A Propane Weed Burner for the Garden

Allen Dong, I-Tech, PO Box 413, Veneta, OR 97487

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A commercially available hand-held propane weed burner (BernzOmatic Outdoor Torch model JT800, Figure 1A) is modified for use in the garden. The BernzOmatic Outdoor Torch has a 1-inch diameter burner head that provides a narrow flame. A flame shield is added to the burner head (Figure 1B) to direct the heat downward and to shield the flame from the crop. With this modification, the burner can be placed within 1/2 inch from the crop and used between crop rows.

The modified burner was field tested on 3/4-inch tall broccoli. Swaths of weeds 4 1/2 inches wide and 1/2 inch away from the crop rows were flamed with no damage to the crop. It is easier to walk backwards, pulling the burner along, rather than forward, pushing the burner ahead. Flames can lap under the shield when the shield is dragged across uneven surfaces. The burn time is approximately 6 hours per gallon of propane. Propane is a flammable gas, use with caution.

Materials:

- BernzOmatic Outdoor Torch model JT800, available from True Value Hardware.
- Sheet metal, 6 1/2 x 14 inches x 18 gauge
- 2 hose clamps, 1-inch diameter
- Steel support wire, 12 gauge x 8 inches

Construction:

Cut and fold the sheet metal as shown in Figure 2. Secure the four folded corners with sheet metal screws. Insert a hose clamp through the two slots on the center tab and attach the flame shield to the burner wand. Insert the steel support wire through the hole at edge of sheet metal, 1/2 inch in, and bend the wire 270 degrees to secure it. Attach other end of the wire to the burner wand using a hose clamp.
Figure 1: A) BernzOmatic Outdoor Torch, B) Torch with flame shield.

Figure 2: A) Sheet metal, 6½ x 14 inches, B) Sheet metal folded into a flame shield.

Note: Mention of product name and store name does not imply endorsement by I-Tech.