



Gary Drake drives the Zapper III as Frank Davis and John Hughey watch. The Zapper III, invented by Oceanography International Corp., uses high frequency waves similar to those in a microwave oven to kill weeds in the soil.

Microwaves used to kill weeds

By CINDY COLVIN
Battalion Reporter

While most people will be using their microwave ovens to prepare meals, in the near future, farmers will be using microwaves to prepare land for the growing season.

A new invention called the weed zapper has been developed by the Oceanography International Corp. in College Station. The weed zapper uses ultra-high frequency waves to kill weeds before the seeds are planted.

John R. Hughey, president of the

corporation, said the new device is not available on the market yet.

Chemical treatment, Hughey said, has been limited because the federal government has approved fewer herbicides each year. The herbicides used continually on the weeds tends to become ineffective as the weeds become immune to the treatment, he continued. The weeds do not grow immune to microwave treatment, Hughey said.

While chemical treatment sometimes only lasts one season, the microwave treatment will last three

years, Hughey said, thus saving the grower some money in the long run.

Hughey said that the first weed zapper is called Zapper III.

The Zapper III is self-propelled and passes over the rows of the field. With the use of soil handling attachments located close to the ground, the machine scoops up the soil and passes it through a microwave unit. Once the soil is exposed, the machine places it back on the ground.

Hughey said production cost of the Zapper III would exceed

\$250,000 per unit. The corporation spent \$1 million in research, and would need another \$10 million to start production, he said.

Because production cost of the units makes the manufacturing and distribution of the Zapper III impossible for the Oceanography International Corporation, Hughey said that on approval of the shareholders, the corporation plans to look for a distributor.

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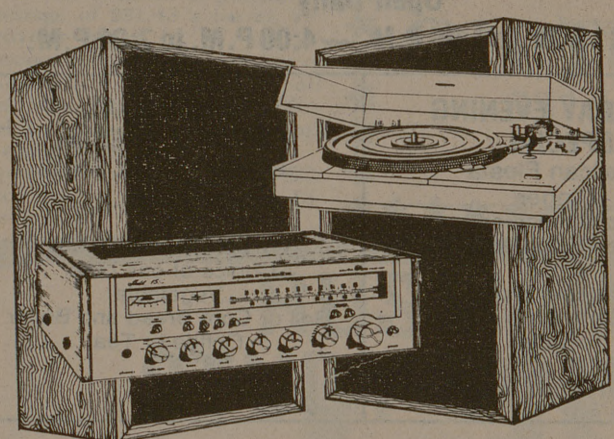
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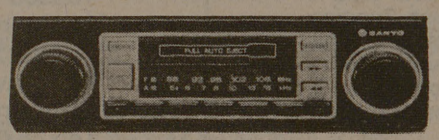
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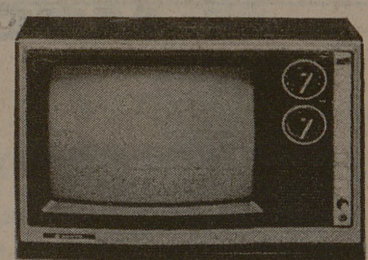
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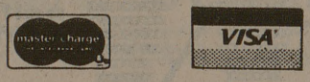
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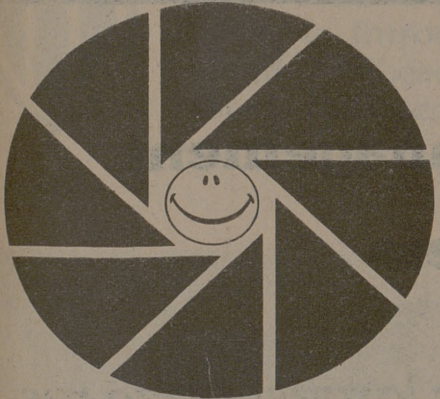
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