

Making dibblers from mini tongs

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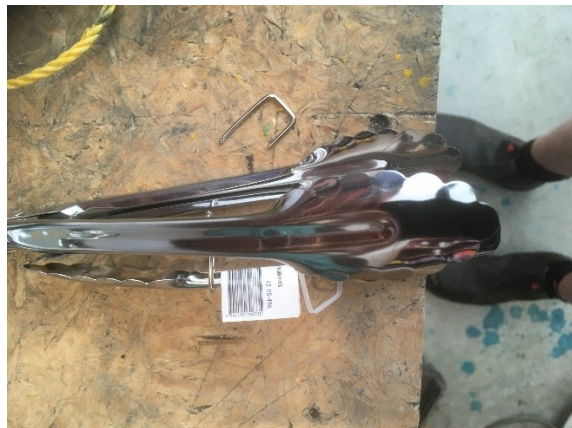
A tool to make pricking out more successful. The tiny seedlings are very delicate and if they are handled by squeezing their stems they die.

If seedlings are planted with a "J-root" the tap root grows up toward the surface rather than down into the depths of the pot or ground. J-rooted plants are much more susceptible to drying out and dying in the pot as well as later in the field.

Kmart purchase \$2 for a pair mini tongs. These are 180mm long.



Remove opening slider.



For the following steps, use smooth edge tin snips. Gilbow are the best brand. Don't use aeroplane snips as they leave a jagged edge.



Cut each side off the existing round end straight toward the heel removing all the scallops.



Use fine wheel and lightly grind off to remove the cut bur.



With a vice about 5mm open, jam in the blade and use a file to make the edge smooth and round.



The vice allows pressure to be put on the stainless steel. Repeat for all four edges.



Use a coarse oil stone and prepare grooves about 4mm apart. Polish off the remaining burs to achieve a smooth edge.



100mm welding edge clamp from Supercheap Auto.



Set it to clamp about 13mm and re-bend each blade to form a half tube.



Squeeze and rotate the ends so they form a symmetrical half circular tip.



Wide ended pliers, 12mm or more are best.



Do both blades. The tips will not close together at this point. They need approach bending.



Put a 15mm spacer between the handles and re bend the ends of the blades so they touch. I used the handles of the pliers.



Now when the dibblers are closed they meet to form the metal cone required to protect the tap root and prevent damage and J-root. About 0.75cm when closed seems to work well, but a larger one also works on grasses, iris where more than one plant is good.

