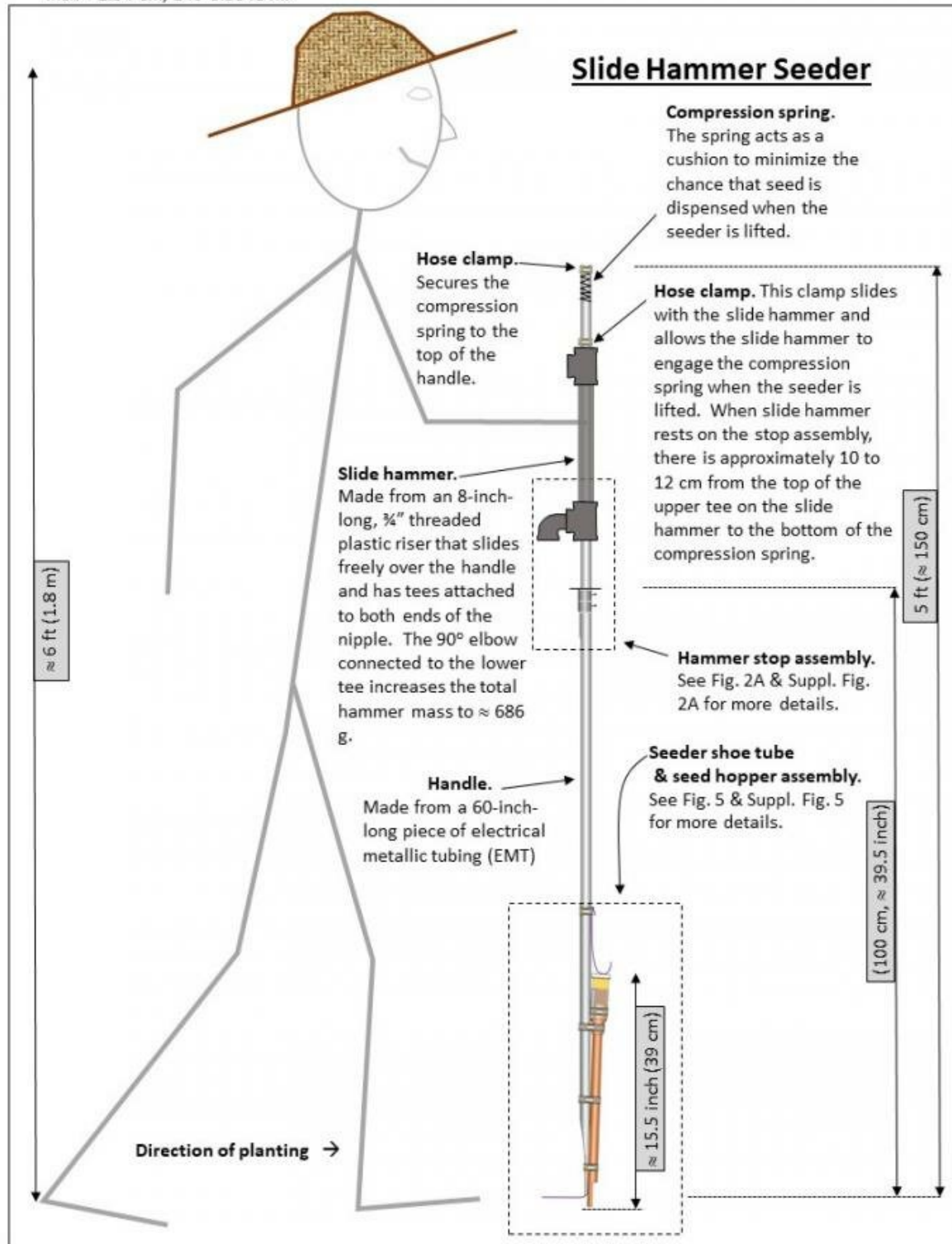


Planting small seeds simply: The allure of the slide hammer seeder

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Fig. 1. The slide hammer (SH) seeder illustrating the various components that are approximately to scale; 1 inch = 2.54 cm, 1 ft=0.3048 m.



The various components in constructing a Slide Hammer Seeder. Credit: Eric

Brennan

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The development of a simply made and easy-to-use planting device could make growing important herbs and beneficial insect-attracting plants significantly more efficient and effective. The low-cost tool, known as the Slide Hammer Seeder (a jab-style seeder), gives farmers and gardeners specific control in sowing plants with very small seeds.

The use and assembly of this device is documented by Eric Brennan of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in his article "The Slide Hammer Seeder: A Novel Tool for Planting Small Seeds", an open-access article published in *HortTechnology*.

Planting seeds by hand has been standard operating procedure since the beginning of agriculture more than 10,000 years ago. Even in the modern era, hand seeding is still important for major staple crops, especially in many parts of the developing world. Although jab-style seeders were widely used for corn in the United States during the early 1900s, their use today is primarily in research plots for agronomic crops with relatively large seeds.

However, these seeders are unsuitable for precision planting of small-seeded species that are of interest as cash crops or as "insectary plants"—those grown in high-value vegetable crops to provide pollen and nectar for beneficial insects.

To address the need for a seeder that allows the precise planting of small-seeded plants, the slide hammer seeder was developed. To make one, all the parts are available at your local hardware store at a cost of about

US\$32.50, and assembly can take as little as 2 hours.

Using the slide hammer seeder, seed is discharged in small quantities beneath the soil at preset depths, calculated for optimum growth potential.

Brennan adds, "I think this planter can really help farmers to accurately inter-seed important insectary [plants](#) like sweet alyssum between vegetable [crops](#) to help control aphids without pesticides. It also could be great for precise seeding of novel and nutritious vegetables such as purslane, which has very small and expensive seeds.

More information: Eric B. Brennan, The Slide Hammer Seeder: A Novel Tool for Planting Small Seeds, *HortTechnology* (2019). [DOI: 10.21273/HORTTECH04122-18](#)

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