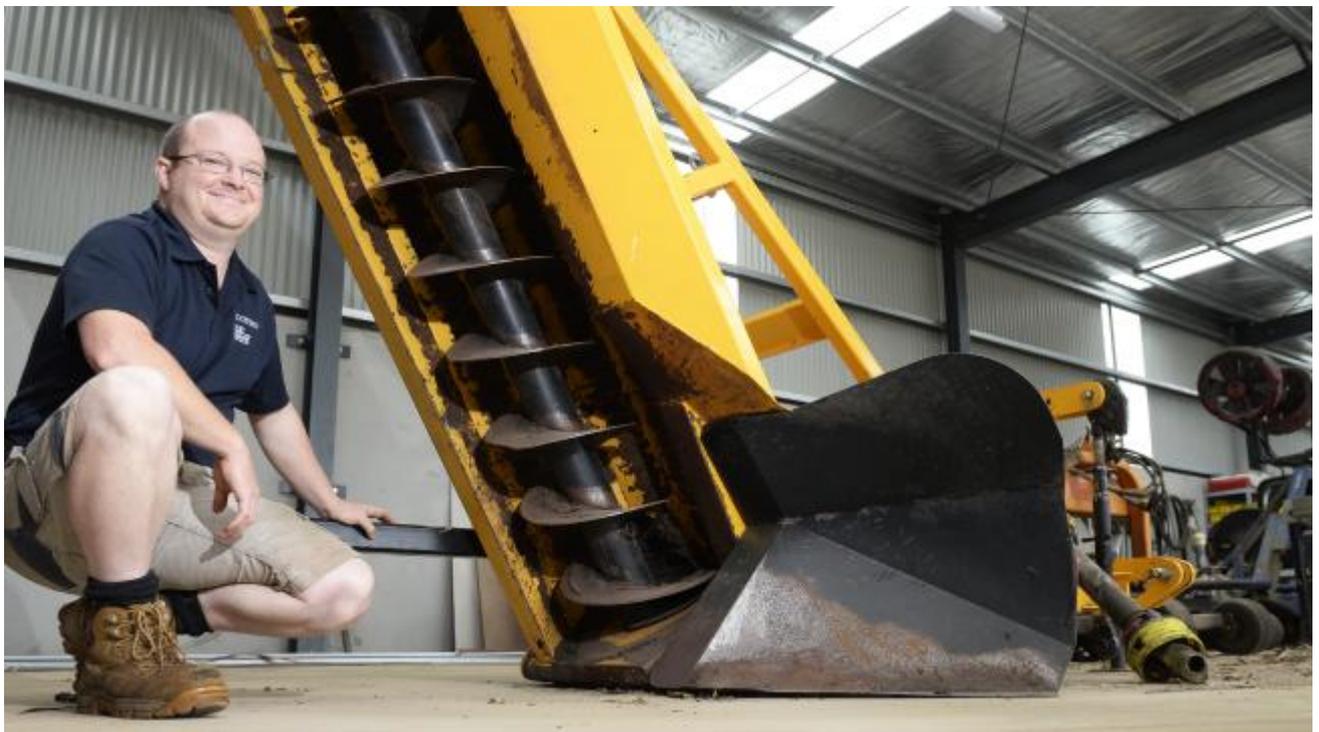


Clever Victorian-made compost turner a boon for horticulture

February 3, 2016 12:00am

COLIN TAYLORThe Weekly Times



Tried and tested: Kooyong Estates chief viticulturist Steve Faulkner with the winery's new Compost Turner.

A PIECE of equipment that can aerate thousands of tonnes of compost a day is proving its worth in a mix of applications in four states.

The PSU Compost Turner is an auger mounted on the rear linkage of a tractor.

It's angled at up to 60 degrees and works by moving along a windrow of compost up to 1.8 metres high and cutting into the side, slicing a layer of up to 240mm deep.

The cut material is mixed, aerated and tipped over the top of the windrow on to the other side.

This continuing process ensures that outside layers are moved to the middle of the windrow, covered by material that had previously been in the middle.

The tractor attachment is manufactured by family-owned business Cutcon from premises in Keilor East.

Cutcon principal Zeljko Lukin has a 36-year background in mechanical engineering, specialising in industrial automation.

“Our compost turner came about after a friend had need of such a machine, but was finding the options available were extremely expensive,” he said.

“It took about two years to get to this point, but the result is something quite different to anything else on the market.

“The machine’s method fully complies with Australian Standard AS4454-2012, which specifies that potentially pathogenic bacteria and weed seeds ought to be completely eliminated in the process of pasteurisation.

“We conducted field testing through Kooyong Winery at Tuerong, on the Mornington Peninsula, and they now have a machine on-site. Others have gone to Tasmania, South Australia, NSW and across Victoria for varying applications, such as wineries, potato growing and green-waste processing.”

There are two models — the PSU 36-18-16 and PSU 36-18-20 with the principal difference a larger auger and extra weight.

The 16 model weighs 550kg and has a cutting depth of up to 200mm, while the 20 weighs 750kg and can move compost at a depth of 240mm.

The 16 and 20 end numbers signify the recommended wheel track for the tractor that would carry it, with the smaller unit requiring 1600mm wheel track and the other 2000mm.

Minimum power requirement is 14.7-22kW (20-30hp).

Theoretically, the smaller unit can turn 700 cubic metres of compost material every hour, while the other stretches that to 900 cubic metres.

Prices are \$24,200 for the PSU 36-18-16 and \$26,950 for the PSU 36-18-20.

For details, visit windrowcompostturner.com.au.

Comments