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THE TILE SAW

In a recent issue of THE LAPIDARY JOURNAL (Vol. 52(10):16,18, Jan, 1999) the virtues of a 10 inch tile saw are extolled for use in the world of gemstones. A little brother of the machine described in that article is available from the discount tool and equipment companies (Harbor Freight Tools, TELE: 1-800-423-2567, Internet: harborfreight.com; and Northern Tool & Equipment Co., TELE: 1-800-533-5545, Internet: northerntool.com) and can be had for just a few sawbucks (pun intended). I have seen this little saw, advertised from \$59.99 to \$84.99 depending on the company, and the catalog it is advertised in. The saw has a 7 inch diamond blade with a 1" arbor, a pan for water for cooling and lubricating the blade, a tilt table, and can cut a maximum depth of 1.4" @ 90°.

It does not have an efficient water retrieval system so I use mine on a portable work table set up outside, usually in my driveway where the excess water can runoff, harmlessly, into the yard and join the ground water. Extra blades cost only about \$12.00.

The little saw is just the ticket for trimming up your local Pennsylvanian fossils in shale or thin limestone. I don't think I would want to take on 500 kilos of agatized dinosaur coprolite with it, but for trimming your local finds to reasonable size and shape, without the hazards of chisel and rock pick, it does a nice job. The only drawback that I have found with it, thus far, is the lack

of a good water catching/retrieval system and the fact that the blades have a one inch arbor hole, which is less common than the typical 5/8" variety. With a Harbor Freight outlet located locally in Independence on Noland Road, just south of I-70, however, I have had no problem obtaining replacement blades. If you want to trim some of you fossils in matrix, so they fit your collection boxes a little better, you might think about giving this saw a try.