



What you should know about JOHNNY'S BROADFORK

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9338 JOHNNY'S 727 BROADFORK

9383 JOHNNY'S 415 BROADFORK

9677 JOHNNY'S 520 BROADFORK

The Johnny's broadfork design is by Eliot Coleman and made exclusively for us by a skilled Maine toolmaker. Your broadfork is invaluable in deeply aerating the soil without damaging the soil structure or mixing the layers. With proper care, you will find this tool to be a pleasure to work with for years to come.

PARTS LIST

1 – Steel fork base	2 – ¼-20 x 2" bolts	2 – ¼-20 self locking nuts
4 – Washers	2 – 50" wooden handles	2 – Small wedges

TOOLS NEEDED

- Hammer, mallet, 7/16" wrench, sharp knife

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

- **STEP 1:** Lay the steel fork on flat, secure surface. Insert the flat end of each handle into a "ferrule" of the fork. Maneuver the handles until the end of each handle is flush with the bottom of its ferrule. The handles may need to be tapped into place with the mallet. When the handles are inserted properly, the predrilled holes in each handle should line up with the predrilled holes in the ferrules.
- **STEP 2:** Insert a 2" bolt through each of the predrilled holes, being sure to place a washer on either side of the ferrule. Do not tighten yet.
- **STEP 3:** Insert one of the small wooden wedges into the slit in the end of each handle. Tap lightly with a hammer until the wedges will go no further into the handles. This step ensures that the handles will fit snugly and not wobble during use.
- **STEP 4:** With a sharp knife (Johnny's floral knife works great), score the exposed wedge flush with the end of each handle. Tap lightly on the exposed section, and it should fall off easily.
- **STEP 5:** Use a wrench to securely tighten the nuts on each bolt.

USING YOUR BROADFORK

Aerating the soil with your broadfork once a year will greatly enhance the long-term productivity of the soil. Work backwards down the bed to avoid stepping on the freshly worked area. With the tines on the side of the fork facing you, press the fork into the soil by stepping on the crossbar. Pull back on the handles approximately 45° as you step backwards off the crossbar, and lift the broadfork out of the soil. Move the tool toward you 6"-8" from the last insertion point and repeat.

When you use your body weight to insert and leverage the tool, instead of your back and arms, this work seems almost effortless. After some practice you will develop a nice rhythm.

To keep your broadfork in good condition, clean it (and all tools) after use. Brush dirt off tines with a wire brush and/or wipe with a slightly oily cloth to minimize rust. Apply linseed oil to handles once each season just before storing the tool for the winter. The tines are made of a steel that will bend without breaking when overloaded. They can be easily returned to their original positions by using a large vise or using a length of pipe over the tine for extra leverage.

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For further information, write or call us at the address or phone/fax numbers listed above.

Soil Aeration

From "Four-Season Harvest" By Eliot Coleman

In my vegetable garden, I grow mostly short-season annuals rather than perennials. By so doing, I miss a key factor in natural soil structure and aeration: the roots of perennial plants. The root systems of perennial herbs, grasses, shrubs, and trees in a truly undisturbed soil are more fibrous and permanent than the roots of annuals in a garden. Although I may have managed to add extra organic matter with compost, the soil still lacks the extra aeration provided by the perennial roots. I want to get that extra aeration without breaking up the soil structure. It would be nice if I could just lift up the soil without turning it over and allow air underneath. Fortunately, there is a wonderful tool designed to do just that.

Once a year, I aerate the soil with a broadfork. This is a 24-inch-wide, 5-tined fork with 2 handles. It is used to lift and aerate the soil without mixing the layers. The gardener holds a handle in each hand, presses the tool into the soil by stepping on the crossbar, pulls back on the handles to gently lift the soil, pulls out the tool, moves it 6 to 8 inches back, and repeats the process. You can do the same thing with a standard garden fork in smaller bites, but the broadfork is more fun. Like any classic hand tool designed for a specific job, it is a pleasure to use. With its 2 handles and wide crossbar, the motion is effortless. Helpers in my garden, especially kids, always enjoy using the broadfork, first because it is a simple tool and makes them feel athletic and coordinated, and second because of the sense of accomplishment it gives. People instinctively feel that the tool makes sense.

A gardener with a broadfork is doing by hand what large-scale organic farmers do with a winged chisel plow. I have visited organic vegetable farms in many parts of the world, and one belief most of them hold in common is the value of gentle soil lifting from below without turning. They regard it as a key practice for enhancing long-term soil productivity.

