

**T**RADITIONALLY, the rule applied to broadcast-band antennas has been "the longer the better." While this rule still holds, it is also true that when antenna length is already short compared to the wavelength of the signal being received (as is the case with most practical BCB antennas), a further reduction in length, within certain limits, has little effect on antenna efficiency.

Almost any single wire antenna of random length will give good results when used with one of the antenna couplers which were described in the 1965 Fall Edition of the *ELECTRONIC EXPERIMENTER'S HANDBOOK* ("Soup Up That AM Broadcast Receiver"). In the author's case, tests made with a 100-foot horizontal, a 50-foot horizontal, and a 33-foot vertical antenna showed little difference in performance when DX'ing the BCB with a medium-priced communications receiver.

**"Loaded" Whip.** Since most antennas for BCB reception are "short" anyway, why not "load" the antenna with an inductance above its center for greater efficiency? To try this idea, the author used a 9-foot whip mounted on a pole with a 24-foot down-lead making up the rest of a 33-foot vertical. An adjustable ferrite antenna coil was connected at the base of the whip as shown in Fig. 1, and the base of the antenna grounded. A transistor radio held near the antenna wire was used to resonate the antenna.

To tune such an antenna across the broadcast band and also couple it to the receiver, one of the antenna couplers featured in the article mentioned above should be used, and is shown in Fig. 1 within the dotted lines. The capacitor used in the tuner is a 100-pf. mica unit, and the coil is simply another ferrite antenna coil. Tests with the loaded whip showed a very worthwhile improvement in signal strength—WMAQ, Chicago (670 kc.), for example, was three "S" units higher in Los Angeles with the loading coil in the circuit.

**Loop Antenna Cuts QRM.** What about adjacent-channel DX? If the strength of strong local stations can be reduced somewhat, it becomes possible to copy

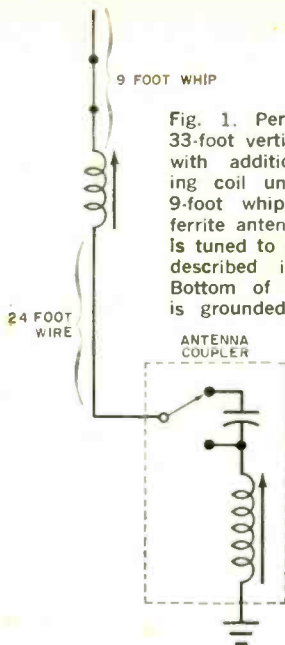


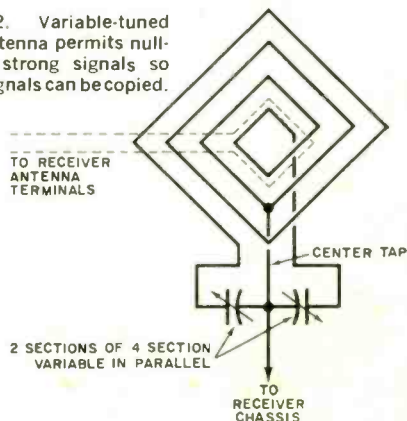
Fig. 1. Performance of 33-foot vertical improves with addition of loading coil under topmost 9-foot whip. Coil is a ferrite antenna type, and is tuned to resonance as described in the text. Bottom of 24-foot wire is grounded for tuning.

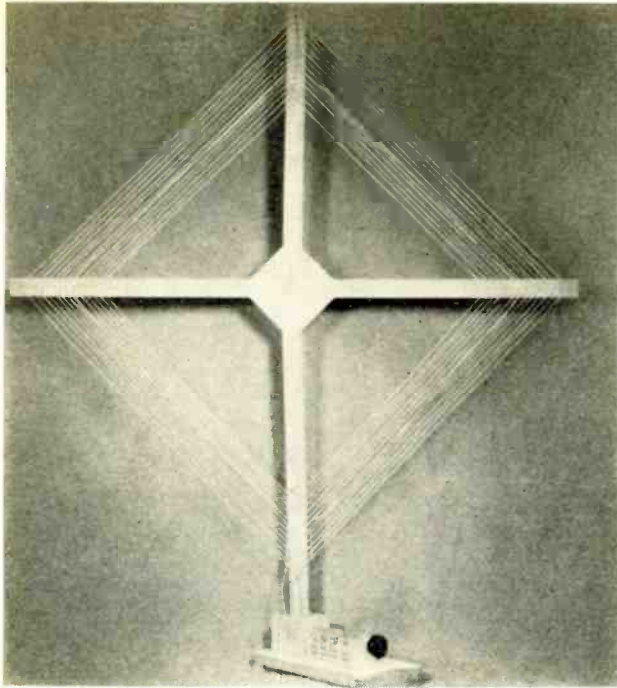
# Compact BCB DX Antennas

Attention to antenna design helps dig out those buried BC stations

By F. J. BAUER, JR., W6FPO

Fig. 2. Variable-tuned loop antenna permits nulling of strong signals so weak signals can be copied.





Crossarms of loop are made with  $\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 44" plywood strips—the vertical arm in one piece and the horizontal in two pieces. Join the three strips together with 6"-square pieces of plywood nailed and glued on each side of the joint. In the author's unit, the loop was mounted in a wooden block fastened to the base holding the tuning capacitor. The loop itself, which is wound 1" in from the ends of the arms, is supported with wire brads. The one-turn coupling coil is wound on the back of the arms opposite the center turn of the loop and as close to it as possible. Three connections are made to the receiver as shown in the diagram on p. 101, two to the antenna terminals and one to the chassis. Note: do not ground the loop to the chassis of an a.c.-d.c. radio due to the shock hazard which might result.

stations in the background. Wave traps were tried but were of little use. In some instances the trap acted more like an antenna than a trap, and merely aggravated the interference problem.

A loop antenna was considered next. If properly built, it would have reasonably good signal pickup and a sharp null at right angles to the plane of the loop. Its directional characteristics would make it possible to null out, to some extent, strong ground-wave signals from local stations.

Although the author's loop looks like a throwback to the 1920's, it performs better than expected. In Los Angeles, for example, it is possible to reduce the signal of a powerful local, KMPC on 710 kc., to receive Chicago, WGN on 720 kc., with little or no interference. After playing around with this circuit for a while, you will often be able to separate and identify distant stations on the same frequency by rotating the loop antenna for a null on one of the signals.

**Loop Construction.** At its largest, the loop measures 42" across, and consists of 13 turns of stranded wire spaced  $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart. Construct the crossarms of the loop as described in the caption above.

To couple the loop to the receiver, wind a separate one-turn coupling coil on the back of the cross-arms opposite the center turn and as close to it as possible.

The best way to tune the loop is with a salvaged four-section variable capacitor of the type used in older receivers. When you pair the sections by connecting them in parallel, the effective maximum capacity of the two resulting sections is well over 600 pf. A similar arrangement can be worked out by gangging two double-section TRF variable capacitors, which are readily available from most electronic parts houses.

Connect the capacitor sections as shown in Fig. 2, and make the three connections to the receiver (to the antenna terminals and ground). With the center tap disconnected, turn the loop for *minimum* signal on a strong local station. Next, place the center tap at approximately the center of the loop, and tune the variable for *maximum* signal. Adjust the tap for minimum signal, and, again, tune the capacitor for maximum. The variable capacitor is retuned as you tune across the broadcast band.

You'll be surprised at the improvement in your BCB DX score!