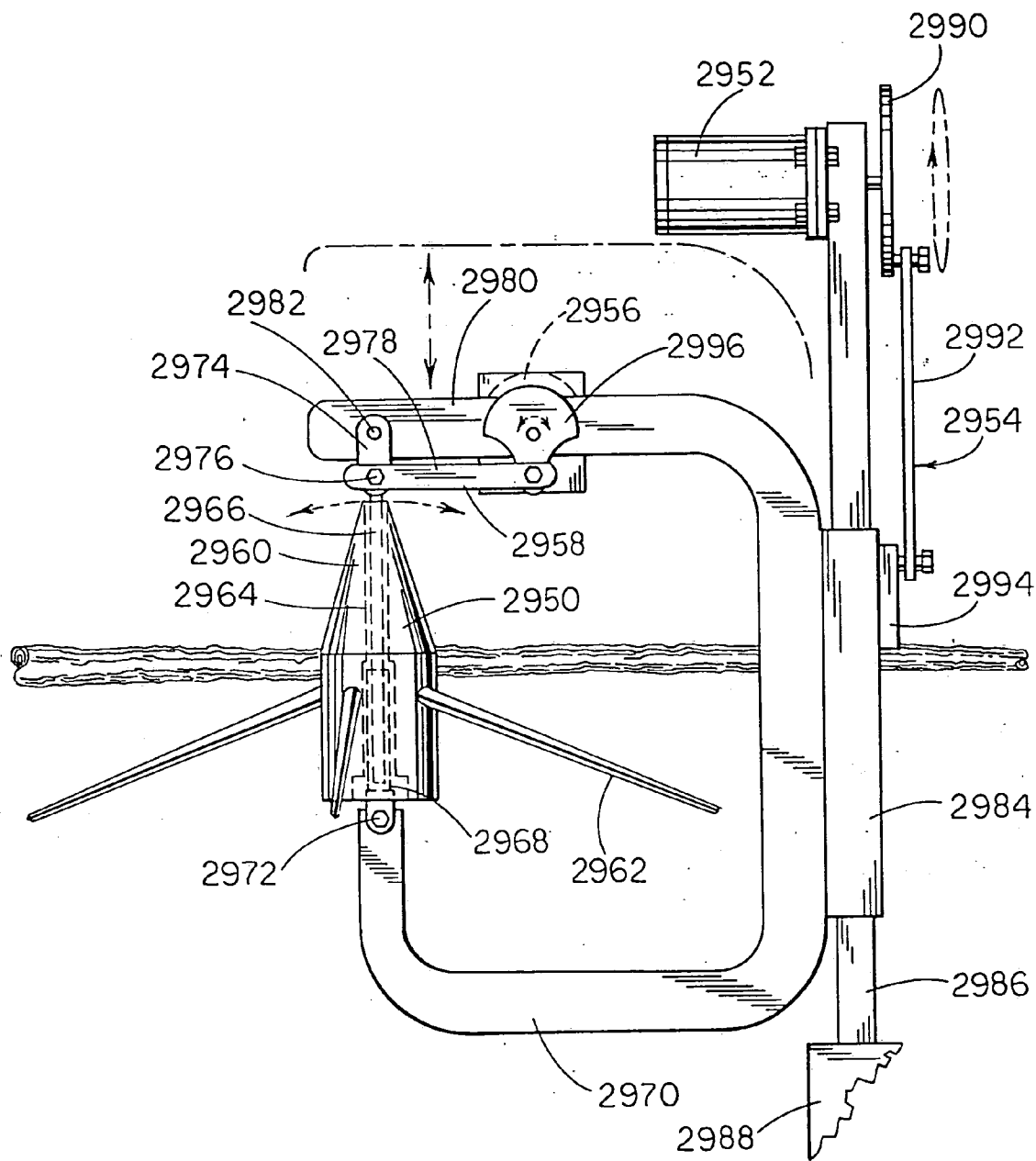


FIG. 84D

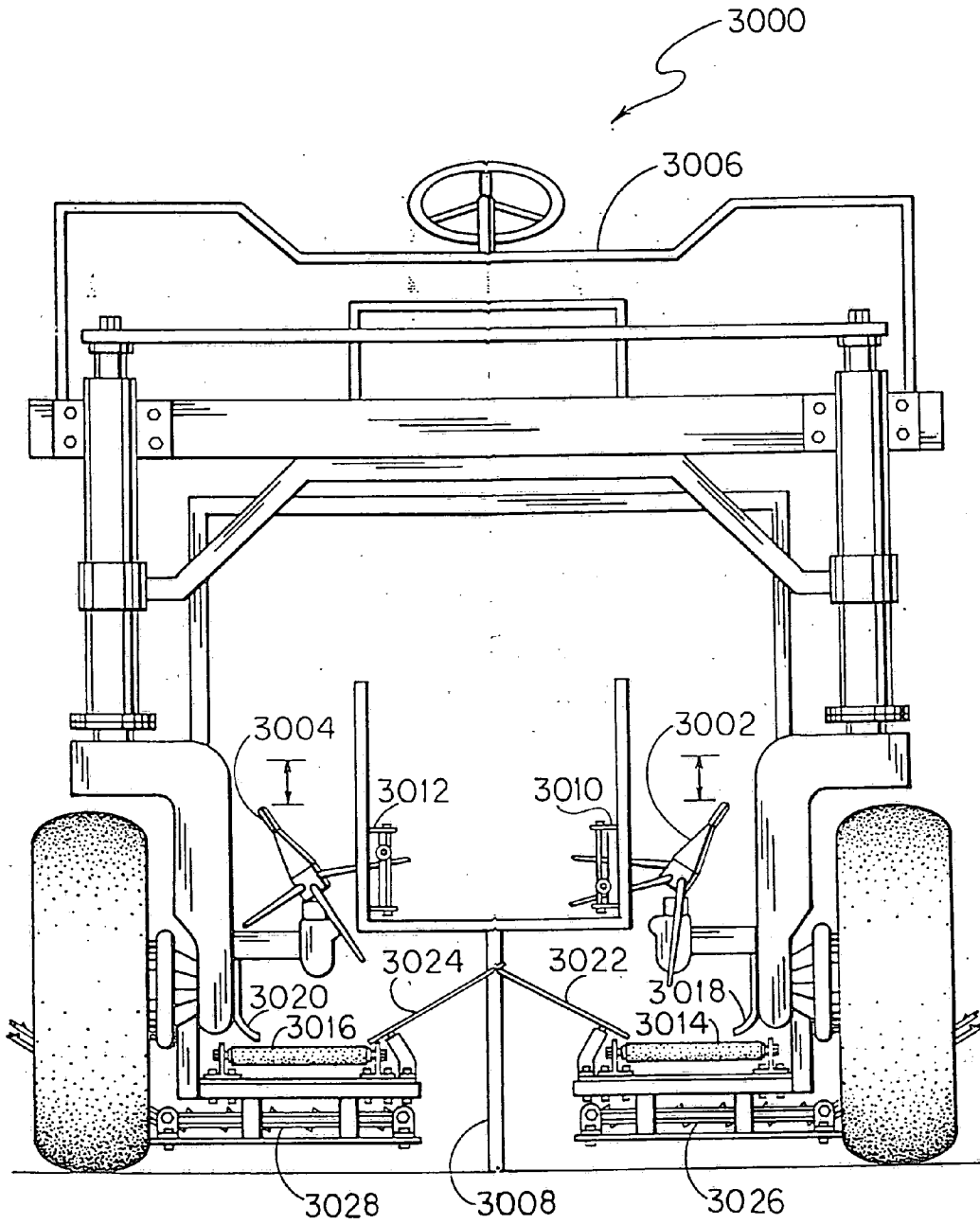


FIG. 85

I. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION
ACTIVITIES OF VITIS LABRUSCANA (and other grapes with
drooping growth habits) ON SINGLE CURTAIN TRELLIS

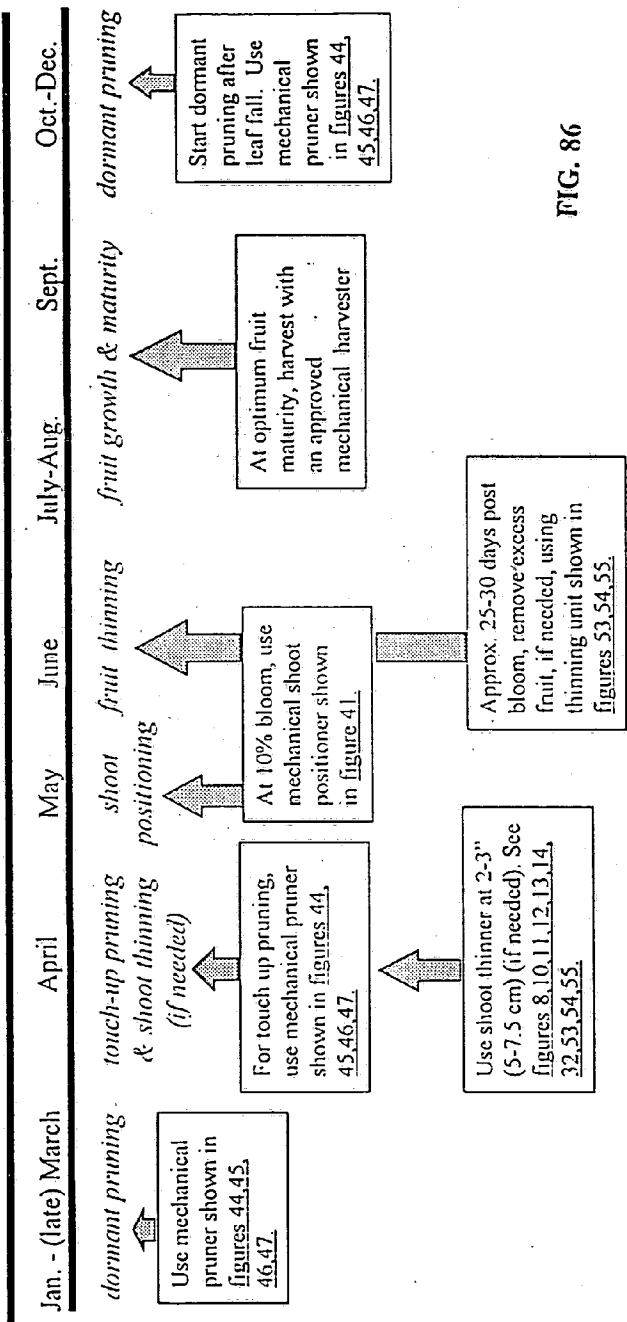


FIG. 86

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

II. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION
ACTIVITIES OF VITIS LABRUSCANA (and other grapes with drooping
growth habits) ON GDC TRELLIS AND GDC-LIKE CANOPY SYSTEMS

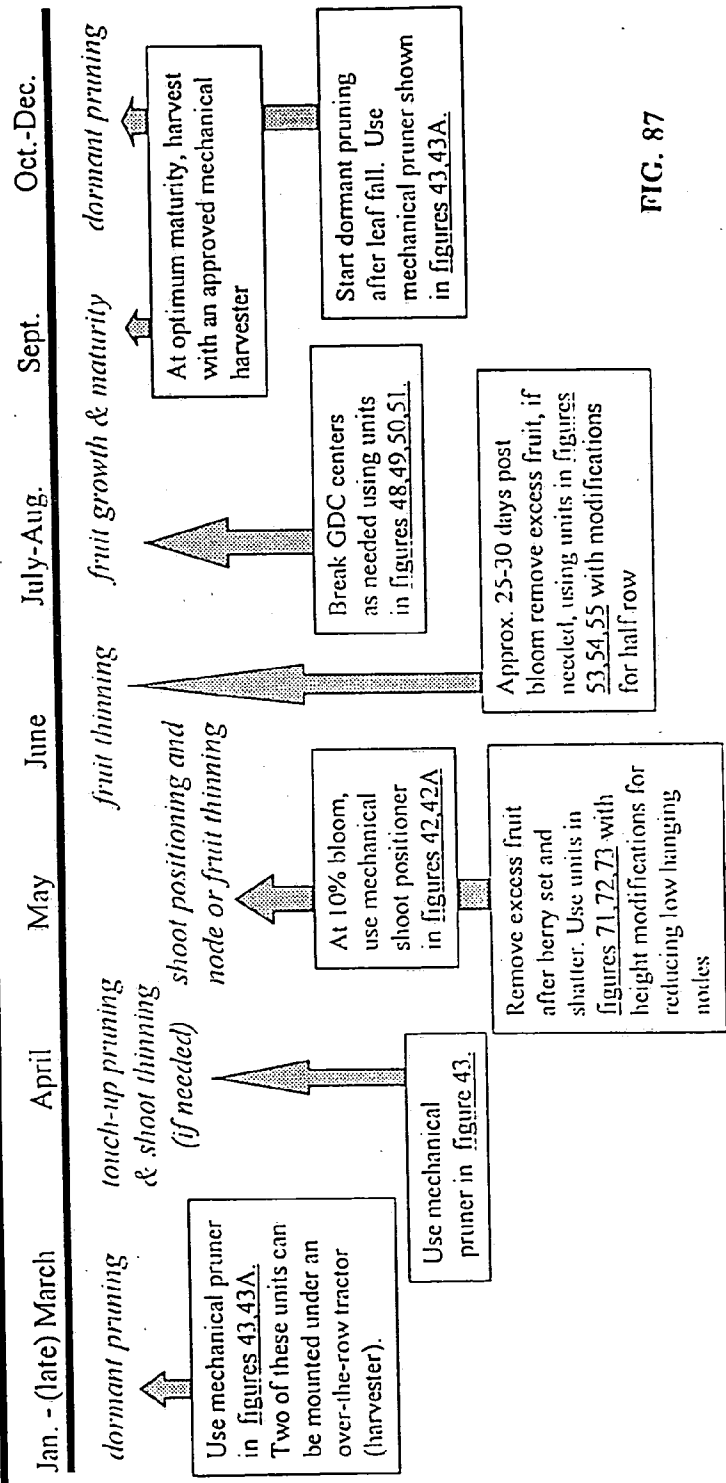


FIG. 87

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

III. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES
ON MINIMAL PRUNED VITIS LABRUSCANA (and other grapes with
drooping growth habits) ON SINGLE CURTAIN TRELLIS SYSTEMS

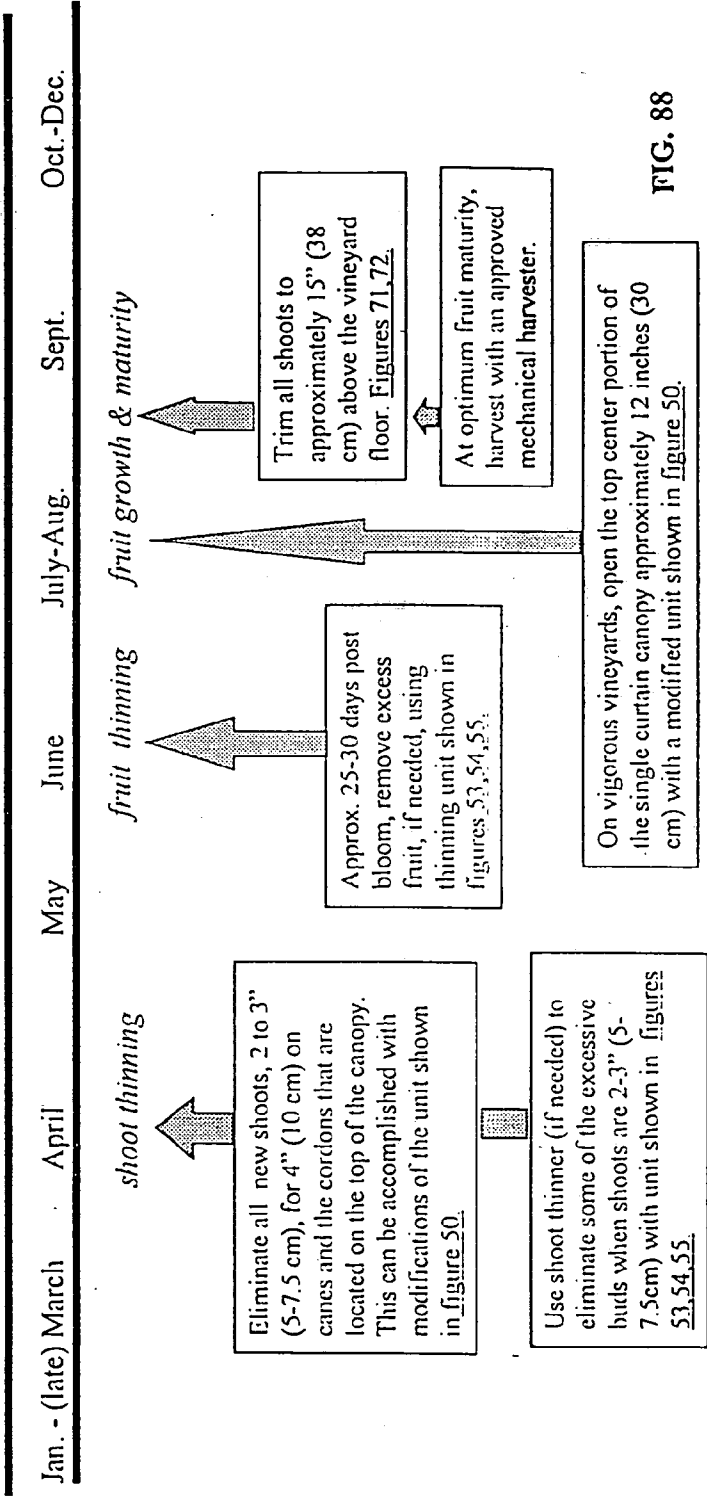


FIG. 88

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

IV. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES
ON MINIMAL PRUNED VITIS LABRUSCANA (and other
grapes with drooping growth habits) ON GDC TRELLIS SYSTEMS

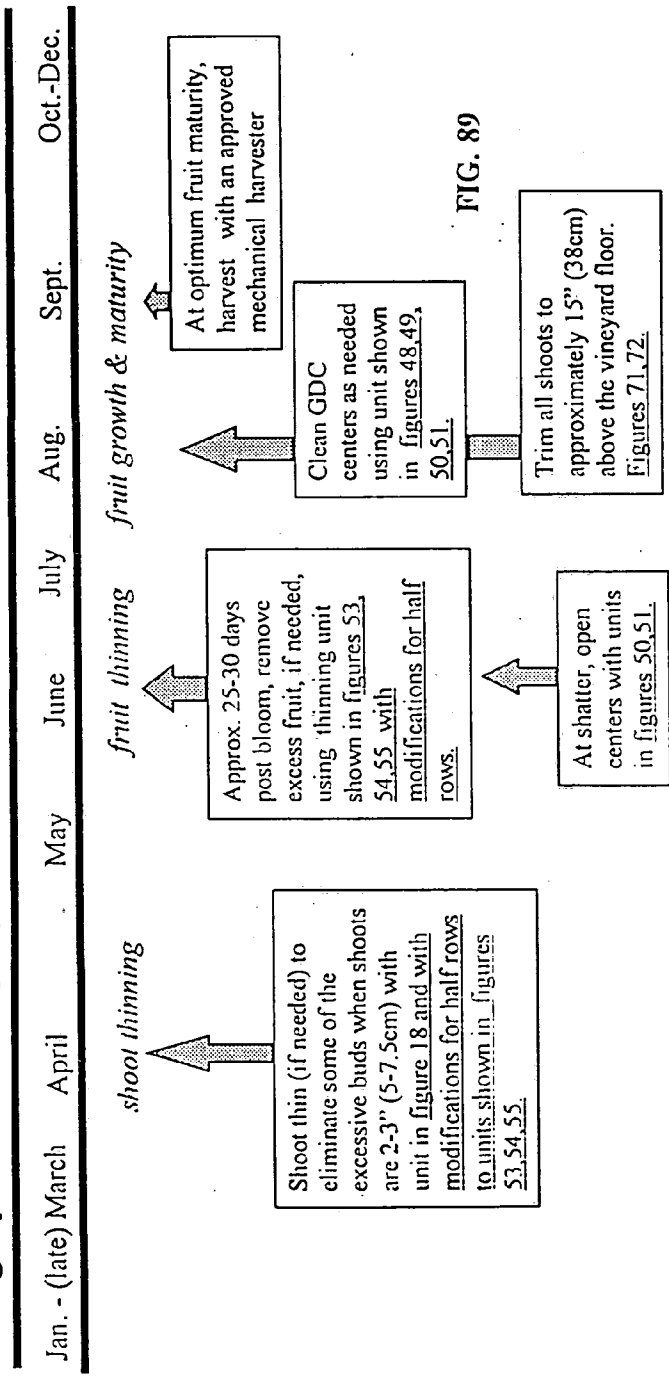


FIG. 89

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

V. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION
ACTIVITIES OF VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS
PRODUCED ON HIGH WIRE SINGLE CURTAIN TRELLISES

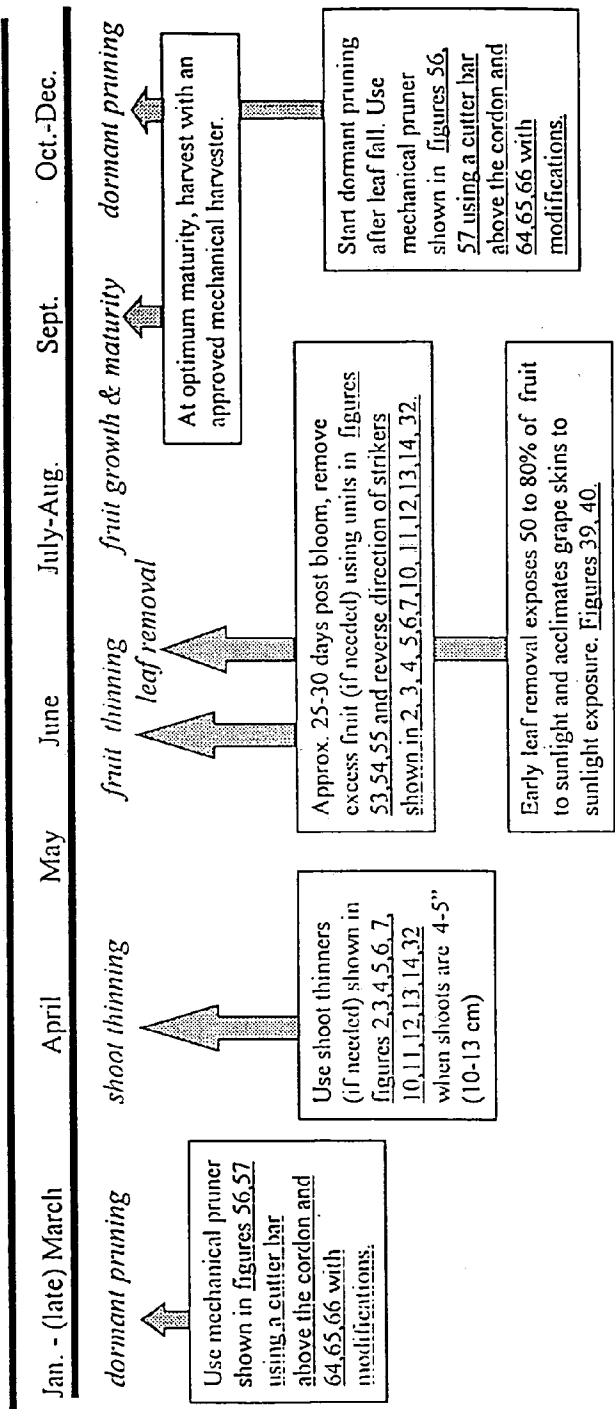


FIG. 90

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

VI. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES
OF VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS PRODUCED
ON GDC AND OTHER DIVIDED CANOPY TRELLISES

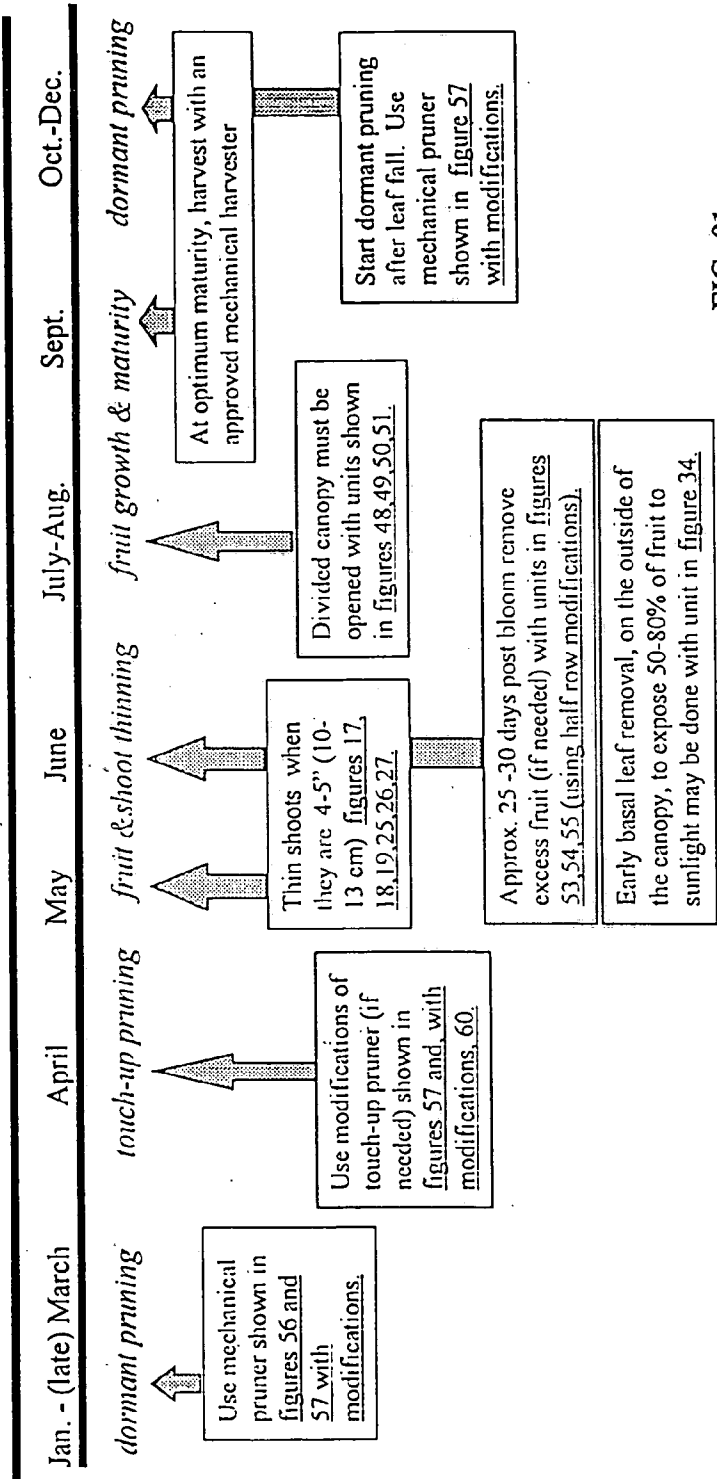


FIG. 91

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

VII. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES IN
MINIMAL PRUNED VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS
TRAINED TO A HIGH WIRE SINGLE CURTAIN TRELLISING SYSTEM.

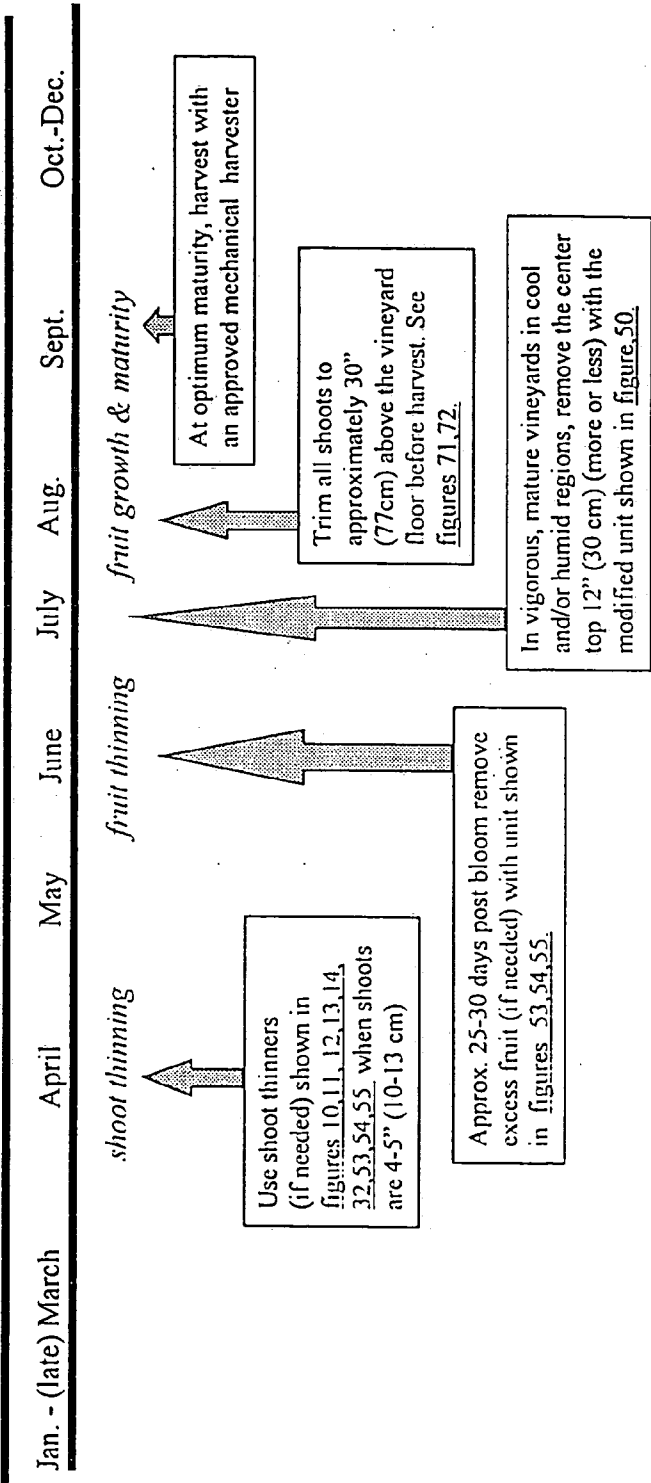


FIG. 92

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

VIII. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION
ACTIVITIES ON MINIMAL PRUNED VITIS VINIFERA AND
FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS ON GDC TRELLIS SYSTEMS

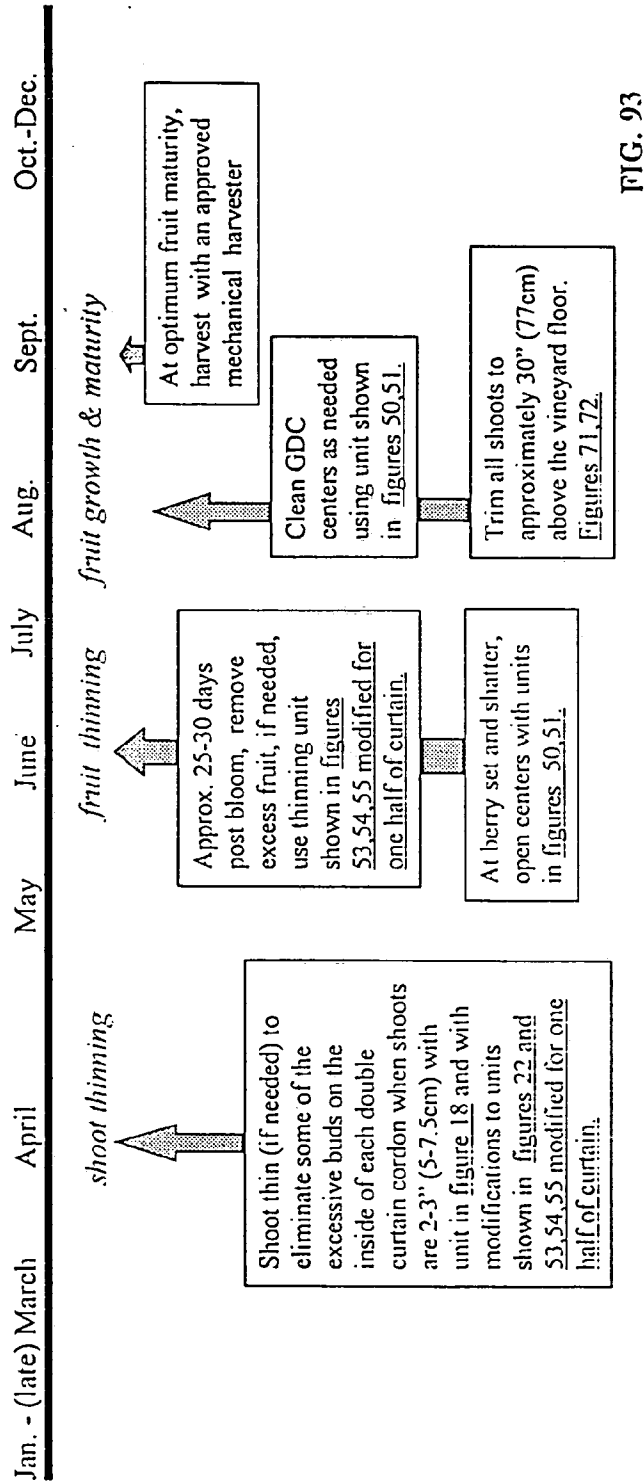


FIG. 93

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

IX. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION
ACTIVITIES OF VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN
HYBRIDS PRODUCED ON STANDARD CALIFORNIA T-TRELLIS

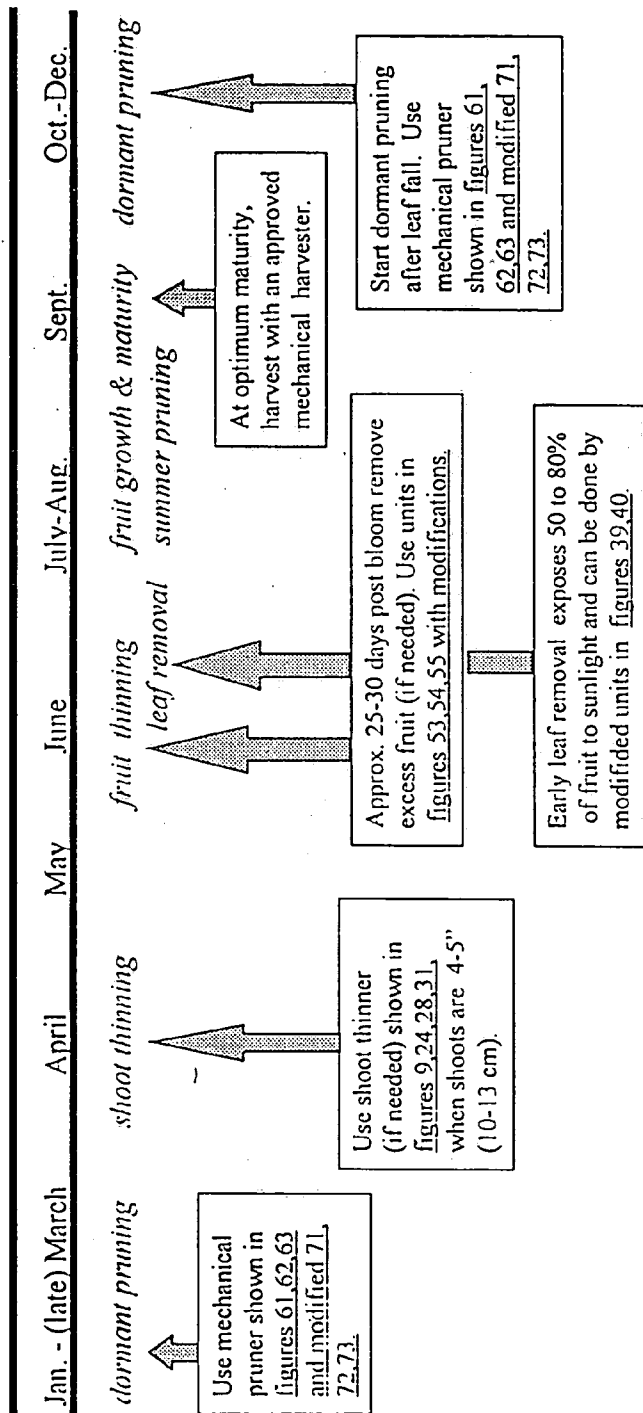


FIG. 94

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

X. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES
OF VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS
PRODUCED ON STANDARD VERTICAL MOVEABLE CATCH WIRES

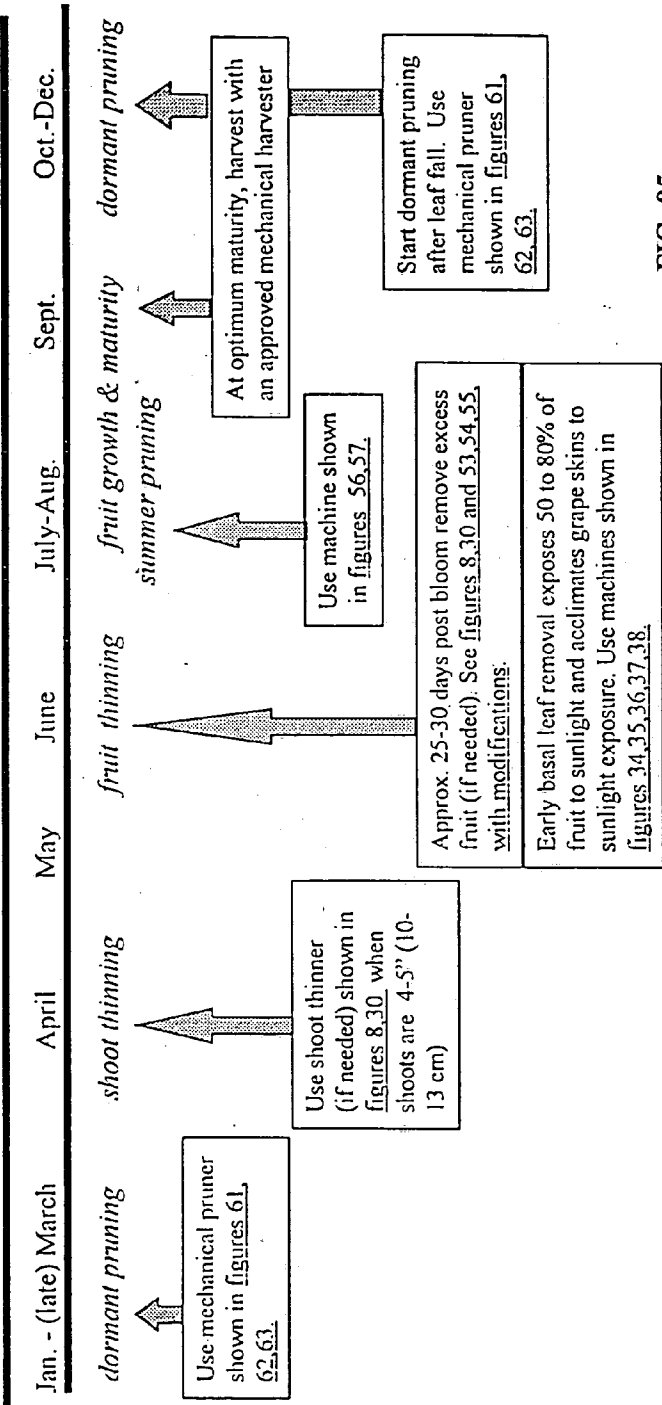


FIG. 95

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

XI. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES OF
VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS PRODUCED ON
LYRE OR "U" AND OTHER DIVIDED CANOPY TRELLISES

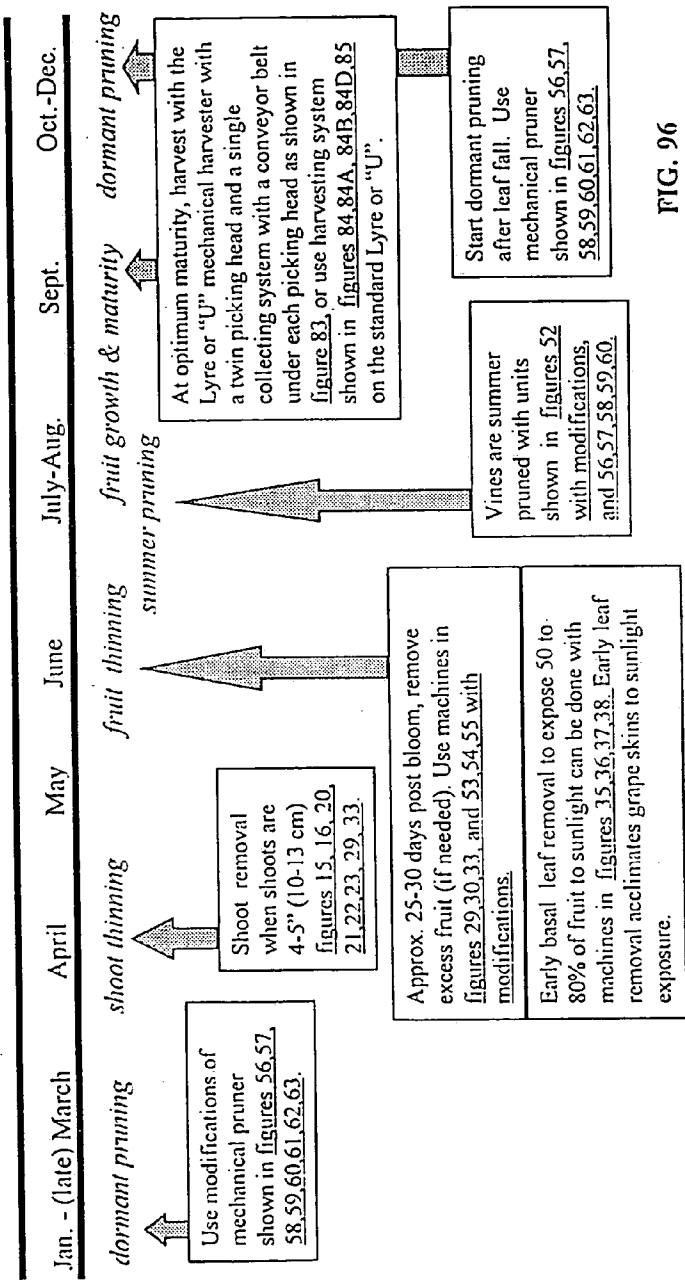


FIG. 96

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

XII. SEASONAL CHART FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION ACTIVITIES
OF VITIS VINIFERA AND FRENCH AMERICAN HYBRIDS ON
SMART-DYSON BALLERINA (and similar) TRELLISING SYSTEMS.

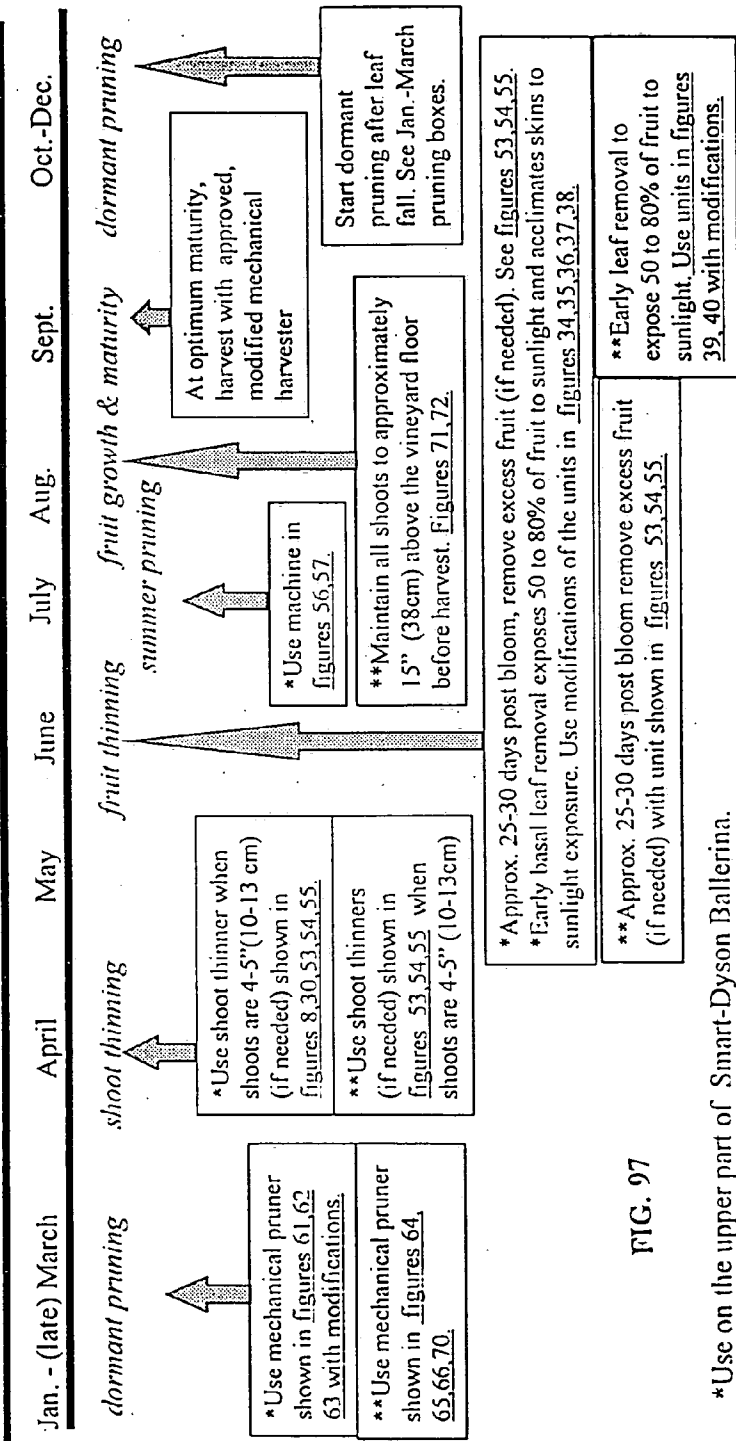


FIG. 97

*Use on the upper part of Smart-Dyson Ballerina.
**Use on the lower part of Smart-Dyson Ballerina.

Exact date of each operation will depend on the viticultural region. The exact date can vary from region to region by as much as 3-4 weeks (depending on the cultivar). Therefore, mechanical operation should be based on physiological growth of the vine. Of course, the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite.

VINEYARD APPARATUS, SYSTEM, AND METHOD FOR VINEYARD MECHANIZATION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/950,301 filed Oct. 14, 1997, which is a continuation-in-part of provisional application Serial No. 60/035,216 filed Jan. 7, 1997, and is also a continuation-in-part of provisional application Serial No. 60/049,285 filed Jun. 10, 1997. Each of these provisional applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable.

REFERENCE TO A MICROFICHE APPENDIX

[0003] Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention is directed to vineyard apparatus, systems, and methods, and, more particularly concerns, machinery, devices, systems, and methods for completely or partially mechanizing grape growing and harvesting while maintaining or improving vineyard consistency and fruit quality. The present invention applies to both wine and juice grape types, is adapted to a substantial number of different trellis types and training systems, and is especially useful in established vineyards, for example having been trained for about three or more years.

[0005] Grapes are consumed in a larger quantity and in more different product types than any other fruit crop on a global basis. The major uses for grapes are for wine, raisins, fresh market, juice (and concentrate), and in canned products (such as fruit cocktail). Table 1 shows the important grape producing countries of the world.

[0006] Chapter XX, "Grape Growing", by Justin R. Morris, in the text "Modern Fruit Science" by Norman F. Childers, Justin R. Morris, and G. Steven Sibbet, published by Horticultural Publications, Gainesville, Fla., 1995, is hereby incorporated by reference. More particularly, as described on pages 478-482 including Table III and FIGS. 24-27, mechanical pruning equipment has reduced the man hours required for grape pruning. Page 484 describes mechanical harvesting, and page 485 describes the economics of vineyard mechanization. As described on pages 491-494 and as shown in FIGS. 38 and 40, vinifera grapes for processing are mechanically harvested and power pruned using tractor powered, hand-held pneumatic power shears in an effort to reduce labor costs.

[0007] Although mechanical harvesters, mechanical shoot positioners, and mechanical pruning devices have been known for some time, heretofore, a commercially viable and effective system and apparatus for complete mechanization of the growing and harvesting of wine and juice grape cultivars has not been developed. Although attempts have been made at vineyard mechanization, they have fallen short in that they either require excessive follow-up hand operations or other manual labor, do not provide for mechanization of both upright and drooping growth habit grape culti-

vars, are not adjustable, adaptable, or versatile enough to be used with a multitude of trellis types or training systems, are not cost effective, do not maintain fruit quality, and the like.

[0008] For example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,426,517; 3,439,482; 3,473,311; 3,563,016; 3,559,386; 3,601,964; 3,613,343; 3,715,876; 3,727,388; 3,760,574; 3,766,724; 3,783,595; 3,866,401; 3,889,454; 3,890,774; 3,890,775; 3,939,629; 3,996,730; 4,016,711; 4,022,001; 4,035,572; 4,112,657; 4,207,727; 4,112,657; 4,207,727; 4,241,569; 4,251,983; 4,282,705; 4,291,526; 4,299,081; 4,321,786; 4,370,847; 4,391,085; 5,339,612; 5,355,667; and 5,423,166 are directed to or disclose grape harvesting or grape harvester equipment or machinery.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618, issued to Tommy L. Oldridge on Apr. 7, 1992, discloses an improved grapevine comber (shoot positioning) machine or device including a pivoting counterforce brush for use with an underslung grapevine comber for cleaning and positioning shoots of the grapevine overhanging the guide wires of a divided canopy, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444, issued to Tommy L. Oldridge on Aug. 13, 1996, discloses a single curtain wine and juice grape vine cane pruner and is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0011] Other patents of general interest include U.S. Pat. No. 3,901,006 directed to a vine combing (shoot positioning) machine, U.S. Pat. No. 4,333,266 directed to a viticultural process and vine-dressing machine, and U.S. Pat. No. 4,638,705 directed to a machine for trimming and disbudding vine shoots for subsequent use as graft supports.

[0012] Hence, there exists a need throughout the viticultural world for an improved vineyard apparatus, system and method for partial or complete vineyard mechanization and to modify, trellis, and train grapevines so that expensive hand operations can be economically mechanized without any substantial loss of yield while maintaining or improving vineyard consistency and fruit quality.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] In accordance with the present invention, a vineyard apparatus, method and system for complete or partial mechanization of grape growing and harvesting or viticulture is provided which addresses the shortcomings of the prior art and makes provision for viticulture mechanization without a substantial decrease in yield and while maintaining or improving vineyard consistency and fruit quality, especially in established vineyards.

[0014] For more than thirty-two years, extensive research studies involving various concepts of vineyard mechanization have been carried out at the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station under the direction of Justin R. Morris (22). Tommy Oldridge was one of the first growers in the region to commercially test, implement, and improve upon the findings of these research studies.

[0015] These studies at the University of Arkansas have involved the evaluation of trellising and training systems suitable for complete vineyard mechanization, mechanical shoot positioning, mechanical pruning, mechanical thinning, mechanical harvesting, and the post-harvest handling and utilization of mechanically harvested grapes (2, 22, 23, 24,

25, 26, 27, 35). The success of this approach to vineyard mechanization has been the fact that it has concentrated on minimizing or eliminating all limiting factors impacting the system while maintaining, or in some cases improving, fruit quality. Also, new equipment has been developed, modified and evaluated for the mechanization of each viticultural operation requiring hand labor. A major effort has been placed on accomplishing these objectives without any substantial loss in fruit quality.

[0016] A principal object of the present invention is the provision of an improved system, apparatus and method for vineyard mechanization.

[0017] Another object of the present invention is the provision of a shoot and fruit thinner for mechanical fruit and shoot thinning, a full row GDC harvester, a modified half-row and modified full row GDC floating, shaking, rotating head harvester, a modified slapper, a modified "U" trellis, and/or a modified cordon wire support assembly, a guide wire anchoring support unit for facilitating mechanization.

[0018] Still another object of the present invention is the provision of respective complete and partial mechanization systems, apparatus, and methods for mechanization of *Vitis labruscana*, *Vitis vinifera*, French-American hybrids, American hybrids, as well as other grape species and cultivars.

[0019] Still yet another object of the present invention is the provision of a Morris-Oldridge vineyard mechanization system, apparatus and method adapted for use with a single curtain trellis, Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) trellis, California T-trellis, high wire bilateral cordon, standard vertical movable catch wire, Lyre or "U", other divided canopy trellises, vertical shoot position (VSP), minimal pruning (MP or MPCT in Australia), Smart-Dyson ballerina trellis, modified forms of such trellises or training systems, or the like.

[0020] Another and more particular object of the present invention is a vineyard system, apparatus and method for mechanization of *Vitis labruscana* grapes on a single curtain trellis, minimal pruned *Vitis labruscana* grapes on a GDC trellis system, minimal pruned *Vitis labruscana* grapes on single curtain trellis system, *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes on standard California T-trellis, high wire bilateral cordon and standard vertical movable catch wires, minimal pruned *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes on high wire single curtain trellising system, and *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes on GDC, Lyre or "U", a modified "U", other divided canopy trellises, and the like.

[0021] Other objects and further scope of the applicability of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description to follow, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like parts are designated by like reference numerals.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0022] FIG. 1 is a graphical representation of the United States indicating the major grape producing regions.

[0023] FIG. 2 is a front plan view representation of a shoot and fruit thinner for *Vitis vinifera*, French-American hybrid, American hybrids and some cultivars of other species of grapes.

[0024] FIG. 3 is a rear plan view illustration of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 2.

[0025] FIG. 4 is a left plan view representation of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 2.

[0026] FIG. 5 is a right plan view illustration of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 2.

[0027] FIG. 6 is a front plan view representation of another shoot and fruit thinner.

[0028] FIG. 7 is a rear plan view illustration of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 6.

[0029] FIG. 8 is a rear plan view of another embodiment of a shoot and fruit thinner with vertical extensions for each of the thinner arms and with the thinner having right and left circular rotary striker or thinning finger assemblies for use with vertical moveable catch wire trellis and Lyre or "U" trellis.

[0030] FIG. 9 is a rear plan view representation of an alternative shoot and fruit thinner embodiment with horizontal and vertical extensions adapted for use with a California T-trellis.

[0031] FIG. 10 is a front plan view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having one circular rotary striker with a chain drive arrangement for transmitting rotary motion from a hydraulic motor to the rotary striker.

[0032] FIG. 11 is a left side view representation of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 10.

[0033] FIG. 12 is a right side view illustration of the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 10.

[0034] FIG. 13 is a front view representation of a circular, rotary striker assembly.

[0035] FIG. 14 is a rear view illustration of the circular, rotary striker assembly of FIG. 13.

[0036] FIGS. 15 and 16 are respective rear plan view illustrations of alternative fruit and shoot thinner embodiments each having a brush unit on one arm and a circular, rotary striker on the other arm for use with a Lyre, or "U", or modified "U" trellis.

[0037] FIG. 17 is a side view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment with a brush unit on one arm.

[0038] FIG. 18 is a front view representation of the brush unit on the shoot and fruit thinner of FIG. 17.

[0039] FIG. 19 is a front view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having a brush unit on one arm and a circular, rotary striker assembly on the other arm.

[0040] FIG. 20 is a rear view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having a brush unit attached to an elongate arm for use with a Lyre or "U", or modified "U" trellis.

[0041] FIG. 21 is a rear view representation of another shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having a brush unit extending from an arm on the opposite side as that shown in FIG. 20.

[0042] FIG. 22 is a rear view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having first and second brush units

extending from one side thereof and adapted for use with a Lyre or "U", or a modified "U" trellis.

[0043] FIG. 23 is a rear view illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having an oval rotary striker assembly mounted on the end of an elongate arm.

[0044] FIG. 24 is a rear plan view representation of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having right and left oval rotary striker assemblies mounted on the base of each arm and adapted for use with a California T-trellis.

[0045] FIGS. 25-33 are schematic elevational view representations of exemplary shoot and fruit thinner arrangements or embodiments indicating the versatility of the shoot and fruit thinner of the present invention as it is adapted for use with a variety of trellises and in a variety of arrangements. Brushes are used for total removal of unwanted shoots and strikers are for thinning unwanted shoots and fruit. More particularly, FIG. 25 is a schematic representation of a shoot and fruit thinner having a brush unit mounted almost vertically on one arm and a rotary circular striker mounted on the end of the other arm thereof, for use on double curtain trellising systems.

[0046] FIG. 26 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner having a brush unit mounted substantially horizontally at the end of one arm and a circular rotary striker mounted on the end of the other arm thereof, for use on double curtain trellising systems.

[0047] FIG. 27 is a schematic representation of a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment having an oval rotary striker assembly mounted on the base of one arm, a circular rotary striker assembly mounted on the base of the other arm and with the strikers or fingers of the oval and circular units overlapping one another near a cordon.

[0048] FIG. 28 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner having an oval rotary striker assembly mounted on the base of each arm thereof with the strikers or fingers overlapping one another near the cordon.

[0049] FIG. 29 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner having a rotary circular striker assembly mounted at the base of each of two elongate arms and adapted for use with a modified Lyre or "U" trellis.

[0050] FIG. 30 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner similar to that of FIG. 8 adapted for use with a standard vertical movable catch wire system.

[0051] FIG. 31 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner adapted for use with a California-T trellis.

[0052] FIG. 32 is a schematic representation of a shoot and fruit thinner similar to that shown in FIGS. 2-7 of the drawings and adapted for use with a single curtain high bilateral cordon system.

[0053] FIG. 33 is a schematic illustration of a shoot and fruit thinner arrangement having a rotary oval striker arrangement mounted on the base of one arm and a rotary circular striker assembly mounted at the base of the other arm and adapted for use with a standard or modified Lyre or "U" trellis.

[0054] FIG. 34 is a front plan view representation of an improved leaf remover or fan and blade unit for removing leaves and small shoots from one side of a standard vertical movable catch wire system.

[0055] FIG. 35 is a partial side view illustration of the leaf remover of FIG. 34 with an adjustable cover.

[0056] FIG. 36 is a front view representation of an improved dual fan unit leaf remover with a leading and trailing fan unit and adapted for use with a Lyre or "U" trellis system.

[0057] FIG. 37 is a top view illustration of the dual fan unit leaf remover of FIG. 36.

[0058] FIG. 38 is a side view illustration of the trailing fan unit of FIG. 37 with adjustable grates.

[0059] FIGS. 38A-38D relate to the adjustable bars or grate elements for the fan units of FIGS. 36-38. More particularly, FIG. 38A is a bottom view illustration of one of the adjustable bars.

[0060] FIG. 38B is a cross-section representation of the bar of FIG. 38A taken along line 38B-38B.

[0061] FIG. 38C is a cross-section illustration of an alternative adjustable bar having a semicircular rather than a rectangular cross-section of the adjustable bar of FIGS. 38A and 38B.

[0062] FIG. 38D is a cross-section illustration of an alternative adjustable bar having a triangular rather than a rectangular cross-section of the adjustable bar of FIGS. 38A and 38B.

[0063] FIG. 39 is a front view representation of a modified leaf remover adapted for use with a highwire single curtain bilateral cordon trellis system and including a cane lifter.

[0064] FIG. 40 is a side view illustration of the leaf remover of FIG. 39.

[0065] FIG. 41 is a front view illustration of a single trellis shoot positioner.

[0066] FIG. 42 is a front view representation of a divided canopy comber as described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618 issued to Tommy Oldridge.

[0067] FIG. 42A is a front view representation of a GDC full-row comber incorporating operative elements as described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618 issued to Tommy Oldridge.

[0068] FIG. 43 is a front view representation of a GDC half-row shoot positioner and pruner trimmer which is similar to the comber described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618 issued to Tommy Oldridge (FIG. 42) with the addition of cutting sickles.

[0069] FIG. 43A is a front view representation of a GDC full-row shoot positioner and pruner trimmer which combines two sets of the working elements of the shoot positioner and pruner trimmer shown in FIG. 43.

[0070] FIGS. 44-47 are directed to the single curtain trellis pruner of U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444 issued to Tommy Oldridge and relate to FIGS. 2, 4, 6, and 8 of that patent, respectively.

[0071] More particularly, FIG. 44 is a front view illustration of the pruner of U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444.

[0072] FIG. 45 is a side view representation of the pruner of FIG. 44.

[0073] FIG. 46 is an enlarged top plan view of a vertical cane pruner of the single curtain grapevine pruner of FIGS. 44 and 45.

[0074] FIG. 47 is a front elevation view representation of horizontal cane pruners of the single curtain grapevine pruner of FIGS. 44 and 45.

[0075] FIG. 48 is a perspective view illustration of a center breaker adapted for use with GDC or other double curtain trellising systems.

[0076] FIG. 49 is a top view representation of the center breaker of FIG. 48.

[0077] FIG. 50 is a perspective view illustration of a modified Orton slapper adapted for use with GDC and other divided canopy trellising systems. This unit is a modification of a unit built by Roy Orton (grape grower, Ripley, N.Y.).

[0078] FIG. 51 is a rear view representation of the modified, extended strikers on the modified Orton slapper of FIG. 50 in operation with a GDC-trellis.

[0079] FIG. 52 is a rear view illustration of the modified Orton slapper of FIG. 50 with extended strikers in use with a Lyre or "U" trellis system.

[0080] FIG. 53 is a rear perspective view illustration of a bow, bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner adapted for use with a single curtain system.

[0081] FIG. 54 is a rear perspective view representation of a modified bow, bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner that can be adapted for use with a GDC or other divided canopy trellising system.

[0082] FIG. 55 is a schematic top view illustration of the bows of the bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner of FIG. 54.

[0083] FIG. 56 is a front perspective view illustration of a top and side pruner.

[0084] FIG. 57 is a front perspective illustration of an adaption of the embodiment in FIG. 56 with two relatively short vertical sickles and a horizontal sickle adapted for GDC or other divided canopy systems.

[0085] FIG. 58 is a front perspective representation of a single vertical sickle which trips rearwardly for summer pruning.

[0086] FIG. 59 is a partial rear view illustration of an angularly adjustable summer cane pruner.

[0087] FIG. 60 is a top view illustration of the summer cane pruner of FIG. 59.

[0088] FIG. 61 is a perspective view illustration of a horizontal rotary cutter.

[0089] FIG. 62 is a perspective view representation of a dual unit horizontal rotary cutter having leading and trailing cutting heads.

[0090] FIG. 63 is a top view illustration of the dual unit horizontal rotary cutter of FIG. 62.

[0091] FIG. 64 is a rear view illustration of a vertical rotary cutter and cane grabber.

[0092] FIG. 65 is a side view illustration of the vertical rotary cutter and cane grabber of FIG. 64.

[0093] FIG. 66 is a rear view illustration of an alternative vertical pruner and cane grabber unit with a vertical sickle or cutter.

[0094] FIG. 67 is a side view illustration of a modified Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system.

[0095] FIG. 68 is an end view illustration of the Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system of FIG. 67.

[0096] FIG. 69 is a front view representation of a leaf remover adapted for use with the top section of the Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system of FIGS. 67 and 68.

[0097] FIG. 70 is a rear view illustration of a vertical pruner and cane grabber unit adapted for use with the bottom section of the Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system.

[0098] FIG. 71 is a front perspective view illustration of a dual sickle horizontal cutter having a short length, fixed upper sickle and an elongate lower sickle which trips rearwardly. This unit is a modification of a unit developed and tested by Dr. C. Intrieri of Bologna, Italy.

[0099] FIG. 72 is a front perspective view representation of a single bar horizontal cutter adapted for summer skirting and the like.

[0100] FIG. 73 is a front view illustration of a double or dual sickle horizontal cutter having a short length, upper sickle and an elongate lower sickle on each side and which both trip rearwardly. The protruding bumper guards in front of the lower sickles are designed to operate in vineyards where each plant is supported by metal or wood stakes. The metal bumper guard allows the unit to pass the post without damage.

[0101] FIG. 74 is a front perspective view illustration of an angularly adjustable mast adapted for use on hillsides or sloping vineyards.

[0102] FIG. 75 is a schematic perspective representation of a conventional GDC trellising system designed by Dr. Nelson Shaulis, N.Y. Agr. Exp. Sta., Geneva, 14456.

[0103] FIG. 76 is a schematic end view representation of a modified vertical catch wire trellis (modified Lyre or "U"). The cross arms are flexible to allow for harvest mechanization. Also, note the location of each cordon to allow for space for the mechanization equipment to operate. The inside movable stakes allow for rapid adjustment of catch wires following mechanical fruit thinning.

[0104] FIG. 77 is a partial cross-section illustration of the removable, adjustable pin attachment of the movable stakes of FIG. 76 taken along line 77-77.

[0105] FIG. 78 is a schematic end view representation of an alternative embodiment of a modified vertical catch wire system or a modified Lyre or "U" trellis. This trellis as well as the traditional Lyre or "U" system is not flexible and requires a modified harvesting system such as an adaption of a harvester built by G. DeGolier (grape grower, Westfield, N.Y.) but with twin harvesting heads and a single catching system, to mechanically harvest both sides of the Lyre or "U" in one pass. Such a machine would contain two sets of beaters mounted side by side (FIG. 83).

[0106] FIG. 79 is a partial top view illustration of the adjustable post attachment elements of FIG. 78.

[0107] FIG. 80 is an end view representation of a modified Lyre or "U" trellis adapted for total mechanization. Note that the cordon is located approximately 10 inches (25 cm) above the lower cross bar, this allows sufficient space for the operation of all mechanization equipment including shoot and fruit thinner, leaf removal equipment, harvesting equipment, etc.

[0108] FIG. 81 is a perspective view representation of a guide wire anchoring support unit and trellis system that allows for the mechanized equipment to enter the Lyre or "U" trellis.

[0109] FIG. 82 is a side view illustration of the anchor unit of FIG. 81.

[0110] FIG. 83 is a schematic front view illustration of a grape harvester machine adapted for use with the modified Lyre or "U"-trellis of FIGS. 80 and 81. This harvester contains two picking heads and a collecting system with a conveyor belt under each picking head.

[0111] FIG. 84 is a schematic front view representation of a modified half-row, floating, at least vertically shaking, rotating head picker mechanical harvester adapted for use with a Lyre or "U" trellis modified to include a moveable cordon wire support, roller or slide assembly.

[0112] FIG. 84A is an enlarged front view illustration of the moveable cordon wire roller assembly of FIGS. 84 and 85.

[0113] FIG. 84D is an enlarged side view representation of a vertically and horizontally shaking, floating, rotating picking head adapted for use in the harvesters of FIGS. 84 and 85.

[0114] FIG. 84B is a cross-section illustration of the moveable cordon wire roller assembly taken along line 84B-84B in FIG. 84A.

[0115] FIG. 84C is a perspective view representation of a modified Lyre or "U" trellis having movable cordon wire roller assemblies, and releasable catch and guide wires, and a modified wire anchor adapted for use with the modified mechanical harvesters of FIGS. 84 and 85.

[0116] FIG. 85 is a schematic front view representation of a modified full-row, floating, at least vertically shaking, rotating head picker mechanical harvester adapted for use with a Lyre or "U" trellis having moveable cordon wire roller or slide assemblies.

[0117] FIGS. 86-97 are seasonal charts showing respective embodiments of the Morris-Oldridge vineyard mechanization system in accordance with the present invention. More particularly, FIG. 86 is a seasonal chart showing vineyard mechanization activities for *Vitis labruscana* and other grapes with drooping growth habits on single curtain trellis systems.

[0118] FIG. 87 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization of *Vitis labruscana* and other grapes with drooping growth habits on GDC trellis and GDC-like canopy systems.

[0119] FIG. 88 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities on minimal pruned *Vitis labruscana* and other grapes with drooping growth habits on single curtain trellis systems.

[0120] FIG. 89 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities on minimal pruned *Vitis labruscana* and other grapes with drooping growth habits on GDC trellis systems.

[0121] FIG. 90 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes produced on high wire bilateral cordon systems.

[0122] FIG. 91 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and other French-American hybrid grapes produced on GDC and other divided canopy trellises.

[0123] FIG. 92 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities on minimal pruned *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes trained on high wire single curtain trellising systems.

[0124] FIG. 93 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities on minimal pruned *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes on GDC trellis systems.

[0125] FIG. 94 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes produced on standard California T-trellises.

[0126] FIG. 95 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes produced on standard vertical movable catch wires.

[0127] FIG. 96 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes produced on Lyre or "U" and other divided canopy trellises.

[0128] FIG. 97 is a seasonal chart for vineyard mechanization activities of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes produced on Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising systems.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0129] Brief History of Vineyard Mechanization and Concerns

[0130] FIG. 1 of the drawings provides a schematic representation of grape production across the United States with black dots representing the areas or regions of production and the size of the dots indicating the relative quantities of production. As shown in FIG. 1, California is the largest grape producer followed by New York, Washington, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arizona, and Arkansas.

[0131] California produces almost entirely the European-type grape *Vitis vinifera*. The American-type, *V. labruscana*, or its hybrids with viniferas are grown mainly in the central and northeastern states. Muscadine, *Vitis rotundifolia* is grown mainly in the gulf and southern Atlantic states.

[0132] The following are the leading cultivars in California in approximate order by acreage: 'Thompson Seedless' (RT); 'French Colombard' (wW); 'Chardonnay' (wW); 'Zinfandel' (rW); 'Cabernet Sauvignon' (rW); 'Flame Seedless' (T); 'Flame Tokay' (T); 'Merlot' (rW); 'Sauvignon blanc' (wW); 'Emperor' (T); 'Grenache' (rW); 'Carignane' (rW); 'Barbera' (rW); 'Perlette' (T); 'Pinot Noir' (rW); 'Ruby

Cabernet' (rW); 'White Riesling' (wW); 'Muscat of Alexandria' (wW); 'Petite Sirah' (rW); 'Rubired' (rW); 'Chenin blanc' (wW); 'Pinot blanc' (wW); 'Semillon' (wW); 'Ribier' (T); 'Gewurztraminer' (wW); 'Napa Gamay' (rW); 'Nebbiolo' (rW); and 'Malvasia Bianca' (wW). The largest acreage of 'Thompson Seedless' is explained by the fact that this cultivar is popular for raisins, table grapes, wine, juice, and canning and therefore constitutes the majority of California's grape acreage (R-raisin; T-table; W-wine; w-white; r-red).

[0133] To use machines successfully for mechanical shoot positioning, mechanical pruning, mechanical thinning, mechanical shoot removal, mechanical leaf removal, mechanical harvesting, and other grape production operations, trellis systems should be devised and shoots positioned to accommodate precise mechanical movement. These operations should occur without excessive damage to the vines and at no reduction in fruit yield and/or quality.

[0134] One training system that addresses these objectives is the Geneva Double Curtain training system (GDC), developed by Shaulis et al. (38) in New York. The GDC trellising system (FIG. 75) doubles the length of cordon per vine, over the 5½ to 6 ft. (165 cm-170 cm) Single Curtain, Bilateral Cordon (BC) which is also easy to totally mechanize when the fruiting canes are selected from the lower 180° of the cordon for cultivars with drooping growth habit. The proper use of a mechanical shoot positioner increases the number of mature, productive shoots on vigorous vines that have their basal nodes adequately exposed to sunlight. Most vigorous vines of large-leaved *Vitis labruscana* L., *Vitis aestivalis*, some American hybrids, French-American hybrids and a few *Vitis vinifera* cultivars with a drooping-shoot growth habit and annual cane prunings of 1.35 kg or more at spacings of 240 cm in-the-row spacing may be expected to give excellent response to the GDC system (17). Less vigorous vines need to be spaced closer in the row or be grown on the BC high wire system.

[0135] The GDC trellising system requires a 3-wire trellis with two horizontal cordon-support wires and a single trunk-support wire. The cordon support wires should be 180 cm above the ground and 120 cm apart. The vines are cordon trained and short cane pruned (i.e., 4 to 6 nodes) for most *Vitis labruscana* species. The cordon wires are attached to flexible cross arms that allow for efficient and total mechanization (FIG. 75). In contrast to *Vitis vinifera* L., the fruiting canes of *Vitis labruscana*, cordon-trained vines are selected from nodes of very short vertical arms originating within the lower 180° of the horizontal cordon. The cordon must be in continuous contact with the support wire in order to obtain maximum efficiency from mechanical operations.

[0136] Bilateral cordon (BC) trained *Vitis labruscana* vines (FIGS. 2 and 3) also can be effectively shoot positioned, pruned, thinned, and harvested by machine (2, 23, 24, 25). Research in Arkansas (2, 24) compared the three major trellising systems used for *Vitis labruscana* grapes in the Eastern United States, and the results have shown the BC system to be as productive and to produce comparable fruit quality to the Umbrella Kniffin system, the predominate trellising system that was used at the time of the study. However, the GDC system proved to be even more productive than either of the other two systems, with no reduction in fruit quality. The GDC system has proven to be superior

to the BC system with vigorous cultivars that have sufficient growth to fill the trellis of the GDC system. However, there is no advantage to the GDC system in low vigor vineyards without the utilization of close in-row spacing. The BC and GDC system can be completely mechanized; hence, these systems as well as the modified systems of FIGS. 76-82 and the like are the recommended or preferred systems for most cultivars and vineyards that are to be partially or totally mechanized.

[0137] Bilateral cordon (BC) with a (105 cm) 42-inch cordon and two stationary top catch wires on a vertical trellis or moveable catch wires utilizing spur pruning on the upper 180° of the cordon currently are common training systems in *Vitis vinifera* vineyards in many parts of the world (FIG. 30). The fruiting spurs are selected from the upper 180° of the cordon since *Vitis vinifera* cultivars grow upright. A 210 cm stake is driven into the ground to a depth of 50 cm at each vine. One or two 12-gauge high tensile strength (HTS) cordon wires are located about 105 cm above the vineyard floor. However, with the moveable catch wire system two or three moveable foliage support wires (13-gauge HTS) are moved upward to support the new growth as the vine grows. These systems can be successfully pruned, thinned, fruiting zone leaf removed, summer tipped or trimmed, and harvested mechanically.

[0138] Mechanical Shoot Positioning:

[0139] Effective mechanical pruning only can be accomplished with species with a drooping growth habit when produced on a 170 cm (6 ft.) GDC or BC system when the vines are shoot positioned, which places the canes in proper position for the winter mechanical pruning operation. See Oldridge Patent No. 5,101,618, dated Apr. 7, 1992 and hereby incorporated by reference, for a GDC vine comber with pivoting counterforce brush. Also, see FIGS. 41-43 for positioning and pruning equipment. Shoot positioning has been shown to be an effective method of improving fruit quality and of exposing the lower nodes on the bearing units (canes) to sunlight to make the basal nodes more productive than under shaded conditions (27, 38, 40). Shoot positioning has proven particularly effective with large vigorous vines on GDC which have a drooping-shoot growth habit. Shoot positioning can be accomplished by mechanical means. A new shoot positioner patented and manufactured by Tommy Oldridge is an improvement over other machines for the positioning of GDC-trained vines (FIG. 42 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618 to Oldridge).

[0140] As soon as the tendrils touch the wire or another cane, they fasten very quickly; therefore, vines are usually first shoot positioned just before bloom. Shoot positioning may require a second pass with a mechanical shoot positioner. For the GDC system, all vigorous shoots growing between the two cordon wires must be pulled or brushed down in order to maintain two separate foliage canopies. This can be accomplished with the Oldridge shoot positioner and middle breaker (FIGS. 48 and 49). Also, other vineyard operations can be carried out at the same time while the shoots are positioned or broken (spraying, etc.).

[0141] Mechanical Pruning and/or Trimming During the Dormant Season:

[0142] In the late 1960s, grape producers indicated that once mechanical harvesting was totally implemented, the

most time-consuming hand labor operations in the vineyard were dormant pruning and tying. Grape producers complained of decreasing availability of qualified labor for pruning and tying and indicated that these should be the next operations mechanized (22).

[0143] Background Information on:

[0144] A mechanical pruner or trimmer was successfully tested in 1967 and 1968 by Morris at the University of Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station on a BC cordon-trained mature Concord vineyard (FIGS. 2-7). The most significant findings of these studies were that the vines had to be shoot positioned before and following bloom in order for the canes to be in the proper position for dormant pruning or trimming and equally important was the need to produce the lower nodes in sunlight to maintain node productivity and fruit quality.

[0145] A mechanical pruning aid for Concord grapes was developed in New York by Pollock et al. (32) for use on cordon-trained vines. A triangular arrangement of reciprocating cutter bars established the length of cane and cane position. This New York pruning system was supplemented by a mechanized brushing technique to remove the top shoots (upper 180° of the cordon) early in the spring.

[0146] In 1971, the Arkansas studies indicated mechanical pruning of grape vines could be accomplished and would reduce pruning labor by as much as 50% (26). One viticultural concern was observed in this early research, the impossibility of treating each vine individually to control crop load (balance pruning according to vine size), which might result in the overcropping or undercropping of individual vines.

[0147] The mechanical thinner (shown in FIGS. 53 and 54) in this application has eliminated this concern for BC-trained vines by being able to effectively adjust fruit loads by controlling the beater speed (rpm) of this unit. The unit shown in FIGS. 2-9 is extremely effective in adjusting crop load with the French-American hybrid and *Vitis vinifera* grapes. This economical thinning system for the BC 170 cm (6 ft.) system is a mechanical thinning unit using bow-rods, fingers, or strikers in an over-the-row beater side-mounted unit built where the operator can see to adjust fruit load on individual vines (FIG. 2 and FIGS. 53 and 54). Results are shown in Tables 2 and 3 where less efficient equipment than that discussed in this application was used to accomplish the desired pruning results of mechanical pruning on yield, vine size, and juice quality (Tables 2 and 3) on shoot positioned Concord grapevines on GDC or BC training systems (23,24). This study was established in a 20-year old vineyard. The vines were either mechanically pruned or balance pruned to a 30+10 severity. The mechanically pruned vines were left untouched or were adjusted to the best 60 or 90 nodes per vine. After six consecutive years, follow-up pruning by hand, to limit the number of nodes per vine to 60 following mechanical pruning, maintained vine size and produced fruit yield and juice quality comparable to vines balance pruned to a 30+10 schedule in this older vineyard and under conditions of this study. Both the no-touch-up treatment and retaining 90 nodes per vine following mechanical pruning treatments reduced per vine and per node fruit yields (data not shown) after the sixth year and resulted in unacceptable objective and sensory juice quality. Also, these two treatments resulted in uneven ripening of Concord grapes (% green fruit), which contributed to the problem of low soluble solids and poor juice color.

[0148] Sensory color acceptability ratings (Table 3), which included both the parameters of color intensity and hue, generally declined with increasing treatment severity on single curtain SC trained vines. However, the color acceptability was rated lower than expected on hand pruned (30+10) GDC-trained vines because of the blue appearance, rather than the expected intense purple juice color. This result was due to the influence of high pH on juice color. The high pH allowed structural transformations of the anthocyanin molecule, resulting in the shift in hue. SC-trained, no touch-up vines had the lowest ratings for both color intensity and color acceptability.

[0149] Juice flavor was rated unacceptable from plots limited to 90 nodes or with no touch-up on the GDC training system and with no touch-up treatment on the SC system, following mechanical pruning.

[0150] From this study it was concluded that continuous mechanical pruning in Concord vineyards is recommended only in shoot-positioned vineyards where pruning can be followed by cane selection and adequate node limitations. However, recent unpublished data shows that mechanical fruit thinning also eliminates this problem without the need for hand thinning.

[0151] These preliminary findings indicated a need for a better mechanical shoot positioner and mechanical pruner. This unit has been patented by Oldridge, U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444 hereby incorporated by reference (FIGS. 44-47). A study was designed at the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station with the objective of examining various levels of mechanical pruning in combination with shoot positioning on Concord grapes. The vineyard was planted in 1981. The vines were extremely uniform in vigor, and all vines were trained to the GDC training system with 3 m x 2 m spacing and drip irrigation. The experimental field plot was an incomplete latin square 7 x 4 factorial (7 columns, 4 rows) with four replications. Treatments consisted of: 1. Four levels of shoot positioning; a) hand positioning, b) machine positioning, c) separating the canopy by breaking centers only, and d) no shoot positioning. (In treatments a, b, and c, the shoots were positioned vertically toward the vineyard floor two or three times, as required). 2. Seven pruning treatments; a) balance pruned by hand to a 30+10 level (6 node canes), b) balance-pruned by hand to a 50+10 level (6 node canes), c) mechanically pruned and adjusted to the best 60 nodes, d) mechanically pruned and adjusted to the best 80 nodes, e) mechanically pruned with fruit removed by mechanical beating at a green-pea size to a level approximating the fruit load of a 30+10 pruning severity, f) mechanically pruned with no touch-up in even-numbered years and hand pruned to 30+10 (6 node canes) in odd-numbered years, and g) mechanically pruned with no touch-up.

[0152] Yield, pruning weight, and juice quality have been determined for eight consecutive years. Unlike some of the recent research findings in other regions, our results indicate that continued mechanical pruning with no node adjustments may have undesirable effects on fruit quality when the mechanical pruning results in extremely high yields (Tables 4 and 5). Our main concern about mechanical pruning is its affect on percent soluble solids and color (Tables 3 and 4). Shoot positioning showed reduction in soluble solids in 1991, but there was no need to position the vines in 1991 due

to reduced vigor and vine size (Table 5). It was obvious that shoot positioning for sunlight exposure was not needed. The excessive heat, hot nights, and fruit exposure to the sun was detrimental to the production of soluble solids. This points out the need to maintain vine vigor or size on high yielding vineyards and also again point out the need for selective mechanical fruit thinning in order to maintain balanced high yielding production of high quality fruit.

[0153] Freeman and Cullis (12) studied mechanical hedge pruning of Cabernet Sauvignon and Doradillo vines in Australia that were trained to a BC system. The following hedge shapes were established in this study: 1) a square hedge with three cutting planes that produced a square cross-section (the distance from the cutting plane to the cordon was set to give node numbers that were similar to the controls); 2) an offset rectangular hedge where the vines were trimmed close to the cordon on one side on alternate years to allow for new spurs to develop; and 3) a hedge pruned to a triangular shape on the upper 180° portion of the cordon. The yield and capacity of hedged vines were equal to or greater than the manually-pruned vines, except in 1976, when the hedged Doradillo vines had lower yields. With the Cabernet Sauvignon, a triangular hedge initially had lower yields but in later years yielded more than the square and offset hedges. This increase in Cabernet yield with the triangular hedge was a result of increased berry number compared to the other hedge shapes.

[0154] Freeman and Cullis (12) concluded that under Australian conditions vine hedging was a viable alternative to detailed manual pruning for vinifera grapes in Australia. The major quality characteristics affected by total mechanical pruning are smaller berries and clusters. Minimal pruning of *Vitis vinifera* vines on a commercial scale is being adopted in Australia. Also, they indicated that the mechanically pruned hedge presents no problems during the mechanical harvesting operation. Machine-assisted pruning has become a fixture in the Australian wine industry (6).

[0155] Minimal Pruning:

[0156] Working on the theory that winter pruning disturbs the vines' natural process of self-regulation of growth and production, Clingeffer and Possingham (5) have developed a trellising system in Australia that requires minimal pruning and provides ideal vine conformation for mechanical harvesting. They call it Minimal Pruning of Cordon-Trained Vines. Cordon-trained vines are trained to either a single or double high wire in the vertical plane. Pruning consists of trimming at the sides only in the summer and trimming at 30 inches above the ground as a harvest aid. Over the seasons, the cordons and canes grow into a large permanent canopy. Trimming can be accomplished with simple and inexpensive tractor-mounted equipment. Commercial production has been accomplished in Australia and to a limited extent in California with this system.

[0157] Pool et al. (35) have used minimal pruning in New York vineyards. Pool (34) has also studied mechanical thinning and found that the resultant crop reduction enhanced juice soluble solids contents.

[0158] Intrieri and Marangoni (15) reported alternate "up-down" mechanical pruning of GDC-trained *Vitis vinifera* grapes in Bologna, Italy, has given satisfactory results in terms of production and vegetative response of the vines for

a three-year period. After four years of tests and surveys, Cargnello and Lisa (1) in Veneto, Italy, concluded that for mechanical pruning to be practical it is necessary to control the bud load annually, and that mechanical pruning must ensure an adequate number of renewal canes with short cuts on some parts of the cordon to avoid the premature aging of the vine. In some regions, success is not or will not be possible until trellis systems are modified for mechanization. Also, this system will not work in regions with short growing seasons, where harvest may be delayed from big crops, and vines are subject to severe injury from low winter temperatures.

[0159] Parallel work on pruning and shoot positioning mechanization has occurred in other grape growing regions of the world, e.g., New Zealand (42), France (37, 44), Italy (7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 33, 41, 43), Spain (13), Bulgaria (21, 29, 30), and the Ukraine (28).

[0160] Mechanized Systems for the Production of French-American hybrids:

[0161] The French hybrids are interspecific hybrids that vary a great deal in their vine characteristics, but, in general, the majority of the cultivars that have been selected for production have shorter internodes than the *Vitis labruscana* species. Most all hybrids tend to be extremely fruitful. This fruitfulness is due to a large extent to the high cluster numbers for shoot and extremely fruitful basal buds. These basal buds are seldom, if ever, fruitful with *Vitis labruscana* and *Vitis vinifera* species. These basal buds or nodes are considered non-count on *V. labruscana*, but on some French hybrids the basal or non-count buds can account for 30-40% of the fruit that is produced.

[0162] An individual bud of the French-Hybrid is more productive since the secondary bud at each node can produce almost as many grapes as the primary buds.

[0163] Hand thinning is a method to produce consistently high quality fruit from these cultivars. Hand thinning is expensive and one of the greatest challenges in producing these cultivars. To fruit and shoot thin these cultivars mechanically and economically, the mechanical shoot and fruit thinner described in this application (FIGS. 2-33) is recommended. The fruit zone area for most French hybrids is the same as for the *Vitis vinifera* species (FIGS. 2-7). Mechanical crop control of this group of grapes may be accomplished by both mechanical shoot and fruit thinning (FIGS. 2-33). This new mechanical fruit and shoot thinner is relatively simple and extremely effective.

[0164] Mechanization of the *Vitis vinifera* species:

[0165] Most of the *Vitis vinifera* cultivars have upright growth habits and require that the fruiting zone be located on the upper 180° of the cordon. The majority of the premium wine produced in the world comes from this species of grapes. Wineries pay premium prices for high quality vinifera grapes. In many premium wine grape regions, the need to restrict crop sizes following mechanical pruning is paramount. These concerns become even greater in regions of the world where there are short growing seasons and potential for winter injury. Producers have to go to extreme hand thinning measures to reduce crop loads, to ensure maturity and maximize winter hardiness. In both cases, the need for cluster and/or berry thinning is necessary to adjust the fruit load to the capacity of the vine. The rule of thumb for foliage

to fruit ratio for many cultivars has been 10 to 15 square centimeters of leaf to one gram of fruit. Lakso (18) has reported that after the final exposed leaf area/grams reaches about 8-12 cm² of functional leaf area per gram of fruit, there is little benefit of having additional leaf area. Crop adjustments to ensure the proper leaf-fruit ratios is used in many grape regions of the world and is even enforced by law in some regions.

[0166] Dr. Robert Pool, Cornell University, Geneva, N.Y. (37), has developed a method to estimate crop level to determine the amount of fruit that should be mechanically removed. Assuming the grower knows the number of vines per acre, an estimate of crop weight (lb.) can be calculated. The grower should harvest all fruit from a representative sample (e.g. two post-lengths) at 1200 growing degree-days, or when berries reach 50% of final weight. For 'Concord' in NY, Pool has shown that regardless of pruning system, weather, year, or crop level, 50% of final cluster weight will occur at 1200 growing degree days. However, this timing will change for different cultivars and for different grape growing regions. The grower then multiplies the weight of fruit per vine at 1200 degree-days by 2 to determine crop weight per vine at harvest. Then multiply lb./vine by vines per acre and divide by 2000 to arrive at tons/acre. If the estimated crop is above the desired tons/acre for maximum quality for the cultivar or vineyard, the grower can calculate the percent of fruit he needs to remove from each vine to arrive at the desired cropping level. As a rule, machine thinning should be used about 20-30 days following bloom in cool growing regions such as the "grape belt" region of New York.

[0167] Winkler et al. (Text 1974), who wrote one of the most respected texts on viticulture, felt that one approach to this functional leaf/fruit ratio was to leave vines unpruned and control the crop by thinning. However, during this time period, it was not practical or feasible since mechanization of harvest of unpruned vines was not an option. Unlike the French hybrids, most vinifera grapes are only moderately fruitful and normally do not produce fruitful basal buds. Therefore, mechanical thinning and shoot removal of vigor or large size vines becomes more critical, and in most cases and some trellising systems, will need to be combined with mechanical leaf removal (FIGS. 34-40).

[0168] Although the Morris-Oldridge complete vineyard mechanization system of the present invention provides the viticulturist with an arsenal of tools, careful use and intelligent implementation of the desired results from each of these tools must be understood for the system to be successful. Adoption of these new completely mechanized systems will mean a more reliable, more stable, and more economical production of premium quality fruit that will be competitive for the local, regional, national and global markets.

[0169] With reference again to FIGS. 2-5 of the drawings, an exemplary shoot and fruit thinner in accordance with the present invention generally designated by the reference numeral 10 is especially adapted for use with *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grapes and is shown in use in connection with a high wire single curtain bilateral cordon trellising system 12.

[0170] The shoot and fruit thinner 10 includes a central support platform 14, right and left depending arms 16 and 18

each supporting at the lower end thereof a circular rotary striker unit 20 and 22 having striker fingers or beaters 24 and 26 extending therefrom. The shoot and fruit thinner 10 also includes a guide wheel 28 which is adapted to ride on a guide wire or cordon wire 30 to facilitate the proper positioning of the shoot and fruit thinner 10 relative to the vine being treated.

[0171] Each of the rotary striker units 20 and 22 rotates about a substantially horizontal shaft in the same or opposite directions under the influence of a hydraulic motor 36 which provides drive to a drive sprocket 38 which in turn drives a drive chain 40 which supplies drive to respective rotary unit drive sprockets 42 and 44 and which also passes around a plurality of idler and directional sprockets or rollers 46, 48 and 50.

[0172] As shown in FIG. 5 of the drawings, the chain and sprockets are usually covered with a removable metal cover or guard 52 to prevent shoots and foliage from obstructing movement of the chain.

[0173] The support platform 14 includes a vertical plate 54 and a horizontal support member 56 pivotally connected to one another by brackets and bolts 58 and 60. The angle of the vertical plate 54 with respect to the horizontal member 56 is adjusted by respective turn buckles or length adjustable telescoping members 62 and 64. Since the upper end of each of the arms 16 and 18 is attached to the vertical plate 54, the angle of each of the rotary heads 20 and 22 can be adjusted by adjusting the length of members 62 and 64 by, for example, removing the bolts therefrom, and adjusting the length of the members 62 and 64 to a different hole setting, and replacing the bolts therein.

[0174] Guide wheel 28 is adjustable and is supported from platform 14 by forwardly extending members 66 and 68 which extend from horizontal support member 56 and support a pivoting yoke 70 about a pivot bolt 72. Upward and lower travel of the guide wheel 28 is limited by upper and lower nuts 74 and 76 placed on respective side rods 78 and 80 which pass through respective circular openings in guide brackets 82 and 84 which are themselves attached to the extension members 66 and 68.

[0175] Horizontal member 56 of support platform 14 is made up of two side pieces 86 and 88 welded to a horizontal plate 90. A hitch ball 92 is attached to plate 90 and provides for quick attachment and detachment of the shoot and fruit thinner 10 to and from a hitch tongue 94 extending horizontally from a horizontal member 96 of a vineyard tractor mast 98 such as shown in any one of FIGS. 34, 36, 39, 48, 51, 56, 74, or the like. After the hitch tongue 94 of mast member 96 is attached to the ball 92, the horizontal plate 90 and horizontal member 56 of support platform 14 are fixed in position relative to the end of mast member 96 by, for example, bolts which pass through brackets extending from member 96 and into plate 90.

[0176] In accordance with the present invention, and as shown throughout the drawings, each of the devices, apparatus, implements, or the like of the present invention preferably utilize a quick disconnect ball hitch mechanism or assembly to facilitate the attachment and detachment of the respective implements or devices to the mast of a vineyard tractor, harvester, or other machinery or equipment. Also, the ball hitch can be used to facilitate the storage of

each of the implements, devices, apparatus, and the like by having a storage rack with a plurality of spaced ball receiving hitch ends which are adapted to attach to the ball on the respective implements.

[0177] Although the shoot and fruit thinner **10** is shown to utilize a hydraulic motor **36** which receives hydraulic fluid from hydraulic lines **100** operatively connected to a hydraulic system of the tractor or other vineyard equipment (or an auxiliary hydraulic system attached to, for example, the power take off on the back of the tractor) which is used to transport the shoot and fruit thinner **10** through the vineyard and simultaneously drive both rotary striker units **20** and **22**, it is to be understood that other motors such as pneumatic or electric motors can be used to simultaneously drive both rotary units **20** and **22** or respective separate drive motors can be added in place of the single motor **36** to drive each of the rotary units **20** and **22** independently of one another. See, for example, **FIG. 36** of the drawings which shows respective hydraulic motors for driving each of two rotary units.

[0178] The amount of shoot and fruit thinning that is accomplished using the rotary striker units **20** and **22** and in particular by the striker fingers **24** and **26** of the rotary units **20** and **22**, is determined by the speed and direction of the rotary units, the number of striker fingers, the flexibility of the fingers, the spacing of the rotary units and fingers from one another, the alignment of the flexible fingers on the respective rotary units (in sync with one another or out of sync with one another), the speed with which the shoot and fruit thinner **10** is moved through the vineyard and along the vine, and combinations thereof.

[0179] With reference to **FIGS. 4 and 5** of the drawings, the striker fingers **24** and **26** are attached to or mounted in respective finger receiving sockets **102** and **104** which are attached to respective rings or annuluses **106** and **108** by respective radial support members **110** and **112** (see **FIGS. 13 and 14**). In accordance with the present invention, it has been discovered that a preferred arrangement of striker fingers includes a pair of such fingers placed adjacent one another and with each of the fingers having a flexible core **114** such as a rubber hose, tube, shaft, or the like, covered partially near its base with a rigid support **116** such as a metal pipe, tube, or the like. The flexible ends **114** of the adjacent fingers **24** of the finger pair tend to grab foliage, shoots, grape bunches, and the like, during travel of the fingers through the vine. Also, the flexible ends **114** on the fingers allow the ends to bend or give, should they contact a solid item such as a wire, post, brace, stay, trellis member, cordon wire support, cordon, other striker fingers, brushes, brush bristles, or the like. Although it is preferred to use pairs of fingers, especially for fruit bunch removal, it is contemplated that one could use single fingers to, for example, remove foliage, shoots, thin bunches, or the like, or one could use a single finger having a split end to achieve nearly the same result as a pair of adjacent fingers. Further, the pair of fingers may be further supported by attaching them one to the other near their base by, for example, wrapping tape around the base supports **116** of adjacent fingers. This increases the rigidity of the finger pair and increases the amount of foliage or fruit which is removed during use thereof. Each of the fingers **24** and **26** may be

releasably attached or mounted in the receiving sockets **102** and **104** by, for example, threaded fasteners, cotter keys, wire, or the like.

[0180] The number and arrangement of the striker fingers is selected to achieve the desired amount of shoot and fruit thinning, leaf removal, and the like. The rotary striker units **20** and **22** of **FIGS. 2-5** are adapted to receive anywhere from one to twelve fingers per unit. The speed of rotation of the striker fingers is controlled by controlling the hydraulic fluid sent to motor **36**.

[0181] The amount of shoot and fruit removal can be adjusted along the travel of a particular row in a vineyard or along a particular vine section to adjust for different physiological stages or conditions of the vine, shoots, fruit, or the like to insure that the shoots and fruit are evenly spaced along the length of the cordon. Also, the rotary striker units may be replaced with brushes or bristles (see **FIGS. 15-22**) or with oval rotary striker units (see **FIG. 23**) to achieve a desired result. In accordance with a particular example of the present invention, the rotary striker units **20** and **22** of the shoot and fruit thinner **10** each included four respective pairs of striker fingers driven at a rotary speed from 10 to 250 rpm with the fingers of the respective units **20** and **22** offset or out of sync by about 45°, and with the transporting tractor driven from 1½ mph to 2½ mph to achieve a desired shoot and fruit thinning along a row of *Vitis vinifera* trained on a high wire single curtain bilateral cordon trellis system. Also in accordance with a particular example of the present invention, each of the rotary striker units **20** and **22** of the shoot and fruit thinner **10** is about 32 inches from tip to tip having a 10 inch center disk and 12 inch length fingers with one inch of each finger inserted into its receiving socket. Further, each of the fingers is one-half inch in diameter and made of a flexible solid rubber material. It is preferred to use striker fingers having an outer diameter of from about one quarter inch to one inch and varying in length from about 4 to 24 inches. Further, when brush units are used in place of rotary striker units, it is preferred to use a brush unit having a tip to tip dimension of about 20 to 40 inches, preferably 32 inches. Adjustments in shoot and fruit removal depend on cultivar and shoot numbers and the projected or desired fruit load.

[0182] Although it is not shown in **FIGS. 2-5** of the drawings, an automatic height adjustment mechanism or device can be added, for example, to the guide wheel yoke **70** or one of the height adjustment members **78** and **80** to automatically adjust the height of the striker fingers **24** and **26** relative to the vine by automatically adjusting the position of the guide wheel **28** relative to the platform **14**. For example, a hydraulic cylinder or an electric motor and screw arrangement can be used to automatically adjust the position of the guide wheel relative to the platform from a control lever or mechanism on the tractor.

[0183] As shown in **FIGS. 6 and 7** of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a shoot and fruit thinner is generally designated by the reference numeral **120** and shown to be substantially identical to the shoot and fruit thinner **10** of the **FIGS. 2-5** with the exception of the removal of the guide wheel **28** and the supporting assembly therefor. The shoot and fruit thinner **120** includes a support platform **122**, right and left arms **124**

and 126, circular rotary striker units 128 and 130, striker fingers 132 and 134, chain 136, hydraulic motor 138, and the like.

[0184] As shown in FIG. 8 of the drawings and in accordance with yet another embodiment or arrangement of a shoot and fruit thinner of the present invention, a shoot and fruit thinner 140 is especially adapted for use with a standard single catch wire trellis system and is substantially identical in its construction to the shoot and fruit thinner 120 of FIGS. 6 and 7 with the exception of the addition of vertical lower extension arms 142 and 144 added to the bottom of each of right and left angled arms 146 and 148 attached to the support platform 150. The shoot and fruit thinner 140 is similar to the shoot and fruit thinners 10 and 120 of FIGS. 2-7 in that it includes a hydraulic motor 152, a drive chain, and a plurality of sprockets 154 and 156 for providing drive to each of two circular rotary striker units 158 and 160.

[0185] With reference to FIG. 9 of the drawings, and in accordance with still yet another embodiment of the present invention, a shoot and fruit thinner is generally designated by reference numeral 170 and has a substantially identical construction to that of the shoot and fruit thinner 140 of FIG. 8 except that the extension arms are elongated and positioned at different angles to accommodate a California T-trellis 168. The shoot and fruit thinner 170 includes upper arms 172 and 174 which extend outwardly and lower extension arms 176 and 178 attached to the free end of each of the upper arms 172 and 174 and which extend inwardly toward the trellis 168. Respective rotary striker units 180 and 182 are supported at the base of each of arms 176 and 178 and are driven by a hydraulic motor 184 and a chain which passes over directional sprockets 186 and 188. The motor 184 and upper arms 172 and 174 are supported on a substantially vertical plate 190 of a support platform 192. As shown in the drawings, the vertical plate 190 and support arms 172, 174, 176 and 178 include a plurality of openings to allow for angular adjustment and repositioning of the support arms relative to one another and to the support platform 192. The arms are attached to the support platform by releasable fasteners 194 such as nuts and bolts. Further, rotary striker assemblies 196 and 198 are attached to the rotary disks by releasable fasteners such as bolts and lock-nuts.

[0186] As shown in FIGS. 10-14 of the drawings, and in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention, a shoot and fruit thinner generally designated by the reference 200 is substantially identical in construction to the shoot and fruit thinner 10 of FIGS. 2-5 except that the shoot and fruit thinner 200 includes only a single arm 202 and single rotary striker unit 204. The arm 202 is attached to a support platform 206. The rotary striker 204 is rotatably driven by a motor and a chain 208 to drive a plurality of striker fingers 210 in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. The support platform 206 of shoot and fruit thinner 200 is releasably attached to a horizontal mast member 212 by a ball hitch 214 and bolts 216.

[0187] With particular reference to FIGS. 11 and 12 of the drawings, a guide wheel 218, supporting assembly 220 and adjustment mechanism 222 has been added to the shoot and fruit thinner 200. Also, for the sake of clarity, a rotary striker assembly 224 has been removed from a rotary striker support disk 226 of the rotary striker unit. 204.

[0188] With reference to FIGS. 10, 13 and 14 of the drawings, the rotary striker assembly 224 is adapted to be releasably connected to the support disk 226 by a plurality of threaded fasteners such as nuts and bolts 228 with the bolts being received through respective openings 230 in a disk or ring 232.

[0189] With reference to FIGS. 15-22, 25, and 26 of the drawings, in accordance with the present invention, one can replace, substitute or augment one or both circular rotary striker units with one or more rotary circular brush units. The brush units may be driven by an independent motor, for example, a separate hydraulic motor.

[0190] With particular reference to FIGS. 15 and 16 of the drawings, respective shoot and fruit thinner embodiments 240 and 280 each have a brush unit at the lower end of one arm and a circular rotary striker unit on the lower end of the other arm and are adapted for use with a Lyre, "U", or modified U-trellis 242. As shown in FIG. 15 and in accordance with a still another embodiment of the present invention, shoot and fruit thinner 240 is shown to include a circular rotary striker unit 242 operatively attached to the lower end of a lower arm 244 with the upper end of the arm 244 attached to the lower end of an upper arm 246 having the upper end thereof attached to a support platform 248. The rotary striker unit 242 includes a plurality of striker fingers 250 which are rotated under the action of a hydraulic motor 252 which provides drive to the rotary striker unit 242 via a chain and a plurality of sprockets.

[0191] The shoot and fruit thinner 240 also includes a rotary brush unit 254 including a plurality of stacked circular bristle assemblies 256 which are operatively attached to the rotary shaft of a hydraulic motor 258. The hydraulic motor 258 and rotary brush unit 254 are supported by a plate 260 which is attached to a lower end of a first or lower rectangular support member 262. The first support member 262 is received in a first adjusting collar or bracket 264 which is welded to a second adjusting collar or bracket 266 which is received on a second rectangular support member 268. The second or upper support member 268 is attached to the lower end of an arm 270 and the upper end of the arm 270 is attached to the support platform 248. Hydraulic fluid is supplied to the motor 258 to rotate the bristles 256 of brush unit 254 in either a clockwise or counterclockwise direction and at a selected speed to provide the desired removal of foliage, shoots, fruit, and the like from the interior of the trellis and/or from the area of the cordon. The brush unit 254 can be used to provide an almost complete removal of shoots, foliage, fruit, and the like from a cordon. Adjustable collars or brackets 264 and 266 include releasable set screws or bolts 272 and 274 which allow for a wide range of adjustment in the angle and position of the brush unit 254. The shoot and fruit thinner 240 is adapted to thin the foliage, shoots, and fruit from the exterior of the trellis 242 using the circular rotary striker unit 242 and to clean out the interior of at least one side of the trellis using the bristles 256 of brush unit 254 to remove foliage, shoots, and fruit from the interior of the trellis.

[0192] With reference to FIG. 16 of the drawings, an alternative shoot and fruit thinner 280 is substantially similar to the shoot and fruit thinner 240 of FIG. 15 except that the rotary striker unit 282 and rotary circular brush unit 284 are on opposite sides of the device. The shoot and fruit thinners

240 and **280** of **FIGS. 15 and 16** are adapted to thin the exterior of at least one side of the trellis and clean the interior of at least the other side of the trellis with a single pass along a vine or can clean the entire interior of the trellis **242** and both exterior sides of the trellis by either using the shoot and fruit thinners **240** and **280** in combination or by making two passes along a particular row in opposite directions. In accordance with one example, the bristle or brush unit **254** is 32 inches from tip to tip and has relatively stiff plastic or resin bristles.

[0193] As shown in **FIGS. 17 and 18** of the drawings, a shoot and fruit thinner or removal device generally designated **290** includes a single rotary brush unit **292** of substantially similar construction to that of the rotary brush unit and support assembly **254** of **FIG. 15**. The rotary brush unit **292** includes a hydraulic motor **294** attached to a plate **296** which is attached to one end of a first or lower rectangular support member **298**. The first support member **298** is clamped in an adjustment collar or bracket **300** which is attached to another adjustment collar or bracket **302**. The bracket **302** is releasably attached to a second or upper rectangular support member **304** which is welded to a support arm **306**. The brush unit **292** includes a plurality of circular bristle assemblies **308** which are clamped to a circular disk **310** which is operatively connected to the rotary shaft of motor **294**. The number of bristle assemblies **308**, the stiffness of the bristles, the speed of rotation of the motor **294**, the position of the brush unit **292**, the ground speed of the tractor or other equipment transporting the device **290**, and the like can be varied to provide the selected removal of foliage, shoots, fruit, and the like from the interior of the trellis.

[0194] Removal device **290** may include a guide wheel **312** as shown in **FIG. 17** if desired or may be operated without a guide wheel as shown in **FIG. 18** of the drawings. The brush unit **292** may be used to clean the interior or exterior of a trellis, a cordon, or the like and may also be used for pruning. It is important to open up the interior of a GDC, Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellis to allow light and air to get to the fruit, and to assist in the mechanical harvesting thereof.

[0195] With respect to **FIG. 19** of the drawings, a multi-purpose shoot and fruit thinner or removal device generally designated **320** is similar to a combination of the shoot and fruit thinners **290** of **FIGS. 17 and 18** and **200** of **FIGS. 10-14** and includes both a circular rotary brush unit **322** and a circular rotary striker unit **324** each having their own separate drive motor and which can be driven at different speeds and in different directions. The shoot and fruit thinner **320** is in a similar arrangement to that shown in **FIG. 26** of the drawings and can be used in connection with a Y or GDC trellising system.

[0196] **FIGS. 20 and 21** of the drawings show respective shoot and fruit thinner embodiments **340** and **350** each having a circular rotary brush unit **342** and **352** each mounted at the base of an elongate arm assembly including respective upper arms **344** and **354**, lower arms **346** and **356**, and adjustable support assemblies **348** and **358**. The shoot and fruit thinners **340** and **350** of **FIGS. 20 and 21** are adapted to reach down into the interior of a deep divided curtain trellis such as a Lyre, "U", or modified "U", or to reach down and under the "U" or upper end of a Y, T, Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellising system.

[0197] With respect to **FIG. 22** of the drawings, a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment or arrangement in accordance with yet another embodiment of the present invention is generally designated by the reference numeral **360** and shown to include first and second circular rotary brush units **362** and **364** with the first rotary brush unit having a circular bristle assembly **366** positioned substantially vertically and in front of the second rotary brush unit **364** having a circular bristle assembly **368** positioned substantially horizontally and trailing the first brush unit **362**. Each of the rotary brush units **362** and **364** is supported by respective adjustment assemblies **370** and **372**, attached to respective support arms **374** and **376**, each of which is attached to a support platform **378**. Each of the rotary brush units **362** and **364** includes a separate and independent drive motor **380** and **382** to provide for driving of the bristles of each of the brush units at independently selected speeds and in independently selected directions.

[0198] The circular rotary brush units **362** and **364** of shoot and fruit thinner or removal device **360** are adapted for use on the interior of a Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellis **384** and are shown in operation adjacent a cordon **386** within the interior of the upper or U portion **388** of the trellis **384**.

[0199] With reference to **FIGS. 23, 24, 27, 28, and 33** of the drawings, in accordance with the present invention, one can replace, substitute or augment one or both circular rotary striker units or circular rotary brush units with one or more oval rotary striker units each having a plurality of striker fingers attached to a single chain or belt which provides for movement of the fingers around the unit.

[0200] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a shoot and fruit thinner generally designated **400** is shown to include a singular oval rotary striker unit **402** having a plurality of striker fingers **404** emanating circumferentially therefrom and having an oval front casing or support member **406**. The oval rotary striker unit **402** is supported in a substantially horizontal position at the lower end of a lower arm **408** which is attached to the lower end of an upper arm **410** which is attached to a platform **412** of the device **400**. The rotary striker unit **402** may be driven by a motor **414** and chain and sprocket arrangement leading from the motor down to the oval rotary striker unit **402** or from a separate and independent motor on the front end of a striker unit drive shaft **416**. It is preferred that the oval rotary striker units also include an oval rear housing or support member opposite housing **406**, a drive sprocket and a plurality of idler sprockets therebetween, a chain **418**, and a plurality of finger receiving sockets or bases **420** attached to the chain **418**. As with the circular rotary striker units, the number, spacing, and flexibility of the fingers or strikers, speed of operation, speed of movement of the unit along the vine, and the like can be selected as desired to provide the necessary removal or thinning of foliage, fruit, canes, shoots, and the like.

[0201] In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, each of the striker fingers **404** of the oval rotary striker unit **402** are short sections of hydraulic line **422** having metal threaded connection ends **424** and **426** with at least connection end **426** adapted to be threadably received into base **420**. In contrast to the circular rotary striker units, it is preferred to use single spaced fingers **404** in place of finger pairs.

[0202] With reference to **FIGS. 24 and 28** of the drawings, a shoot and fruit thinner embodiment generally designated **430** is shown to include first and second oval rotary striker units **432** and **434** and which is especially adapted for use with a California T-trellis **436**. Each of the oval rotary striker units **432** and **434** are supported by respective lower arms **438** and **440** and upper arms **442** and **444**, each attached to a support platform **446**. Each of the striker units **432** and **434** may be driven by a common hydraulic motor. **448** or by respective separate independent drive motors mounted adjacent to the lower end of each of support arms **438** and **440**. In accordance with a particular example of the present invention, and with respect to the California T-trellis of **FIG. 28**, the cordon is located approximately 42 inches above the vineyard floor, there is about 24 inches between the cordon and the horizontal cross bar, the cross bar spans about 48 inches, and the overall height of the T-trellis is about 64 inches. Also, in accordance with this example, each of the flexible strikers or fingers of the oval rotary strikers is about 9-12 inches in length and the short turning radius on the ends of the chain-driven oval rotary strikers adjacent the cordon is used for close cordon to top cross bar shoot and fruit removal to adjust shoot numbers.

[0203] **FIGS. 25-33** of the drawings depict schematic shoot and fruit thinner or removal device embodiments or arrangements and highlight the versatility of this equipment with respect to the use for different trellises or training systems and to accomplish different results. Further, **FIGS. 2-24** also highlight the versatility and adaptability of the shoot and fruit thinner embodiments of the present invention. In order to facilitate the operation of the fruit and shoot thinner devices and to provide for a selected removal, clearing, thinning, or pruning, each of the shoot and fruit thinners may include one or more meters or gauges which indicate the speed of rotation of, for example, each circular rotary striker, oval rotary striker, or brush unit and allow the tractor or other vehicle operator to adjust the speed of rotation accordingly, depending on the physiological condition of the vine in that area, amount of fruit, or the like.

[0204] Also, it is to be understood that the shoot and fruit thinner embodiments or arrangements of **FIGS. 2-33** of the drawings are adapted for use with the modified trellises of **FIGS. 76-81** of the drawings as well as the Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system of **FIGS. 67 and 68**.

[0205] **FIGS. 34-40 and 69** of the drawings depict improved leaf removal fan units in accordance with other embodiments of the present invention. More particularly, **FIGS. 34 and 35** of the drawings are directed to an improved leaf remover or fan and blade unit generally designated **500** and shown to include a single vertically and angularly adjustable blade and fan assembly **502** adapted for cleaning one side of a standard vertical, movable catch wire trellising system. Fan assembly **502** includes a fan blade **504**, a housing **506**, an intake connected to a conical cutting blade housing **508**, and a discharge **510** at the lower end of the housing **506**. A cutting blade **512** is located in the cutting blade housing **508** directly behind a plurality of horizontal bars or rods **514** which pass across the circular fan intake opening **516**. The bars or rods **514** are spaced a sufficient distance apart to allow leaves and small shoots to enter the cutting blade housing **508** and to be cut by the blade **512** or cut by being sheared between the rods **514** and the blade **512**. Fan blade **504** and cutting blade **512** are mounted on a

drive shaft **518** which is rotatably driven by a hydraulic motor **520** and supported by a pair of spaced shaft bearings **522**.

[0206] The fan assembly **502** of leaf remover or fan unit **500** is vertically supported by spaced vertical support members **524** which extend downwardly from a horizontal support member **526** which is attached to the horizontal mast member **96** via a ball hitch **528** and nuts and bolts **530**. The angle of the fan and blade assembly **502** is selected by adjusting the relative position of first and second angle support members **532** and **534** with the upper end of member **532** being connected to horizontal member **526** and the lower end of member **534** being pivotally connected to a bracket extending from fan housing **506**. Also, the lower end of vertical support members **524** are pivotally connected to a housing or plate supporting the fan housing **506**, shaft bearings **522**, and motor **520**. Furthermore, the vertical position of the fan assembly **502** can be quickly and easily altered by vertical extension and retraction of a hydraulic cylinder **536** of mast **98**. Also, the side to side position of the fan unit (the distance of the fan unit from the tractor **538**) can be adjusted by extending or contracting a cylinder located within or adjacent the horizontal member **96** of mast **98**.

[0207] With particular reference to **FIG. 35** of the drawings, fan assembly **502** of fan unit **500** may have an adjustable fan cover **540** added to the face thereof to selectively cover a portion of the fan intake opening **516** and thereby provide for leaf and shoot removal in only a selected region or area, for example, the bottom half of opening **516**. A threaded fastener or bolt **542** provides for adjustment of the location of the cover **540** relative to the opening **516**. Although the rods or bars **514** are shown as being cylindrical, it is to be understood that other cross-sections such as semi-circular, rectangular, or triangular may be used.

[0208] With reference to **FIGS. 36-38** of the drawings, a modified or improved dual fan leaf remover is generally designated **550** and shown to include leading and trailing fan units **552** and **554** adapted for use with a Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellising system. Each of the fan units **552** and **554** of the dual unit leaf remover **550** is similar to the fan assembly **502** of **FIGS. 34 and 35**. The leading and trailing fan units **552** and **554** are supported from a horizontal support member **556** which is attached to the horizontal mast member **96** by ball hitch **558** and nut and bolt and bracket assemblies **560** and **562**. Leading fan unit **552** includes spaced vertical support members **564** and **566** and angle adjust support members **568** and **570**. Upper angle adjust member **568** is pivotally attached to a horizontal member **572** which is attached to a horizontal cross member **574** which is attached to horizontal member **556** and supports the upper end of vertical support members **564** and **566**.

[0209] Leading fan unit **552** includes a fan blade **576**, a fan blade housing **578**, an intake operatively connected with a conical cutting blade housing **580**, and a bottom discharge **582**. Attached to the front surface of conical cutting blade housing **580** is a cowling or cover plate **584** having a bent or angled leading surface **586** which facilitates movement of the fan unit along the vine. Attached to cowling or cover plate **584** are a plurality of adjustable rods or bars **588** each having small and large sized portions **590** and **592** with the small portion **590** telescopically received within the large portion to allow adjustment of the length thereof. A cutting

blade **594** is located within the housing **580** just behind the adjustable bars **588** to provide not only a cutting of the leaves and small shoots by the blade **594** but also by being sheared between the blade **594** and the bars **588**. Cutting blade **594** and fan blade **576** are attached to a drive shaft **596** of hydraulic motor **598**.

[0210] Trailing fan unit **554** differs from leading fan unit **552** in that the trailing fan unit **554** is adapted to be swung up and out of the way of the trellis if necessary for egress into and exit out of the trellis or for angular adjustment with respect to the vine. Trailing fan unit **554** is supported by vertical support members **600** and **602** connected by an upper horizontal cross member **604**. Vertical support member **600** is attached to a pivotally supported member **606** which is operatively connected to a second pivoting support member **608** by a length adjustable turnbuckle or connector **610**. The second pivotal support member **608** is connected to the shaft of a hydraulic cylinder **612** which itself is supported by a horizontal member **614** extending forwardly from horizontal support member **556**. The hydraulic cylinder **612** is not shown in its entirety in FIG. 36 for the sake of clarity of other components. With this arrangement, retraction of the shaft of hydraulic cylinder **612** causes upward movement of the fan housing of fan unit **554** with complete retraction providing movement to the phantom line position shown in FIG. 38.

[0211] Further, trailing fan unit **554** includes a fan blade **616**, a fan housing **618**, a fan housing intake operatively connected to a conical cutting blade housing **620**, an upper discharge channel **622**, and an upper discharge outlet **624**. A cutting blade **626** is located in cutting blade housing **620** just behind a cover plate or cowling **628** having an inlet or opening **630**. Opening **630** like the intake opening in leading fan unit **552** is covered by a plurality of adjustable rods or bars **588**, each having large diameter and small diameter portions **592** and **590**. Trailing fan unit cover **628** has a forward bent edge **632** which facilitates movement of the fan unit along the vine. Cutting blade **626** and fan blade **616** are connected to a drive shaft of a drive motor **634**.

[0212] The cutting opening **630** of trailing fan unit **554** subtends an arc of over 90° but less than 180° and provides for leaf and small shoot removal over only a small section of the fan housing. In contrast, the cutting opening of leading fan unit **552** is circular and similar to the opening **516** of the fan unit **500** of FIGS. 34 and 35. In accordance with one example, the leading fan unit **552** has a cutting blade **594** with a length of about 16 inches while trailing fan unit **554** has a cutting blade **626** with a length of 28 inches. Hence, the total effective area of the intake of each of the fan units **552** and **554** is substantially the same even though the opening **630** is not circular.

[0213] With reference to FIGS. 38 and 38A-38D, each of the adjustable bars or rods **588** has depending studs **636** and **638** extending therefrom which pass through stud receiving openings **640** and are adapted to receive a locknut **642** for securement in a selected position. The spacing between the rods or bars **588** and the angle of attack of the rods with respect to the vine can be adjusted or varied upon the conditions to provide for more or less leaf and small shoot removal and also to facilitate the guiding of the leaves and shoots to the inlet or cutting openings of the fan units.

[0214] With respect to FIGS. 38, 38A, and 38B of the drawings, the rods or bars **588** have a substantially rectan-

gular cross-section with the large portion **592** telescopically receiving at least a portion of the small end **590** therein with each of the large and small portions having a flat base which provides for a shearing action between the cutting blades **594** and **626** and the lower surface of each of the bars or rods **588**.

[0215] With respect to FIGS. 38C and 38D of the drawings, it is contemplated that the rods **588** may have other cross-sections than rectangular. For example, the rods may have a semi-circular cross-section such as rods **644** of FIG. 38C or a triangular cross-section such as rods **646** of FIG. 38D. Each of the rods **644** and **646** have a flat base which provides for shearing action between the base of the rod and the cutting blades **594** and **626**.

[0216] With respect to FIG. 37 of the drawings, horizontal mast member **96** is shown to have an external hydraulic cylinder **648** which provides for extension and retraction of a large rectangular section relative to a smaller rectangular section of horizontal member **96**. Hence, one can adjust the horizontal position of the leading and trailing fan units relative to the tractor by extending or retracting cylinder **648**. Further one can adjust the vertical position of the leading and trailing fan units with respect to the vine by adjusting the vertical support members and/or the hydraulic cylinder **536**.

[0217] FIGS. 39 and 40 of the drawings are directed to a modified leaf remover or fan and blade unit **650** adapted for use with a high bilateral cordon trellis system and including a cane lifter **652** for lifting the canes prior to leaf and small shoot removal. The leaf remover or unit **650** is identical in construction to the leaf remover or unit **500** of FIG. 34 with the exception of the addition of the cane lifter **652** including an arcuate upper pipe or tube **654**, a lower horizontal pipe or tube **656**, an intermediate plate or skin **658**, and a plurality of attachment brackets **660**, **662**, and **664** which provide for attachment of the cane lifter **652** to the cover or front plate **666** of the fan unit.

[0218] Like fan unit **500** of FIG. 34, leaf remover or unit **650** of FIGS. 39 and 40 includes a cutting blade **668**, a fan blade **670**, a plurality of cross rods or bars **672**, vertical support members **674** and **676**, angle adjust members **678** and **680**, a horizontal support member **682**, a ball hitch **684**, bolt nut and bracket assembly **686**, and a motor **688**.

[0219] As shown in FIG. 41 of the drawings, a single trellis shoot positioner such as a single curtain or bilateral cordon shoot positioner (Slawson-Meade) is generally designated by the reference numeral **670** and shown to include a plurality of selectively positioned motor driven brush units **672-682** supported from a horizontal member **684** extending from a vertical member **686** of a mast **688** attached to the front of a tractor **690**. Such a single trellis shoot positioner is used to mechanically shoot position the vines to place the canes in proper position for the winter mechanical pruning operation. Shoot positioning is an effective method of improving fruit quality and of exposing the lower node to sunlight to make the basal nodes more productive than under shady conditions.

[0220] Shoot positioning has proven particularly effective with large vigorous vines on GDC which have a drooping-shoot growth habit. Also, as soon as the tendrils touch the wire or another cane, they fasten very quickly. Therefore,

vines are usually first shoot position just before bloom. Shoot positioning may require a second pass with the mechanical shoot positioner.

[0221] For the GDC system, all vigorous shoots growing between the two cordon wires must be pulled or brushed down in order to maintain two separate foliage canopies. This can be accomplished with the Oldridge shoot positioner of FIGS. 42, 42A, 43, and 43A and middle breaker of FIGS. 48 and 49. With particular reference to FIG. 42 of the drawings, a grape vine comber and shoot positioner adapted for use with a divided canopy is generally designated by the reference numeral 700 and is shown and described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618 issued to Tommy L. Oldridge on Apr. 7, 1992 and hereby incorporated by reference. The grapevine comber or combing unit 700 is operatively attached to a mast 702 on the front of a tractor 704 and is adapted for use with a divided canopy vine system including a series of upright members 706 with cross-member 708 in a "T" or "Y" configuration. Vine trunks 710 extend vertically past a central wire to roof portions 712 which extend out to a cordon supported by a cordon wire near the extremity of cross-member 708. Extending downwardly from the cordons are fruiting canes 714.

[0222] The grapevine combing unit and shoot positioner 700 is releasably mounted to a horizontal member 716 which is attached to the top of a vertical mast member 718 of mast 702. Comber unit 700 includes a horizontal support member 720 releasably attached to horizontal mast member 716 by a ball hitch 722 and a bracket assembly 724. The comber unit 700 includes a U-shaped underslung frame 726 mounted to horizontal member 720 so that the vine canes 714 can hang down within the U-shaped frame 726. A plurality of brushes 728, 730, 732, and 734 are supported on the tractor side of an upright 736 of frame 726 and are operated against a plurality of brushes 738 mounted on a vine side upright 740 to comb the canes 714 hanging downwardly from the cordon and cordon wire. Brush 734 is a primary brush which grooms the roof portion 712 of the vine. However, primary brush 734 cannot effectively accomplish its purpose without a counterforce being exerted from the underside of the roof portion 24 by a pivoting counterforce brush assembly 742 including an elongate brush 744 which is urged upwardly against the lower surface of the roof portion of the canopy. As described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,618, the brush 744 remains free to rotate downwardly about a spindle in response to contact of the brush with the canopy, cross-members 708, or other immovable objects.

[0223] In accordance with a particular example, the U-shaped frame 726 and in particular the tractor side upright 736 is attached to vertical support members 746 and 748 received in respective mounting bracket 750 attached to horizontal support member 720. Adjustment of the vertical support members 746 and 748 in their respect bracket 750 provides for raising and lowering of the brushes with respect to the divided canopy system and vines. Further, the vertical position of the frame and brushes can be adjusted by raising and lowering the vertical member 718 of mast 702 by, for example, extending or contracting a hydraulic cylinder located within vertical member 718. Likewise, the comber unit 700 can be adjusted horizontally with respect to the tractor 704 by moving horizontal mast member 716 by, for example, extending or contracting the hydraulic cylinder located within mast member 716.

[0224] Like the Oldridge vine comber 700 of FIG. 42, the vine comber and shoot positioner 760 of FIG. 42A is adapted to shoot position and vine comb both halves of a GDC system and incorporates both right and left vine combers or shoot positioner units 762 and 764 suspended from a power driven harvester chassis or modified high clearance type 4-wheeled tractor 766. Each of the combers or shoot positioning units 760 and 762 is of substantially identical construction to the comber 700 of FIG. 42 except that the comber unit 762 is a mirror image of the unit 764. The comber or shoot positioner 760 of FIG. 42A is adapted to treat both halves of the GDC or divided canopy system with a single pass of the machine along the row or vines. The comber 700 of FIG. 42 is adapted to treat one-half of the GDC system and as such requires two passes, one down each side of the GDC, or divided canopy system, to treat the entire row.

[0225] The comber units 762 and 764 of machine 760 each include a plurality of outer brushes 768 and 770, inner brushes 772 and 774, and pivoting counterforce brush assemblies 776 and 778. The inner brushes and pivoting counterforce brush assemblies 772 and 776 of unit 762, and 774 and 778 of unit 764 are supported on respective vertical members 780 and 782 which extend from respective horizontal members 784 and 786 which are received in brackets or channels 788 and 790. The brackets 788 and 790 are adjustably mounted to respective vertical support members 792 and 794 which allow for vertical adjustment of the inner brushes and counterforce brushes relative to the GDC system and vines.

[0226] Further, the outer brushes 768 and 770 of units 762 and 764 are supported on respective vertical support members 796, 798, 800, and 802 which are received in respective brackets 804 and 806 attached to horizontal support members 808 and 810. Hence, the position of the outer brushes 768 and 770 can be adjusted by adjusting the position of the vertical support members in their respective brackets.

[0227] Simultaneous vine combing, shoot positioning, and pruning is accomplished using the comber, (positioner), pruner, and trimmer or positioning and pruning unit 820 of FIG. 43. The unit 820 is identical in construction to the comber and positioner unit 700 of FIG. 42 with the exception of the addition of first and second horizontal sickles or cutter bars 822 and 824. The comber and pruner 820 includes a plurality of outer brushes 826, inner brushes 828, and counterforce brush 830. First or lower horizontal sickle or cutter 822 is mounted atop a vertical support member 832 received in a bracket 834 attached to horizontal frame member 836. Lower sickle 822 is mounted near the front of the unit 820 and in front of at least the lower exterior brushes 826 to cut off and prune or trim any lower ends of canes or shoots extending below sickle 822 and to facilitate the movement of the unit along the vine without having canes wrap around the lower frame members.

[0228] Lower sickle 822 includes a lower fixed sickle blade 840, an upper movable sickle blade 842, a support plate 844, a motor support plate 846, a counterweighted drive disk 848, a drive rod 850, and a drive bracket 852 attached to upper blade 842. A motor, for example, a hydraulic motor, is attached to the rear surface of motor plate 846 and in position to drive disk 848.

[0229] Upper sickle 824 of unit 820 is located above lower sickle 822 and behind brushes 826, 828, and 830 in a

position to prune? cut, or trim depending vine sections **854** of vines which have been positioned, combed, and the like by the brushes **826**, **828**, and **830**. Upper sickle **824** is identical in construction to lower sickle **822** and is supported from a vertical support member **856** received in a bracket attached to a horizontal support member **858**. The position of each of the upper and lower sickles **824** and **822** can be adjusted by adjusting the relative positions of their support members **856** and **832**.

[0230] With reference to **FIG. 43A** of the drawings, a vine comber, shoot positioner, pruner and trimmer machine, or device generally designated **860** includes right and left comber, positioner, pruner, and trimmer units **862** and **864** extending downwardly from a modified high clearance 4-wheeled tractor or harvester chassis **866**. The units **862** and **864** are identical in construction to the comber and pruner **820** of **FIG. 43** except that the unit **862** is a mirror image of the unit **864** and the frame members and vertical support members are similar to those of the comber machine **760** of **FIG. 42A**. Like the comber and pruner unit **820** of **FIG. 43**, each of the comber and pruner units **862** and **864** of the machine **860** include outer brushes **868** and **870**, inner brushes **872** and **874**, counterforce brushes **876** and **878**, first lower forward horizontal sickles **880** and **882**, and second upper rear horizontal sickles **884** and **886**.

[0231] The comber and pruner unit **820** of **FIG. 43** is adapted to treat one-half of a GDC or other divided canopy trellising system while the comber and pruner machine **860** of **FIG. 43A** is adapted to treat both halves of a GDC or other divided canopy system simultaneously and with a single pass down along a row or vine.

[0232] The combing, shoot positioning, pruning, and trimming apparatus of **FIGS. 42, 42A, 43, and 43A** of the drawings, are particularly suited for use with GDC and other divided canopy trellises and training systems, especially those with downward or drooping growth and fruiting zones.

[0233] As shown in **FIGS. 44-47**, a single curtain vine cane pruner is generally designated **900** and is identical to that shown and described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444, issued to Tommy L. Oldridge on Aug. 13, 1996 and hereby incorporated by reference. More particularly, **FIGS. 44-47** each relate respectively to **FIGS. 2, 4, 6, and 8** of U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444. As described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,444, the vine cane pruner **900** includes a main support structure or mast **902**, a suspension carriage **904**, vertical cane pruners **906** and **908**, and horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912**. As shown, the machine **900** is mounted on the mast **902** which is attached to the front of a tractor and has a horizontal member **914** which extends laterally to the tractor and over the single curtain system. The suspension carriage **904** supports each of the vertical cane pruners **906** and **908** on opposite sides of and on the front end of the carriage and supports each of the horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912** on opposite sides of the carriage and rearwardly of the vertical cane pruners. Thus, as the vehicle travels along the single curtain trellis system, the trellis and vine first pass between the vertical cane pruners **906** and **908** and then between the horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912**.

[0234] Each of the vertical cane pruners **906** and **908** include a housing **920**, a substantially planar reciprocating hedger, sickle, or cutter **922** mounted on the housing with cutting teeth **924** extending forwardly from a cane inlet end

926 to a cane outlet end **928**. A cutter drive motor **930** is connected to a suitable linkage **932** for driving the sliding tooth plate of the hedger **922** in relation to the fixed tooth plate.

[0235] Further, each of the vertical cane pruners **906** and **908** include a vertical cane gathering device **934** including a plurality of prongs **936** attached to fittings **938** which are themselves attached to a chain **940**. The chain **940** is driven by a drive sprocket **942** operatively attached to a drive motor **944**. In accordance with one example, prongs **936** are made of lengths of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch rubber hose and are of sufficient length to extend approximately 4 to 12 inches beyond the cutter **922**. The chain or spine **940** is driven in a counterclockwise direction so as to move the prongs from the inlet end **926** to the outlet end **928** of hedger **922**. Also, each of the vertical cane pruners **906** and **908** include a horizontal disk or bumper **946**.

[0236] With respect to **FIGS. 45 and 47** of the drawings, each of the horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912** of the pruning machine **900** includes a housing **950** mounted on an arm **952**. Each horizontal cane pruner includes a substantially planar reciprocating hedger, pruner, sickle, or cutter **954** mounted on housing **950** with cutting teeth **956** facing substantially inwardly in relation to the pruning machine. A cutter drive motor **958** is connected by a suitable linkage **960** for driving one or both of the sliding tooth plates of the hedger **954**.

[0237] Further, each of the horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912** includes a cane grabber or feeder **962** having a plurality of prongs **964** extending from fittings **966** attached to a chain **968** driven by a drive sprocket **970** operatively attached to a motor **972**. The chain **968** of horizontal cane pruner **910** is driven clockwise while the chain **968** of horizontal cane pruner **912** is driven counterclockwise so that the prongs **964** of each cane grabber **962** travel downwardly on the vine side of the respective housings **950**. Lastly, each of the horizontal cane pruners **910** and **912** include a horizontal disk or bumper **974** which are adapted to come into contact with obstacles and cause the horizontal cane pruners to rotate on their pivot points to clear the obstacles and then return under spring bias to the operating position.

[0238] As shown in **FIGS. 48 and 49** of the drawings and in accordance with another aspect of the present invention, an Oldridge center breaker generally designated **980** is shown to include a plurality of vertically depending breaker bars or rods **982, 984, 986, and 988** each having an elongate downwardly extending portion and a forwardly bent portion at the lower end thereof. The breaker bars **982-988** are adapted for clearing out the center of the top of a GDC, Y, U, or other double curtain trellising system in order to open up the center, prepare the vine for shoot positioning and pruning, facilitate harvesting, and the like. The breaker bars **982-988** are adapted to be dragged along the row to reposition movable items such as canes, shoots, foliage, and the like, to partially remove, break, or clear away canes, foliage, shoots, and the like, while tripping rearwardly and passing over immovable objects such as trellises, vine trunks, catch wire stakes, wires, and the like. Further, the breaker bars **982-988** open up the center and break or position shoots to allow air and light into the center of the divided canopy system.

[0239] Also in accordance with the present invention, the center breaker **980** can be used in combination with, for example, spraying equipment to accomplish a plurality of activities while driving the tractor down along the row. Also, although four breaker bars are shown in use in **FIGS. 48 and 49**, it is to be understood that one to four breaker bars may be utilized simply by removing or adding breaker bars to the device. Also, additional breaker bars could be added for clearing, positioning, and breaking out the center on a larger trellising system.

[0240] In accordance with the embodiment shown in **FIGS. 48 and 49** of the drawings, each of the breaker bars **982-988** is supported in a releasable bracket **990** having one or more set screws **992** which hold the breaker bar **982** in position relative to the bracket. Depending on the vine being treated, the breaker bar can be raised or lowered simply by loosening the set screws **992**, positioning the bar to the selected position, and tightening the set screws. Each of the brackets **990** is supported on an arcuate lever **994** which is pivotally attached to a support bracket **996** by a bolt **998**. Thus, each of the breaker bars **982** pivots in an arc about the pivot point **998**. Attached near the base of each of the levers **994** is one end of a coil spring **1000** having the other end thereof fixed to the lower end of a vertical support member **1002**.

[0241] Each of the brackets **996** and support members **1002** are connected to a rearwardly extending horizontal support member **1004**. Each of the support members **1004** is received in an adjustment bracket **1006** which allows for adjustment in the position of the support relative to a cross member **1008**. The cross member **1008** is attached to a forwardly extending support assembly **1010** adapted to be attached to a horizontal member **1012** of a mast **1014** on a tractor **1016** via a ball hitch **1018** and nut and bracket assemblies **1020**.

[0242] With particular reference to **FIGS. 48 and 49** of the drawings, breaker bars **982, 984, 986, and 988** of breaker device **980** are adapted to trip rearwardly upon contact with solid structures such as trellis support arms **1022 and 1024** and vine trunks **1026**. The amount of center breaking, shoot positioning, shoot breaking, foliage removal, and the like by device **980** can be adjusted or controlled by selecting the length of the breaker bars, the strength of the trip springs **1000**, the number and rigidity of breaker bars, the ground speed of the tractor, and the like. In accordance with a particular example, each of the breaker bars **982-988** is made of a length of 2-6 ft., preferably 4 ft., of steel or aluminum pipe, tubing, rod, or the like having an outer diameter of from ½ inch to 4 inches, preferably 1-2 inches.

[0243] As shown in **FIGS. 50-52** of the drawings, a modified Orton slapper generally designated **1030** is adapted for use with GDC and other divided canopy trellising systems and is designed to clean out the center of the trellis removing shoots, foliage, fruit, and the like from the interior of the trellis to open up the center of the trellis to light, air, and the like. The modified slapper **1030** includes a support frame **1032** having a support platform **1034** adapted to be releasably attached to a horizontal member **1036** of a mast **1038** attached to a tractor **1040** via a ball hitch **1042** and bolt and bracket assemblies. The slapper support frame **1032** includes right and left side assemblies **1044 and 1046** which serve as a yoke for supporting a rotary slapper unit **1048** on

a drive shaft **1050** extending from a motor **1052** attached to a motor support plate **1054** attached to left side frame assembly **1046**. The drive shaft **1050** is supported by respective shaft journal bearings **1056 and 1058**. Each of the shaft journals **1056 and 1058** is attached to a respective side assembly **1046 and 1044**.

[0244] The rotary slapper unit **1048** of modified slapper **1030** includes large right and left circular support plates **1060 and 1062** each attached to shaft **1050** to rotate therewith and support therebetween a plurality of cross members **1064** which serve as not only structural support members between the plates **1060 and 1062** but also as attachment elements for extended striker straps or striker pairs **1066 and 1068**. Each of the striker straps or striker pairs **1066 and 1068** is releasably attached to a respective cross member **1064** by a bolt assembly **1070**. The number and location of the striker straps or striker pairs **1066 and 1068** is selected to provide the desired clearing and removal of foliage, shoots, and the like from the center of the trellis. Successful operation of this unit is influenced by the size of the trellis, the condition of the vine, the ground speed of the tractor, and the like.

[0245] It is preferred to form each of the striker straps or striker pairs **1066 and 1068** of a flexible yet sturdy material such as leather or rubber, pieces having a width of one to four inches, preferably two inches, a thickness of at least ¼ inch, preferably ½ inch, and a length of from 1 to 3 feet, preferably 18 to 24 inches. In accordance with one example of the present invention, each of the slapper or striker straps is about 2 inches in width by 18 inches in length and formed of rubber belting material, the modified slapper has 4 to 6 slappers or slapper pairs, the circular support plates have a diameter of about 20 inches, the circular plates are supported by 6 cross members, and the overall width and length of the modified slapper are 32 inches by about 56 inches.

[0246] As shown in **FIGS. 50-51** of the drawings, there are six striker pairs **1066 and 1068** attached to support members **1064** in sets of two pairs at an angular spacing of 120° between sets. It is to be understood that singular striker straps **1066 or 1068** may be attached in such an arrangement, that additional sets of strikers or striker pairs may be added, or that fewer sets of strikers or striker pairs may be used to accomplish the desired clearing and cleaning out of the center or interior of the trellis. **FIGS. 51 and 52** show the modified slapper **1030** in use with a GDC and Lyre or "U" trellis, respectively.

[0247] With reference to **FIG. 50** of the drawings, in accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a speed gauge **1076** may be added to the modified slapper **1030** to provide the tractor operator with an indication of the speed of rotation of the rotary unit **1048** so that a desired removal can be reproduced from row to row by selecting a speed of rotation of the rotary slapper unit **1048**, selection and arrangement of striker slapper or striker pairs, ground speed of tractor, and the like.

[0248] As shown in **FIG. 53** of the drawings, a bow, bow-head, or Quad-rod fruit thinner is generally designated **1080** and adapted for use with a single curtain system. The bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner **1080** is attached to a horizontal member **1082** of a mast **1084** attached to a tractor **1086**. The bow or Quad-rod fruit thinner includes right and left bow-rod support and drive assemblies extending down-

wardly from a horizontal support member **1092**. Each of the side assemblies **1088** and **1090** supports four bow-rods **1094** with the bow-rods of the left side assembly offset slightly lower than the bow-rods of the right side assembly. The bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner includes a drive motor **1096** which drives an output shaft **1098** which provides reciprocatory drive to the bow-rods of the right side assembly via a rotary to reciprocating converter **1100**. Drive is transferred from shaft **1098** to a second shaft **1104** via a drive belt **1102** and from second shaft **1104** to a rotary to reciprocatory converter **1106** to drive the bow-rods of the left side assembly.

[**0249**] Bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner **1080** may include a speed gauge **1108** which provides an indication to the tractor operator of the speed of rotation of the shafts **1098** and **1104** and the speed of reciprocation or operation of the bow-rods **1094**. One can adjust the amount of fruit thinning by adjusting the speed of operation of the bow-rods, the number of bow-rods, the angle or inclination of the bow-rods, the rigidity of the bow-rods, the ground speed of the tractor, and the like.

[**0250**] With reference to **FIGS. 54 and 55** of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified bow, bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner is generally designated **1120** and can be used for use with the modified "U" of **FIG. 80** or adapted for use with GDC or other divided canopy trellising systems. Bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner **1120** is similar in construction to the bow-head or Quad-rod fruit thinner **1080** of **FIG. 53** in that it is supported from a horizontal member **1122** of a mast **1124** attached to the front of a tractor **1126**. Further, the bow-rod fruit thinner **1120** includes right and left bow-rod assemblies **1128** and **1130** depending from a horizontal support member **1132**, a motor **1134**, first and second drive shafts **1138**, a drive belt **1140**, rotary to reciprocatory converters **1142** and **1144**, and a speed gauge **1146**.

[**0251**] The bow-rod fruit thinner **1120** of **FIGS. 54 and 55** differs from the bow-rod fruit thinner **1080** of **FIG. 53** in that different sized bow-rods are arranged in an alternating sequence of small and large bow-rods **1148** and **1150** with the bow-rods of the left assembly **1130** slightly offset downwardly from the bow-rods of the right assembly **1128**. With particular reference to **FIG. 55** of the drawings, each of the short bow-rods **1148** is angled inwardly with respect to the adjacent longer bow-rod **1150**. Further, it is to be understood that the bow-rods may be angled downwardly, for example, from 5-30° with respect to horizontal depending on the cultivar, trellis, and fruit load. With respect to a particular example of the present invention, each of the bow-rods **1150** is about 44 inches in overall length and made from a flexible beater rod material about 1 inch in diameter, each of the short bow-rods **1148** is about 24-32 inches in overall length and formed of the same flexible beater rod material, also the gap between the bow-rods of the left assembly and the right assembly is about 4 or more inches to prevent excessive damage to the vine, trellis, and the like.

[**0252**] The bow-rod fruit thinner **1120** is adapted for use with a GDC or other divided canopy trellising system. In particular, selected bow-rods may be removed to avoid contact with a cordon. Also, the thinner **1120** may be adapted for use with GDC by removing the right or left assembly **1128** and **1130** and/or tilting one or both of the right or left

assembly to a 10-20° angle with respect to vertical. In accordance with one example, the bow-head or bow-rod fruit thinner **1120** is adapted for use with a GDC trellising system by removing the right assembly **1128** altogether and tilting the left assembly **1130** at a 10-20° angle with respect to vertical. Alternatively, both the right and left assemblies may be angled away from one another and mounted under a harvester chassis to simultaneously treat both sides of a GDC or other divided canopy system having flexible or pivoting support arm.

[**0253**] With reference to **FIG. 56** of the drawings, a vertical and horizontal sickle or hedger unit **1160** is shown to include first and second vertical sickles or cutter bars **1162** and **1164** and a trailing horizontal sickle or cutter bar **1166** adapted for use with a single curtain system. The first and second vertical sickles or hedgers **1162** and **1164** extend from respective support brackets **1168** and **1170** attached to a horizontal support member **1172** releasably attached to a horizontal member **1174** of a mast **1176** on a tractor **1178** by a ball hitch **1180** and bolt and bracket assemblies **1182**.

[**0254**] Horizontal sickle **1166** is attached to a vertical support member **1184** received in a collar or bracket **1186** attached to a horizontal member **1188** received in a collar or bracket **1190** attached to horizontal support member **1172**. The support members **1184** and **1188** and brackets **1186** and **1190** allow for adjustment of the location of the horizontal sickle relative to the vertical sickles **1162** and **1164** with respect to not only the height of the horizontal sickle **1166** but also the distance that the horizontal sickle trails the vertical sickles **1162** and **1164**. Each of the sickles or hedgers **1162**, **1164**, and **1166** includes a drive motor **1192**, a drive disk **1194**, a drive rod **1196**, a drive bracket **1198** attached to a movable set of teeth **2000** which translate relative to a fixed set of teeth **2002** to provide for cutting, pruning, trimming, hedging, and the like.

[**0255**] As shown in **FIG. 57** of the drawings, a top and side pruner generally designated **2010** is similar in construction to the top and side pruner **1160** of **FIG. 56** except that the vertical sickles have been shortened and the horizontal sickle has been raised to adapt the top and side pruner **2010** for GDC or other divided canopy systems. More particularly, top and side pruner **2010** includes first and second vertical sickles or hedgers **2012** and **2014** and a trailing horizontal sickle or hedger **2016**. Vertical sickles **2012** and **2014** and trailing horizontal sickle **2016** can be tilted relative to vertical to accommodate a Y or GDC trellis by either tilting mast **2018** (see **FIG. 74**) or by angling the attachment of each of the sickles to support member **2020**. The short second vertical sickle or hedger **2014** is adapted to be inserted down inside a Lyre or "U" trellis and prune or trim foliage, shoots, and the like from the interior of the trellis. The first vertical sickle **2012** is adapted to prune or trim on the outside of the trellis. The trailing horizontal sickle **2016** is adapted to trim above the trellis.

[**0256**] As shown in **FIG. 58** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a single vertical sickle pruner **2030** includes a vertical sickle or hedger **2032** pivotally attached to a support bracket **2034** by a bolt **2036**. Attached to bracket **2034** is a stop **2038** which limits forward travel of the sickle **2032**. One end of a spring **2040** is attached to sickle **2032** while the other end is attached to a forwardly extending support member **2042**.

The spring **2040** allows the sickle **2032** to trip rearwardly should the sickle contact an immovable or uncuttable object. Support member **2042** is attached to a horizontal support member **2044** which is releasably attached to a horizontal member **2046** of a mast **2048**. Single vertical sickle pruner **2030** is adapted for summer pruning of, for example, a single curtain system.

[0257] With reference to **FIGS. 59 and 60** of the drawings, an angularly adjustable summer cane pruner is generally designated **2050** and shown attached to the end of a horizontal member **2052** of a mast attached to a tractor. The pruner **2050** includes a sickle or hedger **2054** pivotally attached to a cantilever member **2056** by a bolt **2058**. The cantilever member **2056** is attached to a collar **2060** which is received on a support member **2062** which is attached to a support plate **2064** which is releasably attached to mast member **2052** by a ball hitch **2066** and nut and bracket assemblies **2068**. Sickle **2054** is biased downwardly to the position shown in **FIG. 59** by a spring **2070** having one end attached to a motor support plate **2072** and the other end attached to a flange extending from a horizontal valve support plate **2074** attached to collar **2060**. The sickle **2054** is raised to a horizontal position by retraction of a shaft **2076** of a hydraulic cylinder **3078** having the shaft pivotally attached to motor support plate **2072** by a bolt **2080**. The opposite end of hydraulic cylinder **2078** is attached to an almost vertical support member **2082** by a pivot pin **2084**. Hydraulic cylinder **2078** is controlled by a hydraulic cylinder control valve **2086** attached to valve support plate **2074**. The hydraulic cylinder support plate **2082** is fixed to cantilever member **2056**.

[0258] A vertical valve support plate **2088** is attached to collar **2060** and supports a hydraulic motor speed control valve **2090** having a control lever **2092** which allows the operator to control the speed of sickle motor **2094**. Sickle **2054** also includes a drive disk **2096**, a drive rod **2098**, a drive bracket **2100**, a movable rack or set of cutting teeth **2102**, and a fixed rack or set of cutting teeth **2104**. Hydraulic lines **2106** and **2108** are operatively connected to the hydraulic system of the tractor or an auxiliary hydraulic system attached to the tractor.

[0259] Hydraulic cylinder control valve **2086** receives electronic signals from, for example, a control panel located adjacent to the tractor operator to raise and lower the sickle **2054** by extending and contracting cylinder **2078**. One can easily maneuver the sickle **2054** over the side of a Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellis by raising the sickle **2054** to the horizontal position shown in **FIG. 60**, extending the horizontal member **2052** of the mast to locate the sickle **2054** inward of the side **2110** of a modified "U" trellis **2112**, and then lowering the sickle **2054** to the vertical position shown in **FIG. 59** by extending hydraulic cylinder **2078**. One can adjust the amount of pruning or trimming by adjusting the location of the sickle relative to the vine, adjusting the speed of the motor **2094**, selecting the ground speed of the tractor or other machinery, and the like.

[0260] As shown in **FIG. 61** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified single horizontal rotary cutter or pruner adapted for use in, for example, the dormant pruning of the canes adjacent to the cordon of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid vines is generally designated **2120** and

shown to include a rotary cut head **2122** attached to the end of a horizontal support member **2124** pivotally attached to a base **2126** of a vertical support member **2128**. The vertical support member is adjustably received in a bracket or collar **2130** attached to one end of a horizontal support member **2132** which itself is received in an adjustable support bracket or collar **2134** attached to a support platform **2136**. The support platform **2136** is releasably attached to a horizontal member **2138** of mast **2140** on tractor on **2142** by a ball hitch **2144** and bolts **2146** (**FIGS. 62 and 63**).

[0261] Horizontal support member **2124** pivots about a vertical axis with forward movement of support member **2124** limited by a vertical stop **2148** extending downwardly from base **2126**. Further, a spring **2150** extends from support member **2124** to a forwardly extending anchor member **2152** attached to base **2126** to draw support member **2124** and rotary cut head **2122** forwardly while allowing the rotary head and support member **2124** to pivot or trip rearwardly when the rotary head contacts an immovable or uncuttable object such as a trellis or post.

[0262] Rotary cut head **2122** of horizontal rotary cutter or pruner **2120** includes a free wheeling or idling deflector assembly **2154** and a housing **2156**, a cutting blade having radial cutting teeth extending from a cutting opening in the housing, and a hydraulic motor **2160** for rotating the cutting blade and teeth relative to the housing. The motor **2160** is attached to housing **2156** which is attached to support member **2124**. The deflector assembly **2154** includes a horizontal circular plate or disk **2162** and a plurality of deflecting veins or vertical flanges **2164** welded to the disk **2162**. The disk **2162** is rotatably journaled on a shaft **2166** with disk **2162** free to rotate in either direction upon contact of one or more of the deflecting veins **2164** with an immovable object or an object larger than the space between the veins, such as the trunk of a vine. The deflector assembly **2154**, and in particular the deflecting veins **2164**, are shaped and spaced to prevent the contact of the cutting teeth **2158** with an immovable object such as a trellis or post and to prevent objects larger than, for example, 1 or 2 inches in diameter, preferably anything larger than 1½ inches in diameter, from being cut or pruned. Since the entire rotary cutting head **2122** can trip rearwardly and the deflector assembly **2154** is free to rotate about shaft **2156**, the rotary cut head **2122** is adapted to prune, trim, or cut smaller items such as shoots or canes without damaging trellises, vine trunks, or the like.

[0263] The horizontal rotary cutter or pruner **2120** of **FIG. 61** is especially adapted for the horizontal cutting and pruning of substantially vertically oriented canes or shoots, for example, in the dormant pruning of *Vitis vinifera* or French-American hybrid grape vines (seasonal charts of **FIGS. 94-97**). The horizontal rotary cutter **2120** is highly versatile in that the vertical height can be adjusted over a wide range by adjusting the position of vertical support member **2128** relative to support bracket **2130**, and the distance of the rotary cut head **2122** from the tractor can be adjusted by adjusting horizontal support member **2132** relative to bracket **2134**. The cutter **2120** can be used with different trellises or training systems including California T-trellis, standard vertical moveable catch wire, GDC, Lyre, "U", Smart-Dyson ballerina, Scott-Henry, or the like. Typically the canes are cut or pruned by the rotary cutting teeth

2158 of rotary cut head **2122** within a few inches of a substantially horizontal cordon.

[0264] Although the cutting teeth of blade **2158** of rotary cut head **2122** are shown as large triangular cutting teeth, it is contemplated that in accordance with the present invention any circular cutting blade such as a circular saw cutting blade for cutting wood may be used as the rotary cutting blade.

[0265] In accordance with a particular example, the rotary cutting blade **2158** is a conventional circular saw blade adapted for cutting wood and having an outer diameter from about 10-36 inches.

[0266] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, and as shown in **FIGS. 62 and 63** of the drawings, a dual unit horizontal rotary cutter or pruner generally designated **2170** is substantially identical in construction to the single horizontal rotary cutter **2120** of **FIG. 61** except that a second trailing horizontal rotary cutter **2172** has been added. Items having identical construction to that shown in **FIG. 61** have the same reference numeral. The second and trailing rotary cutter **2172** is similar in construction to the cutter **2120** except that the support arm and motor are located above the rotary cut head to prevent entanglement or obstruction of the support arm and motor of the second trailing cutter **2172** with, for example, the interior of a Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellis.

[0267] The dual unit horizontal rotary cutter or pruner **2170** includes a first or leading rotary cutter **2122** and a second or trailing rotary cutter **2172**. The rotary cutters **2122** and **2172** are designed and adapted to simultaneously prune or cut substantially vertically oriented canes, shoots, or the like extending from a cordon. The rotary cutters **2122** and **2172** can be used to simultaneously prune, for example, a *Vitis vinifera* or French-American hybrid vine trained on a standard vertical catch wire, Lyre, "U", or modified "U" trellis or trellising system. In contrast, the single rotary cutter **2122** of the single horizontal rotary cutter **2120** of **FIG. 61** is adapted to prune or trim only one side or the exterior of a trellis, for example, a GDC or other divided canopy trellis.

[0268] The trailing rotary cutter **2172** has a cut head **2173** and is operatively attached to a bracket **2174** extending from a horizontal support member **2176** pivotally attached to a base **2178** of a vertical support member **2180** adjustably received in a bracket or collar **2182** attached to a second collar or bracket **2184** adjustably received on horizontal support member **2132**.

[0269] Rotary cut head **2173** includes a free-wheeling or idling deflector assembly **2186** having a plurality of veins or vertical deflector members **2188** fixed to a rotating disk **2190**. Further, rotary cut head **2173** includes a cutting blade **2192** having cutting teeth extending from an opening in a housing **2194**. Cutting blade **2192** rotates within housing **2194** under operation of a motor **2196**. Further, support arm **2176** and rotary cutter **2173** are biased forwardly or towards the leading rotary cutter **2122** by a spring **2198** attached to support arm **2176** and a member **2200** extending from base **2178**. A stop **2202** limits forward travel of the second cutter and support arm **2173** and **2176**.

[0270] With reference again to **FIGS. 62 and 63** of the drawings, cut head **2173** of second or trailing rotary cutter

2172 is shown in its forward most position where it trails the cut head **2122** of the first or leading cutter by at least several inches. Both rotary cutters **2122** and **2172** of dual horizontal cutter or pruner **2170** are free to trip rearwardly should they contact an immovable or uncuttable object.

[0271] As shown in **FIGS. 64 and 65** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention a vertical rotary cutter and cane grabber assembly or vertical pruner is generally designated **2210** and is shown adapted for use with a single curtain high bilateral cordon system and suited for dormant pruning of the canes of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrid grape vines. Although the vertical rotary cutter and grabber **2210** is shown in use in conjunction with a single curtain high bilateral cordon arrangement, it is contemplated that this device may be used for the vertical pruning or cutting of substantially horizontally oriented canes of vines on other training or trellising systems. The vertical rotary cutter and cane grabber **2210** includes a vertical rotary cutter **2212** and a substantially vertical cane grabber **2214**. The vertical rotary cutter **2212** includes a vertical rotary cut head **2216** and a parallel deflector or guide roller **2218** operatively supported from a vertical support member **2220**, the base of which is attached to first end of a horizontal support member **2222** pivotally attached at its second end to a lower end of a vertical support member **2224** by a bolt **2226**. A spring **2228** having one end attached to horizontal member **2222** and the other end attached to vertical member **2224** allows the vertical cutter **2212** to trip rearwardly should it contact an immovable or uncuttable object. Vertical support member **2224** is attached to a horizontal support member **2230** releasably attached to a horizontal member **2232** of mast **2234** by a ball-hitch **2236** and bolts **2238**.

[0272] Further, rotary cut head **2216** includes a housing **2240** attached to vertical member **2220** by a short member **2242**. Also, housing **2240** supports upper and lower brackets or journals **2244** and **2246** which support deflector roller **2218** therebetween. Housing **2240** supports a motor **2248**, for example, a hydraulic motor, having a drive shaft operatively attached to a rotary cutting blade **2250** having a plurality of cutting teeth **2252** thereon. A plurality of separate cutting teeth **2254** are fixed to a cutting opening **2256** of housing **2240** to form a circular or rotary sickle or hedger with the rotating cutting teeth **2252** of cutting blade **2250**.

[0273] Deflector or idler roller **2218** of the vertical rotary cutter unit **2212** of the rotary cutter and cane grabber **2210** of **FIGS. 64 and 65** is adapted to contact the cordon and guide the vertical cutter **2216** along the cordon to trim or prune the canes extending therefrom while at the same time serving as a deflector for deflecting the vertical cutter **2216** away from immovable objects such as a trellis or post **2258**, a vine trunk, and the like. The vertical cutter **2212** can trip rearwardly should the roller **2218** or forward edge or surfaces of the cutter **2216** contact an immovable object and thereby prevent damage to the teeth **2252** and **2254**.

[0274] Cane grabber **2214** of vertical pruner or rotary cutter and grabber **2210** of **FIGS. 64 and 65** are similar in construction to the cane grabbers **962** of **FIG. 47** of the drawings with the exception that inner and outer housings **2260** and **2262** of cane grabber **2214** include elongated upper protrusions **2264** and **2266**, respectively, which facilitate the removal of cut cane pieces from the cane grabber

once they have been trimmed from the vine by the vertical rotary cutter **2216**. The cane grabber **2214** includes a plurality of flexible fingers **2268** extending from a chain **2270** driven in a counter-clockwise direction by a motor **2272** mounted on a plate **2274** attached to housing **2262**.

[0275] As shown in **FIGS. 64 and 65** of the drawings, the vertical rotary cutter **2216** is mounted substantially parallel to the tractor and vine while the cane grabber **2214** is offset at an angle of, for example, 20° to 60°, preferably 30° to 45°, with respect to the plane of the cutter **2216**. With the fingers **2268** moving about the cane grabber **2214** in a counter-clockwise direction, the fingers tend to grab and direct the canes toward the cutting blade **2250** and cutting opening **2256** of vertical cutter **2216**. Also, the fingers **2268** draw the cut ends of the canes away from the vertical cutter **2216** and then the protrusions **2264** and **2266** of the housings **2260** and **2262** force the cut cane pieces and any uncut canes away from the fingers and away from the device to avoid entanglement of the device with sections of cut cane as well as uncut canes which would otherwise tend to wrap around and be entangled with the device. It is to be understood that the vine and canes are not shown in **FIG. 65** for the sake of clarity of the device **2210** and its components. Cane grabber **2214** and more particularly housing **2260** is attached to a first end of a horizontal member **2276** pivotally attached at its second end to the lower end of a vertical member **2278** by a bolt **2280**. A spring **2282** has one end attached to horizontal member **2276** and the other end attached to vertical member **2278** to allow the cane grabber **2214** to trip rearwardly should it contact an immovable obstruction or object. The upper end of vertical member **2278** is attached to horizontal support member **2230**.

[0276] In accordance with one example of the vertical rotary cutter and cane grabber **2210**, the cane grabber **2214** includes a plurality of flexible fingers **2268** formed of 9-12 inch lengths of $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter hydraulic line having a metal fitting on each end thereof and rotary cutting blade **2250** having an outer diameter of from 10-36 inches. Also in accordance with one example, it is preferred to drive the motor, chain, and fingers of cane grabber **2214** in a counter-clockwise direction while driving the motor and cutting blade of the rotary cutter **2216** in a clock-wise direction using separate hydraulic motors **2272** and **2248** receiving hydraulic fluid from the hydraulic system of the tractor or an auxiliary hydraulic system mounted on the tractor.

[0277] As shown in **FIGS. 66 and 70** of the drawings, and in accordance with alternative embodiments of the present invention, vertical pruner units, devices, or apparatus generally designated **2290** and **2292** each include respective vertical sickles or cutters **2294** and **2296** and cane grabbers **2298** and **2300**. The vertical pruner **2290** of **FIG. 66** is similar to the vertical pruner **2210** of **FIG. 64** except that the rotary cutter has been replaced with a vertical linear, sickle, hedger, or the like and that both the cane grabber **2298** and vertical cutter **2294** are supported from above rather than from the side. The vertical pruner **2292** of **FIG. 70** is similar to the vertical pruner **2290** of **FIG. 66**, except that the cane grabber **2300** and vertical cutter **2296** are supported from above in a position closer to the ground than that of the cane grabber **2298** and vertical cutter **2294** of vertical pruner **2290**.

[0278] With reference again to **FIG. 66** of the drawings, the cane grabber **2298** like cane grabber **2214** of **FIG. 64**,

includes outer housings **2302** and **2304** and a plurality of flexible fingers **2306** extending from a chain **2308** driven in a counter-clockwise direction by a motor **2310** mounted on a plate **2312** attached to housing **2302**. Plate **2312** is attached to a support plate **2314** attached to the lower end of a vertical support member **2316** the upper end of which is attached to a horizontal support member **2318** releasably attached to a horizontal mast member **2320**.

[0279] The vertical linear cutter, sickle, hedger, or the like **2294** includes an elongate cutting bar **2322** and a parallel deflector or guide roller **2324** supported by a vertical support member **2326** the upper end of which is pivotally attached to a horizontal support member **2318**. A spring **2328** having one end attached to a member extending from horizontal support member **2318** and the other end attached to vertical support member **2326** allows the vertical pruner **2294** to trip rearwardly should the deflector roller or sickle contact an immovable or uncuttable object. Vertical pruner **2294** further includes a hydraulic motor **2330**, a drive link **2332**, and a drive bracket **2334** attached to a movable set of cutting teeth. Deflector roller **2324** is supported at its upper and lower ends by brackets or journals **2336** and **2338**.

[0280] Vertical pruner or pruning and grabbing unit **2290** operates in the same fashion as vertical pruner **2210** of **FIGS. 64 and 65** and is adapted for dormant pruning as described, for example, in stage chart XII of **FIG. 97**.

[0281] **FIGS. 67 and 68** of the drawings, illustrate a modified Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system **2350** having the shoot growth from the top canes trained upward and the shoot growth from the bottom canes trained downward. The upward shoot growth is hedged to prevent an umbrella-like canopy from developing. Upward shoot growth is held in place by two pairs of catch wires **2352** and **2354** supported on spaced vertical posts **2356**. The downward growth is not hedged and is allowed to develop an umbrella-like canopy similar to a bilateral cordon. Hence, the upper half (40 inches, 1.02 m) is treated as Vertical Shoot Positioned (VSP) while the lower half (48 inches, 1.2 m) is treated as bilateral trellising systems. The Smart-Dyson Ballerina trellis **2350** is modified from that described in an article by Dr. Richard Smart, the Australian Grape Grower and Wine-maker, May 1994, pages 27 and 28. The Smart-Dyson Ballerina trellis has two fruiting zones each approximately within 14 inches above and below the cordon.

[0282] The Smart-Dyson Ballerina trellis system was developed by Dr. Richard Smart of Port Macquaire, Australia, and John Dyson of New York. This system was designed to manage extremely high vigor vinifera vines to obtain fruit shoot balance and produce both high yields and quality. The advantage of this modified Smart-Dyson system is the "Ballerina" that has a single cordon with spurs at 48 inches or 1.2 m. The spurs that are on the lower part of the 180° of the cordon forms the lower ballerina and the upper spurs form the vertical shoot position part of the system. The lower part of the Smart-Dyson Ballerina system is mechanized in the same manner as shown with respect to the bilateral cordon system. The upper part of the system is trained utilizing the equipment shown for use with vertical shoot position systems.

[0283] With reference to **FIG. 69** of the drawings, a leaf removal unit **2360** is shown in operation in connection with the upper half of a Smart-Dyson ballerina system. The leaf

removal unit **2360** of **FIG. 69** is similar to the leaf removal unit **500** of **FIG. 34** and includes a fan unit **2362** substantially identical to the fan unit **552** of **FIGS. 36 and 37**. Leaf remover or unit **2360** includes the single vertically and angularly adjustable blade and fan unit **2362** adapted for cleaning one side of a standard vertical, movable catch wire trellising system, for example, the upper half of a Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system. Fan unit **2362** includes a fan blade **2364**, a fan housing **2366**, an intake contacted to a conical cutting blade housing **2368**, and a discharge **2368** at the lower end of the housing **2366**. A cutting blade **2370** is located in the cutting blade housing **2366** behind a plurality of adjustable length bars or rods **2372** which pass across a circular fan intake opening in a cowl or cover plate **2374** having a bent forward surface **2376**. The bars or rods **2372** are spaced a sufficient distance apart to allow leaves or small shoots to enter the fan intake and to be cut by the blade **2370** or by being sheared between the rods and the blade. Fan blade **2364** and cutting blade **2370** are mounted on a drive shaft **2378** which is rotatably driven by a hydraulic motor **2380** and supported by a pair of spaced shaft bearings **2382**.

[0284] The fan unit **2362** of leaf remover **2360** is vertically and pivotally supported by spaced vertical support members **2384** adjustably attached to a horizontal support member **2386** which is releasably attached to a horizontal mast member **2388**. The angle of the fan and blade unit **2362** is selected by adjusting the relative position of first and second angle support members **2390** and **2392** with the upper end of member **2390** being attached to horizontal support member **2386** and the lower end of member **2392** being pivotally attached to the upper end of fan housing **2366**. Like fan unit **500** of **FIG. 34**, the vertical position and angle of the fan unit **2362** can be quickly and easily altered or adjusted to accommodate different trellising systems and growth habits. Further, the length adjustable bars or rods **2372** like the rods or bars **588** of fan unit **552** and fan unit **554** can be placed at different angles and spaced at selected distance (as shown in **FIG. 38**) to accommodate differing foliage loads, desired clearance, tractor speed, and the like.

[0285] With reference again to **FIG. 70** of the drawings, vertical pruner **2292** is substantially identical to vertical pruner **2290** of **FIG. 66** except that the vertical support members **2396** and **2398** of the cane grabber **2300** and vertical sickle **2296**, respectively, have been lengthened in order to prune the lower ballerina section of a Smart-Dyson ballerina trellising system.

[0286] As shown in **FIG. 71** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified dual sickle horizontal cutter is generally designated **2400** and shown to include a short length, fixed position upper sickle **2402** and an elongate, rearwardly tripping lower sickle **2404**. This cutter **2400** is a highly modified version of a horizontal sickle unit developed and tested by Dr. C. Intrieri of Bologna, Italy. The horizontal dual sickle cutter **2400** is adapted, for example, for trimming all shoots to approximately 15 or 30 inches above the vineyard floor as described in stage charts III, IV, VII, VIII, IX, and XII of **FIGS. 88, 89, 92, 93, 94, and 97**, respectively.

[0287] The short length, fixed angular position upper sickle **2402** is located above and slightly forwardly of the lower longer horizontal sickle **2404**. Upper horizontal sickle

2402 includes a hydraulic motor **2406** attached to a plate **2408** which is attached to a base member **2410** on the lower end of a vertical support member **2412**. Like the vertical support member **2128** of **FIG. 61**, the vertical support member **2412** is adjustably received in a bracket or collar **2414** attached to one end of a horizontal support member **2416** which itself is received in an adjustable support bracket or collar **2418** attached to a support platform **2420**. The support platform **2420** is releasably attached to a horizontal mast member **2422** of a mast **2424** attached to a frame member **2426** of a tractor **2428**. The support platform **2420** is releasably attached to horizontal mast member **2422** via a ball hitch and bolt assemblies.

[0288] Upper horizontal sickle **2402** further includes a drive disk **2430** operatively attached to a drive shaft of motor **2406**. A drive link **2432** has one end attached to drive disk **2430** and the other end attached to a drive bracket **2434** which is attached to a movable set of cutting teeth **2436**.

[0289] Lower horizontal sickle **2404** includes an elongate support member **2438** attached to a support plate **2440** pivotally attached to the lower end of base **2410** of vertical support member **2412**. The pivotal connection between support plate **2440** and base **2410** includes a torsion spring which allows support member **2438** of lower horizontal sickle **2404** to trip rearwardly about a vertical axis should the lower horizontal sickle contact an immovable or uncuttable object. More particularly, a single large bumper disk or roller **2442** and plurality of smaller bumper rollers or disks **2444** are rotatably attached to corresponding cantilever support members **2446** and **2448** which are attached to support member **2438**. The rollers or disks **2442** and **2444** are adapted to contact, for example, vine trunks, posts, trellises, and the like and cause the horizontal sickle **2404** to trip rearwardly before such objects can contact cutting teeth **2450** and cause damage to the lower sickle **2404**. The rollers or bumpers **2442** and **2444** are spaced from one another a selected distance to only allow items having a diameter or width of less than about two inches, preferably less than one inch to pass between the rollers and contact the cutting teeth **2450**. Like sickle **2402**, lower sickle **2404** includes a motor and drive linkage for reciprocating the cutting teeth **2450**.

[0290] The unit **2400** includes a plurality of set screws or bolts which make it easy to quickly and easily adjust the vertical height of the upper and lower horizontal sickles **2402** and **2404**. The short fixed, upper horizontal sickle **2402** tends to protect the support structure and drive arrangement of the sickles by cutting any canes or vineyard floor growth which would otherwise wrap around or entangle these items. The lower horizontal sickle **2404** provides the bulk of the trimming of canes and shoots at a selected distance above the vineyard floor, for example 15 or 30 inches, prior to harvest to facilitate mechanical harvesting using, for example, a harvester such as shown in **FIGS. 83, 84, 85**, or the like.

[0291] With reference to **FIG. 72** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a more simplified single unit single bar half-row horizontal cutter generally designated **2460** is shown to include an elongate, rearwardly tripping, sickle **2462** substantially identical to the lower horizontal sickle **2404** of dual sickle horizontal cutter **2400** of **FIG. 71**. The single horizontal sickle unit **2460** of **FIG. 72** differs from the dual

unit **2400** of **FIG. 71** in that it does not include the upper short fixed horizontal sickle **2402** and does include a forwardly extending arced rod or bar **2464** which serves to direct canes, shoots, and the like toward the cutting teeth **2466** of sickle **2462**. The cane guiding bar **2464** is fixed in position relative to support member **2468** of sickle **2462**.

[0292] As shown in phantom lines in **FIG. 72** of the drawings, horizontal sickle **2462** may be vertically adjusted to a variety of selected vertical positions, for example, 15 inches or 30 inches from the vineyard floor, depending on what trellising system is being trimmed or pruned. For example, trimming of shoots and canes prior to harvest may require the shoots or canes to be trimmed to approximately 30 inches above the vineyard floor as described in stage chart VII of **FIG. 92**.

[0293] With reference to **FIG. 73** of the drawings, a double or dual unit full-row horizontal cutter is generally designated **2470** and shown to include inner and outer dual sickle horizontal cutter arrangements **2472** and **2474** which are similar in construction to the dual sickle horizontal cutter **2400** of **FIG. 71** except that the outer dual sickle arrangement **2474** is a mirror image of the inner unit or arrangement **2472** and trails the inner unit **2472**. Also, the disk or rollers **2442** and **2444** of lower horizontal sickle **2404** of unit **2400** of **FIG. 71** have been replaced with forwardly and downwardly angling aprons or bumpers **2476** and **2478** adapted for vineyards where each plant is supported by, for example, metal or wooden stakes. The metal bumpers or guards **2476** and **2478** contact the stakes, posts, vine trunks, or the like and cause the elongate lower horizontal sickles to trip rearwardly without damaging the cutting teeth thereof. The double or dual unit horizontal cutter **2470** of **FIG. 73** is particularly adapted for use with the Minimal pruned, high-wire, bi-lateral cordon, Smart-Dyson Ballerina (and other like trellising systems) can serve to trim or prune both sides of a row along a single pass down the row. In contrast, the horizontal cutters **2400** and **2460** of **FIGS. 71 and 72** are adapted to trim or prune half of a row with each pass of the tractor down the row.

[0294] The support structure for each of the inner and outer dual sickle horizontal cutters **2472** and **2474** of dual unit cutter **2470** differ from the vertical support structure of units **2400** and **2460** of **FIGS. 71 and 72** in that they allow not only for vertical height adjustment, but also for automatic horizontal distance adjustment between the inner and outer units and allow the entire inner and outer cutters **2472** and **2474** to trip rearwardly. More particularly, inner cutter **2472** includes upper and lower horizontal sickles **2480** and **2482** operatively attached to a base **2484** on a vertical member **2486**. Vertical member **2486** is attached to a support assembly **2488** at the lower end of a vertical support member **2490**. The upper end of vertical support member **2490** is adjustably received in a collar or bracket **2492** which is pivotally attached to a horizontal member **2494**. A spring **2496** has one end attached to collar or bracket **2492** and the other end attached to a member extending forwardly from horizontal member **2494**. Hence, spring **2496** allows the collar or bracket **2492**, vertical member **2490**, and entire inner cutter **2472** to trip rearwardly and upwardly should the inner cutter **2472** contact an immovable or uncuttable object. Also, lower horizontal sickle **2482** of inner cutter **2472** can trip rearwardly about a vertical axis should bumper or guard **2476** contact an immovable or uncuttable object.

[0295] Likewise, outer cutter **2474** includes an upper horizontal sickle **2498** and a lower horizontal sickle **2500** operatively attached to a base **2502** on the lower end of a support member **2504**. The member **2504** is attached to a support assembly **2506** which is attached to the lower end of a vertical support member **2508**. The upper end of member **2508** is received in a bracket or collar **2510** pivotally attached to a horizontal member **2512**. A spring **2514** has one end attached to bracket or collar **2510** and the other end attached to a member extending forwardly of horizontal member **2512**. Spring **2514** allows support member **2508** and outer cutter **2474** to trip rearwardly and upwardly.

[0296] Also, at least lower horizontal sickle **2500** trips rearwardly about a vertical axis should guard or bumper **2478** contact an immovable or uncuttable object.

[0297] Dual unit horizontal cutter **2470** includes a support platform **2516** releasably attached to a horizontal mast member **2518** and supporting first and second horizontal members **2520** and **2522**, hydraulic control and valve structure **2524**, and one end of first and second hydraulic cylinders **2526** and **2528**. Support member **2494** of inner cutter **2472** is telescopically received in and supported by first member **2520** while support member **2512** of outer cutter **2474** is telescopically received in and supported by second member **2522**. Valve structure **2524** includes control valves for selectively applying hydraulic fluid to each of the hydraulic cylinders **2526** and **2528** to selectively extend or retract the pistons and shafts thereof to achieve the desired distance between the support members **2490** and **2508** and inner and outer cutters **2472** and **2474**. Hence, cylinders **2526** and **2528** can be used to spread the inner and outer cutters apart or bring them together as desired. For example, in order to start the dual unit horizontal cutter **2470** at the end of a row, one may extend the shafts of the cylinders **2526** and **2528** to space the inner and outer cutters **2472** and **2474** as far apart as possible to accommodate conventional catch and cordon wire anchoring posts, or the like. Once the cutter **2470** has moved beyond the anchoring posts, the operator can retract the shafts of the cylinders **2526** and **2528** to bring the inner and outer cutters **2472** and **2474** back to the position shown in **FIG. 3** for trimming and pruning along the row.

[0298] With reference again to **FIGS. 71-73** of the drawings and reference to stage chart II of **FIG. 87**, although the trimmers and pruners **2400**, **2460**, and **2470** are usually used for trimming or pruning prior to harvest, they can also be used for dormant pruning and to remove excess buds or fruit to reduce fruit load after set and shatter. For example, for grapes having drooping growth habits, shoots or canes extending downwardly from a cross arm may be trimmed to a selected length to provide a particular fruit load by raising the trimmers or pruners to a height just a few inches underneath the cross arm.

[0299] As shown in **FIG. 74** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a tilting mast **2540** is shown to include an expanding vertical section **2542** and an extending horizontal section **2544** substantially identical in construction to the masts shown, for example, in **FIGS. 64-66**, and **69** of the drawings. The tilting mast **2540** of **FIG. 74** differs from the other masts in that the vertical section **2542** can tilt relative to the supporting tractor or vehicle. Tilting mast **2540** includes a

lower support structure **2546** attached to the forward end of the tractor or vehicle and serving to pivotally support a lower end **2548** of vertical mast section **2542** about a horizontal axis of a bolt or pin **2550**. Support structure **2546** includes a lower horizontal member **2552** which provides for attachment of one end of a cylinder **2554** thereto. A shaft **2556** extending from cylinder **2554** is attached by a bolt or pin **2558** to lower end **2548** of vertical section **2542**. Support structure **2546** also includes an upper member **2560** which supports a yolk **2562** which limits tilting movement of vertical member **2542**. As shown in phantom lines, the mast is tilted to the left by extension of the shaft **2556** from cylinder **2554**. Likewise, the mast may be tilted to the right by retracting shaft **2556** in cylinder **2554**. Although the mast **2540** may be tilted from 0 to 30 degrees in either direction, it is preferred to have mast only tilt through 0 to 12 degrees in either direction from vertical to ensure stability of the equipment and tractor or vehicle. Extension and retraction of shaft **2556** from cylinder **2554** and resultant tilting of mast **2540** is controlled by the vehicle operator by, for example, controlling hydraulic fluid to and from the cylinder **2554**.

[0300] The angularly adjustable mast **2540** of FIG. 74 is adapted for use on hillsides or sloping vineyards and may also be used on a relatively flat vineyard to tilt equipment such as thinning, pruning, or trimming devices, units, or the like to accommodate particular trellising systems or growth habits. As an example, mast **2540** can be used to tilt equipment relative to the angled arms of a GDC or Y-trellis.

[0301] With reference to FIG. 75 of the drawings, a basic Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) training system is shown to include cordon wire supports A, cordon wires B, cordons C, pruning canes D, renewal spurs E, and posts F spaced at 24 feet.

[0302] As shown in FIGS. 76 and 77 of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified vertical catch wire trellis or modified Lyre or "U" system adapted for complete or total mechanization of vineyard cultivation, especially in an established vineyard, is generally designated **2590** and shown to include first and second cross arms **2592** and **2594** which pivot respectively about bolts **2596** and **2598** extending through brackets **2600** and **2602** on a collar **2604** adjustably attached to a post **2606**. The cross arms flex or pivot about bolts **2596** and **2598** to allow for harvest mechanization. Tubular cross arm extensions **2608** and **2610** are adjustably received on each of the cross arms **2592** and **2594** using respective pins **2612** and **2614** received in corresponding openings through the extensions and cross arms.

[0303] Further, each of the cross arms **2592** and **2594** support movable and pivoting tubular stakes **2616** and **2618** extending upwardly from U-members or yokes **2620** and **2622** and pivotally attached thereto by respective bolts **2624** and **2626**. Each of the yokes **2620** and **2622** are releasably and pivotally attached to the respective cross arms **2592** and **2594** by pins **2628** and **2630** received in corresponding circular openings through the yokes and cross arms. The use of pins for releasably attaching the cross arm extensions **2608** and **2610** and movable stakes **2616** and **2618** to cross arms **2592** and **2594** increase the versatility and adjustability of the modified trellis **2590**. As shown, each of the cross arms include a plurality of openings which allow for adjustment in the positioning of the cross arm extensions and movable stakes.

[0304] In accordance with a particular example of the present invention, it is preferred to form the tubular members including the cross arm extensions **2608** and **2610** and movable stakes **2616** and **2618** of metal pipe or conduit such as **1½ to 2½ inch outer diameter steel tubing and to form the other metal components of sturdy metal material such as steel or cast aluminum.**

[0305] With reference to FIGS. 78 and 79 of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified vertical catch wire system or a modified Lyre or "U" trellis having fixed cross arms is generally designated **2650** and shown to include elongate tubular cross arms **2652** and **2654** each including horizontal sections, upwardly angling sections, and vertical sections. Each of the horizontal sections of the cross arms **2652** and **2654** include a plurality of circular openings adapted to receive respective bolts **2656** and **2658** and pins **2660** and **2662**. One end of each of the cross arms **2652** and **2654** is supported in a tubular member **2664** attached to a collar releasably attached to a post **2668**. The modified trellis **2650** includes tubular movable stakes **2670** and **2672** pivotally attached to respective yokes **2674** and **2676** by respective bolts **2678** and **2680**. The movable stakes **2670** and **2672** allow for rapid adjustment of catch wires following mechanical fruit thinning and allow for the stakes to be laid down to facilitate mechanical harvesting.

[0306] The modified trellis **2650** of FIGS. 78 and 79 as well as the traditional Lyre or "U" system is not flexible and requires a modified harvesting system such as an adaptation of a harvester built by G. DeGolier with twin harvesting heads and a catching system to mechanically harvest both sides of the Lyre or "U" in one pass. Such a modified harvesting machine contains two sets of beaters mounted side by side as shown in FIG. 83.

[0307] With reference to FIG. 80 of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified Lyre or "U" trellis adapted for total or complete mechanization is generally designated **2700** and shown to include a modified U tubular member **2702** attached to the upper end of a vertical tubular member **2704** by a support bracket **2706**. Cordons **2708** and **2710** are shown to be located approximately 10 inches above a cross bar **2712** of the U member **2702**. This allows sufficient space for the operation of all mechanization equipment including shoot and fruit thinner, leaf remover, harvester, and the like. Vertically extending arms **2714** and **2716** of U member **2702** extend upwardly an additional 12 to 36 inches, preferably 24 inches, above a conventional Lyre or "U" trellis.

[0308] As shown in FIGS. 81 and 82 of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified vertical catch wire anchoring and trellis system is shown to include a modified guide wire anchoring support unit **2730** adapted to be used at each end of a row having a plurality of modified vertical catch wire system or modified Lyre or "U" trellises **2732**. The modified guide wire anchoring support unit **2730** and modified vertical catch wire trellises **2732** allow mechanization equipment to enter the end of the row and facilitate total or partial mechanization of the vineyard. The trellis **2732** is similar in construction to the trellis **2700** of FIG. 80 and includes a modified tubular U member attached to the upper end of a post **2736** by a bracket or support **2738**.

[0309] The guide wire anchoring support unit **2730** includes a tubular U member having vertical members **2742** and **2744** extending upwardly from a horizontal cross member **2746**. Cross member **2746** is attached to the top of a first vertical tubular member **2748** attached to a second vertical tubular member **2750** by upper and lower cross braces **2752** and **2754**. The ends of cross bar **2746** are additionally supported by brace members **2756** and **2758**, each having one end attached to the cross bar **2746** and the other end attached to vertical member **2750**. An elongate U-shaped channel member **2760** is attached to the lower end of each of vertical members **2748** and **2750** and adapted to be buried 12-24 inches below the vineyard floor. Respective cordon wire attachment studs **2762** and **2764** extend from vertical members **2742** and **2744**. Also, a plurality of chain hooks or catches **2766** extend outwardly from vertical members **2742** and **2744** in spaced pairs to serve as anchors for chains **2778** on the end of the respective catch wires. Also, chain racks **2768** and **2770** are attached to cross bar **2746** for storage of chains, cables, or the like. Ends of respective support wires **2772** and **2774** are tied around the corners of the U member **2740** and under respective cross braces **2756** and **2758** to prevent upward movement thereof. Similarly, central guide wire **2776** is tied around the upper-end of vertical member **2748** just below cross bar **2746** and above cross member **2752**.

[0310] By burying cross member **2760** below ground and forming the entire anchoring support unit of sturdy rigid materials such as 3 inch outer diameter, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick steel pipe and welding all connections, guide wire support unit **2730** provides sufficient support for anchoring the cordon, guide, and catch wires at each end of a row. The studs **2762** and chains **2778** allow the cordon wires and guide wires or catch wires to either be released or loosened prior to mechanical harvesting and thereby reduce possible damage to the wires, trellises, anchors, harvesting equipment, and the like.

[0311] With reference again to FIGS. 76-81 of the drawings, and in accordance with a particular example of the present invention, it is contemplated that the trellises developed for a total or complete or improved mechanization of the vineyard have a cross bar at approximately 42 inches from the vineyard floor, a cordon located about 10 inches above the cross bar, a first guide or support wire catch located about 14 inches above the cordon, and a second higher support or guide wire catch located 14 inches above the first catch. Thus, each of the trellises **2590**, **2650**, **2700**, and **2732** has an overall height of at least about 80 inches or more. Note that the trellises **2700** and **2732** of FIGS. 80 and 81 have a third support or guide wire catch located an additional 14 inches above the second support or guide wire catch and thus have an overall height of at least about 94 inches.

[0312] In accordance with another example of the present invention, the trellis **2700** of FIG. 80 is made from $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch outer diameter by $\frac{3}{16}$ inch circular metal tubing, has an overall height of about 84 inches, an overall width of about 60 inches, a lower central post extending about 32 inches above the vineyard floor, about 14 inches from the top of the post to the cordon, about another 10 inches from the cordon to the first catch wire clip, about 12 additional inches from the first catch wire clip to the second catch wire clip, and about 14 inches from the second catch wire clip to the third

or top wire clip. This system provides at least 32 inches of clearance between the vineyard floor and the cross bar, about 14 inches of fruit zone below the cordon, and about 38 inches from the cordon up to the top wire.

[0313] With reference to FIG. 83 of the drawings, a modified full-row grape harvesting machine or harvester adapted for use with the modified Lyre or "U" trellis of FIGS. 80 and 81 is generally designated **2800** and shown to include two picking heads **2802** and **2804**, a conveyor belt **2806** and **2808** under each picking head, and cross conveyors **2810** and **2812** in back of the harvester which receive the grapes from conveyors **2806** and **2808**. Each of the picking heads or harvester units **2802** and **2804** are supported from a harvester chassis or over-the-row tractor **2814**.

[0314] The harvester **2800** is adapted for over-the-row or full row harvesting and further includes respective aprons **2816** and **2818** and fish scales or pivoting catch plates **2820** and **2822** which run the length of the conveyors **2806** and **2808** and facilitate the movement of grapes and grape bunches from the picking heads to the conveyors. Although the aprons **2816** and **2818** are fixed, the fish scales **2820** and **2822** are spring-biased and pivot rearwardly to allow the harvester **2800** to pass by a trellis **2700**.

[0315] The picking heads may be similar to the harvesting heads of the G. DeGolier harvester or similar in construction to the thinning heads of FIGS. 53 and 54 of the drawings. Further, each of the picking heads includes opposing sets of beaters, strikers, bow heads, rods, or the like **2824** which are shown angled downwardly and offset relative one to the other. Also, the beaters, strikers, bow heads, rods, or the like adjacent the cordon may be eliminated or shortened to prevent damage to the cordon.

[0316] In accordance with the present invention, it is contemplated that the picking heads **2802** and **2804** of the harvester **2800** may be tilted with respect to the vertical and as such accommodate a Y or GDC system. Also in accordance with another aspect of the present invention, it is contemplated that the picking heads **2802** and **2804** of harvester **2800** in FIG. 83 and picking heads **3002** and **3004** of harvester **3000** in FIG. 85 may be supported in a fashion allowing for hydraulic head adjustment to raise, lower, and/or tilt the picking heads to accommodate, for example, angled uprights, or a wide range of trellising systems.

[0317] Also, in accordance with the present invention it is to be understood that the harvester **2800** may include forward and rearward sets of picking heads on each side thereof for harvesting grape varieties which are difficult to harvest. Also, the harvester **2800** may include differing types of picking heads (FIG. 85) and may have the inner beaters, strikers, and the like removed to accommodate the harvesting of grapes on particular training or trellising systems.

[0318] With reference to FIGS. 84, 84A, and 84B of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified half-row, floating, at least vertically shaking, rotating head picker mechanical harvester **2840** is adapted for use with a Lyre or "U" trellis **2842** modified to include movable cordon wire support, roller, or slide assemblies **2844** for each cordon wire. The harvester **2840** includes a harvesting unit **2846** mounted on one side of a tractor **2848** and is a modified version of the early Cornell concept for harvesting a modified GDC trellis with

a single, reciprocating, vertical spiked-wheel. The Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) was a trellising system designed specifically for mechanical harvest employing over-the-row machines fitted with vertical-shaking head pickers as described, for example, in Shaulis, N., E. S. Shepardson, and J. C. Moyer. Grape Harvesting Research at Cornell, N.Y. State Hortic. Soc. Proc., Proc. 105th Meeting, January (1960) and Shaulis, N., E. S. Shepardson, and T. D. Kordan. The Geneva Double Curtain. Bull. 811 N.Y. State Agric. Exp. Sta., Geneva, Cornell Univ. (1967). An early over-the-row harvester equipped with vertical-shaking heads was manufactured in the U.S. by Chisholm-Ryder, and an Italian version was built and extensively tested. One difficulty with the Cornell/Chisholm-Ryder system was keeping the spike-wheel picking heads concurrently aligned along the cordons. The end result was that the early Cornell and Chisholm-Ryder machines never saw extensive commercial production.

[0319] The half-row harvester **2840** of **FIGS. 84, 84A, and 84B** is shown in use with a modified trellis **2842** which incorporates the movable cordon wire support assemblies **2844** which address the problem of picking head alignment along the cordons. The harvester **2840** and, more particularly, the harvester unit **2846** includes a rigid support structure **2850** which is attached to the tractor **2848**, at least one spiked-wheel picking head **2852** including a center tumbler **2854**, and a plurality of radially extending spikes **2856** attached thereto. The head **2852** floats or rests upon a vertical shaft and idles or rotates should the spikes contact an object, vine, trellis, or the like. The picking head **2852** is supported and driven from underneath by a member **2858** extending upwardly from a support structure **2860**. The harvester unit **2846** includes a collecting conveyor **2862**, a cross conveyor **2864**, aprons **2866** and **2868**, and fish scales or pivoting catch plates **2870** supported from a frame **2872**.

[0320] Still further, the harvester unit **2846** includes an upper awning and a vertically-depending flexible curtain **2876** which directs any grapes or grape bunches downwardly toward collecting conveyor **2862** along with fish scales **2870** and aprons **2866** and **2868**. The vertically-shaking picking head **2852** shakes the cordon **2878** and cordon wire **2880** at least vertically and thereby causes grapes or grape bunches to fall from the vine and onto the conveyor **2862** where they are fed to cross conveyor **2864** into a single collection system. The fish scales **2870** pivot at least rearwardly and the curtain **2876** is flexible, for example, having elongate vertical cuts or slits therein allowing portions to flex up and over the vine or trellis and allow the harvester to travel along the row while directing as many of the grapes as possible toward the collection conveyor **2862**.

[0321] By incorporating the movable cordon wire support assemblies **2844** and by relaxing the catch wires, loosening the cordon wires, and taking tension out of the cordons and trunks before harvesting, the spikes **2856** of the picking head **2852** remain in proper position underneath the cordon and the cordon wire stays in position to shake the cordon and harvest the grapes while preventing damage to the catch wires, cordon wire, cordon, and trunk of the vine. In accordance with the preferred embodiment, the trunk leading to the cordon has a bend and flexibility of at least 10 inches.

[0322] With particular reference to **FIGS. 84A and 84B** of the drawings, the movable cordon wire support, roller, or slide assembly **2844** is attached to the interior or exterior of each vertical member **2882** extending upwardly from a cross bar **2884** of the trellis **2842**. Typically, conventional Lyre or "U" trellis systems have the cordon wire located inside the trellis, and as such the movable cordon wire support assembly **2844** is mounted as shown in solid lines in **FIG. 84A**. In new vineyards, it would be preferred to add the movable cordon wire support assembly **2844** on the exterior of the trellis to facilitate mechanization of the vineyard.

[0323] Each movable cordon wire support assembly **2844** includes upper and lower horizontal plates **2886** and **2888** attached to the ends of a vertical channel member **2890** and having respective circular openings near their free end for receiving an elongate bolt **2892** having a head **2894** and a threaded lower end **2896** adapted to receive a nut **2898**. The shaft of the bolt **2892** and one edge of the channel member **2890** form an elongate channel adapted to receive a grooved roller, wheel, slide, or the like **2900** having a central circular through hole **2902** adapted to receive the cordon wire **2880** therethrough. The roller or wheel **2900** may also include an elongate radial slot **2904** which extends to opening **2902** to allow an existing cordon wire to be inserted through the slot and into the opening **2902**. The slot **2904** is thereafter filled with a plug **2906** which is welded in place to prevent the cordon wire **2880** from coming out of opening **2902** in roller **2900**.

[0324] It is preferred that the plates, channel member, and bolt be formed of sturdy rigid metal materials while the roller or wheel **2900** be formed of a synthetic resin or plastic material which can be either self-lubricating or lubricated to easily slide up and down along channel member **2890** and bolt **2892**. Additionally, end stops **2908** and **2910** can be added to the interior of plates **2886** and **2888** to limit movement of roller or wheel **2900**. It is preferred that the channel member **2890** be attached to vertical trellis member **2882** by welding, but it is understood that other means of attachment such as screws or rivets may be used. If roller **2900** becomes overly worn or broken, it may be replaced by removing bolt **2892** and inserting a new roller.

[0325] With respect to **FIG. 84C** of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a modified guide wire anchoring support unit **2920** and modified trellis **2922** including movable cordon wire support assemblies **2940** has substantial structural similarity to that of guide wire anchoring support unit **2730** and trellis **2732** of **FIG. 81** except that the trellis **2922** and anchoring unit **2920** are adapted to easily relax, loosen, or release tension on the guide wires and cordon wires to facilitate mechanical harvesting using, for example, the mechanical harvester of **FIG. 84** or **85**. More particularly, a vertical support member **2924** has been extended and includes a chain catch or hook **2926** and chain catch or hooks **2928** and **2930** have been added to the back side of each of vertical trellis members **2932** and **2934** to provide for the use of chains on the end of respective cordon wires **2936** and guide wires **2938**.

[0326] Trellis **2922** has been modified to include a more rectangular U member, movable cordon wire support assemblies **2940**, and a guide wire bracket **2942** atop a post **2944**. The guide wire anchoring support unit **2920** facilitates the

use of mechanization equipment while the chain hooks or catches thereon facilitate the loosening, relaxing, and releasing the tension from the catch wires, cordon wire, trunk, and cordons to provide, for example, at least 10 inches of flexibility in the bend of the trunk as it leads to the cordon.

[0327] Although the vine and cordons shown in **FIGS. 84B and 84C** are shown in a Y-type of cordon configuration, it is to be understood that a cordon which runs in only a single direction along a cordon wire may be used in combination with the movable cordon wire support assembly **2844**.

[0328] With reference to **FIG. 84D** of the drawings and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, the half-row harvester **2840** of **FIG. 84** or the full-row harvester of **FIG. 85** may include one or more floating, shaking, rotating picking heads **2950** which not only shake vertically under the influence of a motor **2952** and drive arrangement **2954**, but also shake or articulate in a horizontal direction under the influence of a motor **2956** and drive arrangement **2958**. Picking head **2950** includes a central tumbler **2960** which supports a plurality of spikes **2962** and has a central opening **2964** which accommodates a small diameter upper support shaft **2966** and a large diameter lower support shaft **2968** which telescopically receives the lower end of upper shaft **2966**. Picking head **2950** is free to rotate about shafts **2966** and **2968** under the influence of spikes **2962** contacting objects as the picking head is moved along the cordon.

[0329] Lower shaft **2968** is pivotally connected to a support yoke **2970** by a bolt or pin **2972**. The upper end of shaft **2966** is attached to a pivoting link **2974** by a bolt **2976** which passes through link **2978**, link **2974**, and shaft **2966**. Link **2974** is pivotally attached to an upper arm **2980** of yoke **2970** by a pin **2982**. Yoke **2970** is attached to a sleeve **2984** which rides up and down on a fixed vertical member **2986** attached to the support structure **2988**. Motor **2952** is attached to upper end of vertical member **2986** and has a projecting drive shaft to which is attached a drive disk **2990** having attached thereto a drive link **2992**. The other end of the drive link **2992** is attached to a plate **2994** on sleeve **2984**. Activation of the motor **2952** and rotation of its drive shaft causes resulted rotation of disk **2990**, reciprocation of link **2992**, reciprocation of sleeve **2984**, reciprocation of yoke **2970**, and vertical reciprocation of pick head **2950**.

[0330] Similarly, motor **2956** has a drive shaft to which is attached a drive disk or member **2996**. Rotation or activation of the motor **2956** causes rotation of disk **2996**, reciprocation of link **2978**, reciprocation of link **2974**, and resultant translational movement of at least the upper end of pick head **2950**. Hence, pick head **2950** not only shakes vertically but also horizontally and, as such, increases the amount of grapes removed from the vine during harvesting or facilitates grape removal, thereby allowing the harvester to operate at a greater land speed. Also, it is contemplated that a plurality of such picking heads may be used for harvesting grape varieties which are difficult to harvest.

[0331] With reference again to **FIG. 85** of the drawings, and in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, an over-the-row, full-row modified spike-wheel picking head harvester **3000** is shown to include at least first and second picking heads **3002** and **3004** supported within a harvester chassis, over-the-row tractor or modified high

clearance-type four-wheel tractor **3006**. The harvester **3000** is adapted for harvesting a modified Lyre or "U" trellis **3008** having movable cordon wire support assemblies **3010** and **3012** which allow the cordons and cordon wires to move vertically under the influence of the shaking picking heads **3002** and **3004**.

[0332] Further, the harvester **3000** includes respective catch conveyors **3014** and **3016**, aprons **3018** and **3020**, fish scales or catch plates **3022** and **3024**, and cross conveyors **3026** and **3028**. Fish scales **3022** and **3024** are spring-biased and, as such, pivot backwardly and out of the way of the trellis **3008** as the harvester runs down along the row. The fish scales and aprons tend to direct all the grapes or grape bunches that are removed to the catch conveyors **3014** and **3016**. As described above with respect to **FIG. 84**, the picking heads **3002** and **3004** are free-floating or idling, at least vertically shaking, rotating picking heads having a plurality of spikes emanating from a central tumbler.

[0333] It is contemplated that the picking heads **3002** and **3004** of harvester **3000** may be the picking heads **2950** of **FIG. 84D** which shake not only vertically but also horizontally. Also, the harvester **3000** may include four or more picking heads, front and rear sets, for harvesting difficult varieties. Also, prior to harvest, the catch wires should be relaxed, the vertical wires should be loosened, and if necessary the tension should be slightly relaxed out of the cordon wires to allow the trunk bend to flex at least about 10 inches during harvest. Movable cordon wire support assemblies **3010** and **3012** are identical in construction to that of the movable cordon wire support assembly **2844**.

[0334] With respect to **FIGS. 86-97** of the drawings and seasonal charts I-XII which provide exemplary embodiments of vineyard mechanization systems or methods, it is to be understood that when reference is made to a particular figure number in the charts, it is to be understood that reference is being made to an exemplary machine, device, implement, harvester, thinner, pruner, trimmer, comb, unit, or the like, and that other devices which provide a similar result may be used. Also, it is contemplated that partial mechanization system and methods can be gleaned from the charts I-XII and Examples I-XII to follow by merely eliminating one or more steps from the system or method.

TABLE 1

WORLD GRAPE PRODUCTION, BY COUNTRY, AVERAGES OF 1989-91 (FAO PRODUCTION YEARBOOK, UN. VOL. 45).			
COUNTRY	AREA (1000 HA)	PRODUCTION (1000 MT)	PRODUCTION (MT Per Hectar)
Afghanistan	52	365	7.0
Argentina	268	2523	9.0
Australia	57	896	15.7
Austria	54	398	7.4
Brazil	58	707	12.2
Chili	115	1113	9.7
Czechoslovakia	35	195	5.6
France	943	7476	7.9
Germany	96	1365	14.2
Greece	155	1304	8.4
Hungary	139	769	5.5
Iran	220	1391	6.3
Italy	999	9039	9.0
Japan	27	283	10.5

TABLE 1-continued

WORLD GRAPE PRODUCTION, BY COUNTRY, AVERAGES OF 1989-91 (FAO PRODUCTION YEARBOOK, UN. VOL. 45).			
COUNTRY	AREA (1000 HA)	PRODUCTION (1000 MT)	PRODUCTION (MT Per Hectar)
Mexico	44	462	10.2
Morocco	48	218	4.5
Purtugal	375	1397	3.7
Romania	221	893	4.0
South Africa	150	1463	9.7
Spain	1460	5531	3.8
Syria	114	435	3.8
Turkey	592	3510	5.9
USA	300	5153	17.2
USSR	885	5328	6.0
Yugoslavia	225	1077	4.8

Metric Tons (MT) per hectar divided by 2.72 = Tons per Acre.
Other countries that are notable producers of grapes are: Cyprus, India, China, Tunisia, Lebanon, Uruguay, Switzerland, Israel, Canada, Korea (Rep). Albania, Yemen, Saudia Arabia, and Peru.

[0335]

TABLE 2

EFFECT OF TRAINING SYSTEM AND MECHANICAL PRUNING TREATMENTS AFTER SIX CONSECUTIVE YEARS ON YIELD AND QUALITY OF CONCORD GRAPES.						
Treatment	Yield (MT/ha)	Soluble solids	Green fruit	Acidity as		Color
	(%)	(%)	(%)	pH	tartaric	(abs. at 520 nm)
GDC						
30 + 10	15.7a	15.2a	3.0ab ^z	3.79d	0.72d	0.343ab
Mech./adj. best 60 nodes	15.9a	15.1	2.3a	3.68cd	0.78bcd	0.291bc
Mech./adj. best 90 nodes	8.1b	13.8b	9.1abc	3.61cd	0.82abcd	0.281cd
Mech./no touch-up	8.6b	13.3bc	12.6b	3.45abc	0.86abc	0.199ef
SC						
30 + 10	10.1ab	15.0a	4.0ab	3.60bcd	0.80abcd	0.320abc
Mech./adj. best 69 nodes	12.4a	15.7a	4.1ab	3.48abc	0.76cd	0.364a
Mech./adj. best 90 nodes	9.9ab	13.6b	8.8abc	3.41ab	0.90a	0.230de
Mech./no touch-up	6.5b	12.0c	11.4bc	3.35a	0.88ab	0.167f

Source: Morris and Cawthon (1981).
^zMeans within columns followed by the same letter or letters are not significantly different at the 5% level, by Duncan's multiple-range test.

[0336]

TABLE 3

EFFECT OF TRAINING SYSTEM AND MECHANICAL PRUNING TREATMENTS ON SENSORY QUALITY OF CONCORD JUICE ON THE SIXTH AND FINAL YEAR OF THE STUDY.			
	Color ^z		
	Intensity	Acceptability	Flavor
GDC			
30 + 10	7.8 a	6.0 ab	5.6 cd
best 60 nodes	7.1 ab	7.0 a	6.6 bc

TABLE 3-continued

EFFECT OF TRAINING SYSTEM AND MECHANICAL PRUNING TREATMENTS ON SENSORY QUALITY OF CONCORD JUICE ON THE SIXTH AND FINAL YEAR OF THE STUDY.			
	Color ^z		
	Intensity	Acceptability	Flavor
Mech./adj. best 90 nodes	6.9 ab	6.3 ab	4.8 de
Mech./no touch-up	4.4 c	4.9 b	4.0 e
SC			
30 + 10	7.7 a	7.9 a	7.6 ab
Mech./adj. best 60 nodes	7.3 ab	6.9 ab	8.3 a
Mech./adj. best 90 nodes	5.7 bc	5.9 ab	5.8 cd
Mech./no touch-up	2.7 d	2.8 c	4.0 e

Source: Morris and Cawthon (1981).
^zMeans within columns followed by the same letter or letters are not significantly different at the 5% level, by Duncan's multiple-range test. The higher the score the better the quality attribute.

[0337]

TABLE 4

THE MAIN EFFECTS OF SHOOT POSITIONING AND PRUNING TREATMENTS ON THE FIFTH YEAR (A COOL WET YEAR*) YIELD AND QUALITY OF 'CONCORD' GRAPES (1986).					
Main Effects	Yield (MT/ha)	Soluble solids	pH	Tartaric acid	Absorbance 520 nm
		%		%	
<u>Shoot Positioning</u>					
Hand	42.1a ^x	16.1a	3.64c	0.83a	0.28ab
Machine	43.7a	16.1a	3.65c	0.85a	0.333ab

TABLE 4-continued

THE MAIN EFFECTS OF SHOOT POSITIONING AND PRUNING TREATMENTS ON THE FIFTH YEAR (A COOL WET YEAR ^w) YIELD AND QUALITY OF 'CONCORD' GRAPES (1986).					
Main Effects	Yield (MT/ha)	Soluble solids % pH	Tartaric acid % pH	Absorbance 520 nm	
Centers broken only	37.7b	16.4a	3.72b	0.83a	0.350a
None	33.3c	16.1a	3.78a	0.81a	0.319ab
Pruning Treatment					
30 + 10	35.0d	16.6ab	3.78a	0.81a	0.333ab
50 + 10	40.0c	16.5ab	3.68b	0.83a	0.337ab
Mech./adj. best 60 nodes	30.6d	17.1a	3.77a	0.84a	0.391a
Mech./adj. best 80 nodes	34.7d	16.3ab	3.76a	0.84a	0.332ab
Mech./+fruit removal ^y	41.7bc	15.9b	3.64bc	0.82a	0.305bc
Mech./30 + 20 alt. years ^z	45/1ab	16.0b	3.70ab	0.81a	0.302bc
Mech./no touch-up	47.3a	15.0c	3.60c	0.83a	0.256c

^wNo days over 36.7° C.; 21.41 cm of rainfall in July and August.

^xMeans of main effects separated by Duncan's multiple range test at the 5% level. Means within main effect and column with the same letter(s) are not significantly different.

^yMechanically pruned with fruit removed by mechanical beating at a green pea size to a level approximating the fruit load of a 30 + 10 pruning severity.

^zMechanically pruned with no touch-up in even-numbered years and hand pruned to 30 + 10 (6 node canes) in odd-numbered years.

[0338]

TABLE 5

EFFECTS OF SHOOT POSITIONING AND PRUNING TREATMENTS ON THE TENTH YEAR (A HOT DRY YEAR ^w) OF THE STUDY ON QUALITY OF CONCORD GRAPES (1991).					
Main	Yield	Soluble solids	Acidity		Color
Effects	(MT/ha)	%	pH	(% tartaric)	520 nm
<u>Shoot Positioning</u>					
Hand	38.6ab ^x	14.0bc	3.34b	0.85a	0.106b
Machine	39.8a	13.6c	3.38ab	0.85a	0.101b
Centers broken only	36.3bc	14.5ab	3.43a	0.84a	0.135a
None	34.9c	14.6a	3.39ab	0.84a	0.139a
<u>Pruning Treatment</u>					
30 + 10	36.2ab	14.4a	3.34b	0.85a	0.112ab
50 + 10	37.7ab	14.2a	3.34b	0.84a	0.117ab
Mech./adj. best 60 nodes	34.3d	14.2a	3.40ab	0.84a	0.128a
Mech./adj. best 80 nodes	35.9ab	14.6a	3.46a	0.82a	0.146a

TABLE 5-continued

EFFECTS OF SHOOT POSITIONING AND PRUNING TREATMENTS ON THE TENTH YEAR (A HOT DRY YEAR ^w) OF THE STUDY ON QUALITY OF CONCORD GRAPES (1991).					
Main Effects	Yield (MT/ha)	Soluble solids % pH	Acidity (% tartaric) pH		Color 520 nm
Mech./+fruit removal ^y	37.6ab	14.4a	3.39ab	0.86a	0.127a
Mech./30 + 10 alt. years ^z	39.9a	14.0ab	3.34b	0.85a	0.121ab
Mech./no touch-up	40.0a	13.4b	3.37b	0.83a	0.090b

^w29 days over 37.4° C. and 8 days over 40.6° C.; 2.56 cm of rainfall in July and August.

^xMeans of main effects separated by Duncan's multiple range test at the 5% level. Means within main effect and column with the same letter(s) are not significantly different.

^yMechanically pruned with fruit removed by mechanical beating at a green pea size to a level approximating the fruit load of a 30 + 10 pruning severity.

^zMechanically pruned with no touch-up in even-numbered years and hand pruned to 30 + 10 (6 node canes) in odd-numbered years.

[0339]

TABLE 6

Shoot removal data from three cultivars*			
Cultivar Vine #	Shoots Removed	Shoots Left	Percent Removed
Cayuga White			
1	17	62	21
2	24	37	39
3	23	29	44
4	8	44	15
5	8	27	23
6	20	65	24
Seyval blanc			
1	24	51	32
2	31	44	41
3	36	62	37
4	25	71	26
5	22	48	31
Vignoles			
1	57	78	42
2	63	61	51
3	70	58	55

*Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Gary Main, Research Associate, University of Arkansas, for his assistance in collecting and assembling these data.

[0340]

TABLE 7

Machine calibration data for Table 6.						
Cultivar	Plate Speed Revolutions/		Ground Speed		Brush* Strokes/	
	Sec	Min	MPH	RPM	Ft.	M
Cuyuga White	0.57	34.2	1.4	2.25	2.2	7.2
Seyval blanc	0.71	42.6	1.4	2.25	2.8	9.2
Vignoles	1.85	111.0	1.4	2.25	8.0	26.2

*Includes both plates at four strikers (fingers) per plate. (Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Gary Main, Research Associate, University of Arkansas, for his assistance in collecting and assembling these data.)

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EXAMPLE I

[0387] Mechanization Activities of *Vitis labruscana* Grapes (and Other Grapes with Drooping Growth Habits) Trained on Single Curtain Trellis Systems:

[0388] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0389] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in FIGS. 44-47.

[0390] Step 2. Shoot Adjustment

[0391] Use modified mechanical pruner (remove brushes) shown in FIGS. 42-47 for touch up pruning and shoot thinner shown in FIGS. 53-55, if needed, to thin shoots when they are 2 to 3" (5-7.5 cm).

[0392] Step 3. Shoot Positioning and Fruit Adjustment

[0393] At 10% bloom, use mechanical shoot positioner shown in FIG. 41. In accordance with the research conducted by Dr. Robert Pool of Cornell University, approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with the thinning unit shown in FIGS. 53-55 (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0394] Step 4. Harvesting

[0395] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE II

[0396] Mechanization Activities of *Vitis labruscana* Grapes (and Other Grapes with Drooping Growth Habits) Trained on GDC Trellis and GDC-Like Canopy Systems.

[0397] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0398] Use mechanical pruner in FIG. 43. Two of these units can be mounted under an over-the-row tractor (harvester)(FIG. 43A).

[0399] Step 2. Shoot Positioning

[0400] At 10% bloom, use mechanical shoot positioner in **FIG. 42** to position shoots. Two of these units can be mounted under an over-the-row harvester, **FIG. 42A**.

[0401] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0402] After berry set, remove excess fruit using units in **FIGS. 71 and 72** (with modifications for half rows). In accordance with the research conducted by Dr. Robert Pool of Cornell University, approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed using modifications to thinning unit shown in **FIGS. 53-55** (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0403] Step 4. Breaking Centers

[0404] Break GDC centers as needed to allow air flow and sunlight into canopy centers using units in **FIGS. 48-51**.

[0405] Step 5. Harvesting

[0406] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE III

[0407] Mechanization of Minimal Pruned *Vitis labruscana* Grapes (and Other Grapes with Drooping Growth Habits) Trained on Single Curtain Trellis Systems:

[0408] Step 1. Shoot Thinning-1

[0409] Eliminate all new shoots, 2 to 3" (5-7.5 cm), on canes and the cordons that are located on the top of the canopy. This can be accomplished with modification of the unit shown in **FIG. 50**.

[0410] Step 2. Shoot Thinning-2

[0411] Use shoot thinners (if needed) to eliminate some of the excessive buds when shoots are 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) with units shown in **FIGS. 53-55**.

[0412] Step 3. Fruit Thinning

[0413] In accordance with the research conducted by Dr. Robert Pool of Cornell University, approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed using thinning unit shown in **FIGS. 53-55**, (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing

seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration in determining fruit load.

[0414] Step 4. Canopy Removal

[0415] In vigorous, older vineyards, remove the center top 12" (30 cm) more or less, of the canopy foliage to allow for movement of air and light into the center portion of the canopy.

[0416] Step 5. Minimal Pruning

[0417] Before harvest, trim all shoots to approximately 15" (38 cm) above the vineyard floor using units shown in **FIGS. 71 and 72**.

[0418] Step 6. Harvesting

[0419] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE IV

[0420] Mechanization Activities of Minimal Pruned *Vitis labruscana* Grapes (and Other Grapes with Drooping Growth Habits) Trained on GDC Trellis Systems

[0421] Step 1. Shoot Thinning

[0422] Use shoot thinners (if needed) to eliminate some of the excessive buds when shoots are 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) with units shown in **FIG. 18**, and with modifications to units shown in **FIGS. 53-55**.

[0423] Step 2. Fruit Adjustment

[0424] In accordance with the research conducted by Dr. Robert Pool of Cornell University, approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed using modifications for half rows on the thinning unit shown in **FIGS. 53-55** (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost becomes a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0425] Step 3. Minimal Pruning

[0426] At shatter, open centers with units in **FIGS. 50 and 51**. Before harvest, keep centers clean as needed with above units and including units shown in **FIGS. 48 and 49** and trim all shoots to approximately 15" (38 cm) above the vineyard floor using units shown in **FIGS. 71 and 72**.

[0427] Step 4. Harvesting

[0428] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum

foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE V

[0429] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on High Wire Bi-Lateral Cordon (Single Cordon)

[0430] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0431] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in FIGS. 64-66 with modifications and the unit in FIGS. 56 and 57, using a cutter bar above the cordon.

[0432] Step 2. Shoot Thinning

[0433] Use shoot thinners shown in FIGS. 2-7, 10-14, and 32 to thin shoots if needed when shoots are 4" to 5" (10-13 cm).

[0434] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0435] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with machines shown in FIGS. 2-7, 10-14, 32, and 53-55 (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0436] Step 4. Leaf Removal

[0437] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, use machines shown in FIGS. 39 and 40 to remove excessive leaves in fruiting zone to expose 50 to 80% of fruit to sunlight. This will improve fruit quality and aid in disease control through increasing light and air flow in the fruiting zone.

[0438] Step 5. Harvesting

[0439] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE VI

[0440] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on GDC and Other Divided Canopy Trellises

[0441] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0442] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in FIGS. 56 and 57.

[0443] Step 2. Touch-Up Pruning and Shoot Thinning

[0444] Use mechanical pruner shown in FIG. 57 with modifications including the removal of the inside cutter bar and in FIG. 60 to touch-up prune the vines. To thin shoots,

if needed, use shoot thinner in FIGS. 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, and 27 when shoots are 4" to 5" (10-13 cm).

[0445] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0446] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with units in FIGS. 53-55 using one half row unit modified for thinning GDC (etc.) (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0447] Step 4. Leaf Removal

[0448] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, use machine shown in FIG. 34 to remove excessive basal leaves in fruiting zone on the outside of the canopy to expose 50 to 80% of fruit to sunlight. This will improve fruit quality and aid in disease control through increasing light and air flow in the fruiting zone.

[0449] Step 5. Break Centers

[0450] Open centers with the units shown in FIGS. 48-51.

[0451] Step 6. Harvesting

[0452] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE VII

[0453] Mechanization of Minimal Pruned *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Trained to a High Wire Single Cordon Trellising System

[0454] Step 1. Shoot Thinning.

[0455] Use shoot thinners shown in FIGS. 10-14, 30, 32, and 53-55 to thin shoots when they are 4-5" (10-13 cm).

[0456] Step 2. Fruit Adjustment

[0457] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with machines shown in FIGS. 53-55 (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost becomes a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0458] Step 3. Canopy removal

[0459] In vigorous, mature vineyards in cool and/or humid regions, remove the center top 12" (30 cm) more or less with modified unit shown in FIG. 50.

[0460] Step 4. Minimal Pruning

[0461] Before harvest, trim all shoots to approximately 15" (38 cm) above the vineyard floor using units shown in **FIGS. 71 and 72**.

[0462] Step 5. Harvesting

[0463] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE VIII

[0464] Mechanization Activities of Minimal Pruned *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Trained on GDC Trellis Systems

[0465] Step 1. Shoot Thinning.

[0466] Use shoot thinners (if needed) to eliminate some of the excessive buds on the inside of each double curtain cordon when shoots are 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) with units shown in **FIG. 18**, and with modifications to units shown in **FIGS. 22 and 53-55** for half row.

[0467] Step 2. Fruit Adjustment

[0468] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed using modifications of half row unit shown in **FIGS. 53-55** (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost becomes a consideration in determining fruit load.

[0469] Step 3. Minimal Pruning

[0470] At shatter, open centers with units in **FIGS. 50 and 51**. Before harvest, keep centers clean as needed with above units and trim all shoots to approximately 15" (38 cm) above the vineyard floor using units shown in **FIGS. 71 and 72**.

[0471] Step 4. Harvesting

[0472] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE IX

[0473] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on Standard California T-trellis

[0474] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0475] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in **FIGS. 61-63** and modified **71, 72 and 73**.

[0476] Step 2. Shoot Thinning

[0477] If needed, use shoot thinner shown in **FIGS. 9, 24, 28 and 31** to thin shoots when they are 4" to 5" (10-13 cm).

[0478] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0479] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with modifications to machines shown in **FIGS. 53, 54 and 55** (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0480] Step 4. Leaf Removal

[0481] Early leaf removal should expose 50-80% of fruit to sunlight and acclimate grape skins to sunlight exposure. Use machines shown in **FIGS. 39 and 40** with modifications.

[0482] Step 5. Harvesting

[0483] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE X

[0484] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on vertical Moveable Catch Wires

[0485] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0486] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in **FIGS. 61-63**.

[0487] Step 2. Shoot Thinning

[0488] Use shoot thinner shown in **FIGS. 8 and 30** to thin shoots, if needed, when shoots are 4" to 5" (10-13 cm.)

[0489] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0490] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with machines shown in **FIGS. 30 and 53-55** with modification (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0491] Step 4. Leaf Removal

[0492] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, use machines shown in **FIGS. 34-38** to remove excessive basal leaves in fruiting zone to expose 50 to 80% of fruit to sunlight. This will improve fruit quality and aid in disease control through increasing light and air flow in the fruiting zone.

[0493] Step 5. Summer Pruning

[0494] Pruning in the summer time can be accomplished with the unit in **FIGS. 56 and 57**.

[0495] Step 6. Harvesting

[0496] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

EXAMPLE XI

[0497] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on Lyre or "U" and Other Divided Canopy Trellises

[0498] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0499] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using modifications of the mechanical pruner shown in **FIGS. 56-63**.

[0500] Step 2. Fruit Adjustment and Shoot Thinning

[0501] When shoots are 4" to 5" (10-13 cm), they may be removed with machines shown in **FIGS. 15, 16, 20-23, 29, and 33**. Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed with machines shown in **FIGS. 29, 30, 33, 53, 54, and 55**, modified for one half of curtain (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0502] Step 3. Leaf Removal

[0503] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, use machines shown in **FIGS. 35-38** to remove excessive leaves in fruiting zone to expose 50 to 80% of fruit to sunlight. This will improve fruit quality and aid in disease control through increasing light and air flow in the fruiting zone. Leaf removal is only recommended for reducing rot problems in susceptible cultivars and under high vigor conditions.

[0504] Step 4. Summer Pruning

[0505] Use machine in **FIGS. 56-60** to cut sides and tops for summer pruning. These vines must have their centers broken open. Using modifications with long slappers on the machine unit shown in **FIG. 52**.

[0506] Step 5. Harvesting

[0507] Use the harvester shown in **FIG. 83** that has been adapted to harvest a modified Lyre or "U" trellis system. The standard Lyre or "U" trellis system can be modified with the movable cordon wire assembly shown in **FIGS. 84A, 84B, and 84D** then harvested with the single or half-row harvester shown in **FIG. 84** or the over-the-row harvester shown in **FIG. 85**.

EXAMPLE XII

[0508] Mechanization of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American Hybrid Grapes Produced on Smart-Dyson Ballerina (and Similar) Trellising System

[0509] Step 1. Dormant Pruning

[0510] Mechanical prune during the dormant season using the mechanical pruner shown in **FIGS. 61-63** (with modifications) on the upper part of the ballerina and the units in **FIGS. 64-66** and that of **FIG. 70** (with modifications) on the lower part of the ballerina.

[0511] Step 2. Shoot Thinning

[0512] When shoots are 4-5" (10-13 cm) use shoot thinners shown in **FIGS. 8 and 30**, and those in **FIGS. 53-55**, with modifications, on the upper part of the ballerina. Use shoot thinners shown in **FIGS. 53-55** (modified) on the lower part of the ballerina if needed.

[0513] Step 3. Fruit Adjustment

[0514] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, excess fruit may be removed from the upper part of the ballerina with machines shown in **FIGS. 53-55** (amount and timing is dependent on cultivar, fruit set, crop load, vine size and vigor). Excess fruit on the lower part of the ballerina may be removed with units shown in **FIGS. 53-55**. The top and bottom obviously need different settings or adjustments to accomplish fruit thinning. To determine the amount of fruit load to retain, it is critical to maintain adequate soil moisture, to optimize fertilization, to control pests and to optimize other critical production factors. Also, in regions with short growing seasons, the number of days after harvest and before frost become a consideration for determining fruit load.

[0515] Step 4. Leaf Removal

[0516] Approximately 25-30 days post bloom, use machines shown in **FIGS. 34-38** (with modifications) on the upper part of the ballerina trellis and use units shown in **FIGS. 39 and 40** on the lower portion of the trellis to remove basal leaves. This may be needed to improve light and air flow in the fruiting zone.

[0517] Step 5. Summer Pruning

[0518] Summer prune upper part of ballerina with unit in **FIGS. 56 and 57**. Trim all shoots on lower part of ballerina to approximately 15" (38 cm) above the vineyard floor before harvest with units shown on **FIGS. 71 and 72**.

[0519] Step 6. Harvesting

[0520] Use an approved commercial harvester such as a harvester equipped with Quad-rods or bow-rods to remove difficult-to-harvest fruit. This harvesting approach allows for excellent fruit removal and does minimal damage to foliage. A harvester should allow for vines to maintain maximum foliage that is capable of carrying out needed photosynthesis and storage of carbohydrates in the vines until frost and/or leaf drop.

[0521] Thus, it will be appreciated that as a result of the present invention, a highly effective, improved vineyard apparatus, system, and/or method for vineyard mechanization is provided by which the principal objective, among others, is completely fulfilled. It is contemplated, and will be

apparent to those skilled in the art from the preceding description and accompanying drawings, that modifications and/or changes may be made in the illustrated embodiments without departure from the present invention. Accordingly, it is expressly intended that the foregoing description and accompanying drawings are illustrative of preferred embodiments only, not limiting, and that the true spirit and scope of the present invention be determined by reference to the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A shoot and fruit thinner adapted to selectively prune vines in a vineyard by removing selected vegetative shoots and/or fruit from one or more vines, said shoot and fruit thinner comprising:

a draft vehicle associated with a mobile power unit, said draft vehicle adapted to be moved about said vineyard along said vines;

a frame supported by said vehicle, said frame having at least one rotary tool depending therefrom, said tool adapted to selectively thin said shoots and/or said fruit on said vine as said vehicle moves about said vineyard, said tool powered by said power unit; and,

controls associated with said power unit for selectively manipulating said tool to control the amount of thinning of said shoots and/or fruit.

2. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 1, wherein said tool is supported by an articulating arm secured to said frame.

3. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 2, wherein said tool comprises a circular disc mounting a plurality of radially spaced apart fingers.

4. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 2, wherein said tool comprises a circular brush adapted to be rotated by said power unit.

5. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 2, wherein said tool comprises an oval chain unit mounting a plurality of regularly spaced apart fingers.

6. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 1, wherein said frame comprises a platform pivotally secured to said vehicle.

7. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 2, wherein said articulating arm comprises an upper and lower arm, and wherein said tool is secured to said lower arm.

8. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 3, wherein said fingers are flexible finger pairs having a first finger adjacent a second finger.

9. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 8, wherein said first and second fingers of each finger pair are formed from an elastomeric material, rubber, plastic, or the like.

10. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 5, wherein said fingers are flexible finger pairs having a first finger adjacent a second finger.

11. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 10, wherein said first and second fingers of each finger pair are formed from an elastomeric material, rubber, plastic, or the like.

12. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 1 further comprising a guide wheel protruding forwardly from said frame, said guide wheel adapted to roll along a central wire on a trellis as said vehicle moves forwardly along said vine.

13. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 12, wherein said tool is supported by an articulating arm secured to said frame.

14. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 13, wherein said tool comprises a circular disc mounting a plurality of radially spaced apart fingers.

15. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 13, wherein said tool comprises a circular brush adapted to be rotated by said power unit.

16. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 11, wherein said tool comprises an oval chain unit mounting a plurality of regularly spaced apart fingers.

17. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 13, wherein said frame comprises a platform pivotally secured to said vehicle.

18. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 13, wherein said articulating arm comprises an upper and lower arm, and wherein said tool is secured to said lower arm.

19. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 14, wherein said fingers are flexible finger pairs having a first finger adjacent a second finger.

20. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 19, wherein said first and second fingers of each finger pair are formed from an elastomeric material, rubber, plastic, and the like.

21. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 16, wherein said fingers are flexible finger pairs having a first finger adjacent a second finger.

22. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 21, wherein said first and second fingers of each finger pair are formed from an elastomeric material, rubber, plastic, and the like.

23. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 13, wherein said mobile power unit includes a remote hydraulic motor rotating said tool, by driving a first gear in contact with an endless chain, said endless chain driving a second gear associated with said rotating tool, and a shield covering said chain to prevent inadvertent contact with said vine, shoots, and/or fruit.

24. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 23, wherein said tool comprises a circular disc having a plurality of radial flexible fingers and driven by said hydraulic motor.

25. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 23, wherein said tool comprises a circular brush driven by said hydraulic motor.

26. The shoot and fruit thinner as recited in claim 23, wherein said tool comprises an oval chain unit having a plurality of flexible fingers and driven by said hydraulic motor.

27. A harvester adapted to be moved along a vine supported by a trellis in a vineyard to harvest fruit therefrom, said harvester comprising:

a wheeled frame for moving a picking head along said vine;

said picking head adapted to substantially surround a portion of said vine to be harvested;

a collecting conveyor located beneath said picking head, said collecting conveyor catching falling fruit from said portion of said vine during harvesting and subsequently transporting said collected fruit rearwardly;

a cross conveyor operatively intersecting said collecting conveyor adjacent the rear of said frame, said cross

conveyor accepting collected fruit from said collecting conveyor and subsequently transporting said collected fruit to the periphery of said frame;

flexible scales extending from said frame and adapted to contact said trellis, said scales providing a substantially impervious barrier to the egression of falling fruit; and,

an apron for transferring said falling fruit to said collecting conveyor; and, drive means for moving said frame along said vine.

28. The modified harvester as recited in claim 27, wherein said harvester is a half-row harvester and said picking head surrounds substantially half of said trellis.

29. The modified harvester as recited in claim 27, wherein said harvester is a full-row harvester and said picking head surrounds substantially all of said trellis.

30. The modified harvester as recited in claim 27, wherein said picking head includes at least one vibrating tool having a rotary head with a plurality of protruding spikes, said spikes adapted to contact a cordon wire and shake said vine as said harvester moves along said vine.

31. The modified harvester as recited in claim 27, wherein said picking head includes at least one striker unit having first and second rows of opposing strikers adapted to intermittently contact said vine during harvesting.

32. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 18 adapted for use with a modified lyre trellis and to facilitate vineyard mechanization, said system including a guide wire anchoring support comprising a U-member supported by

first and second vertical members extending upwardly from a subterranean cross member.

33. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 32, wherein said u-member has two spaced apart parallel vertical uprights joined by a horizontal cross member.

34. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 33, wherein said cross member is attached to the top of said first vertical member and said second vertical member supports two horizontal cross braces extending to said horizontal cross member adjacent each of said vertical uprights.

35. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 34, wherein said first vertical member supports a central wire just below said horizontal cross member, a support wire is attached to each of said vertical uprights adjacent said horizontal cross member, a cordon wire is attached to each of said vertical uprights above each of said support wires, and one or more catch wires are attached to each of said vertical uprights above said cordon wire and spaced vertically from each other.

36. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 35, wherein each of said catch wires is attached to said vertical uprights in an adjustable manner to selectively tension said vine.

37. The trellis anchoring system as recited in claim 36 further comprising hooks or catches on said vertical uprights to releasably secure chains on the ends of said catch wires to said vertical uprights.

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