44 disposed at the junctions of the ends 45,47 and configured to permit entry into the pocket areas 44 of the illustrated lip stabilizing projection 18.

As the adapter 22 is rearwardly moved onto the lip ~~22~~10, sliding engagement between the sloped adapter surfaces 42 with the complementarily sloped block surfaces 40 causes the blocks 38 to move toward one another along the front lip edge, as indicated by the arrows 46 in FIG. 1, to cause the front lip projection 18 to be received in the facing block pockets 44. The previously mentioned connector structure (not shown) is then operatively placed in the aligned adapter and lip openings 28,20,30. The sloping configurations of the engaged adapter and block surfaces 42,40 substantially inhibits side-to-side horizontal movement of the installed adapter 22 relative to the front lip edge 16, and the installed block members 38 further shield the lip projection 18 from operational wear.

As can be seen, the use of the stabilizing blocks 38 provides a simple, effective and inexpensive technique for achieving the dual functions of shielding the front lip projection 18 from operational abrasion wear and inhibiting undesirable side to side movement of the installed adapter 22 relative to the bucket lip 10. Additionally, these desirable results are achieved without the use of separate fasteners to mount the stabilizing blocks 38 in place. Further, the installed stabilizing blocks 38 automatically shift toward one another along the length of the front bucket lip edge 16 in response to rearward movement of the adapter 22 relative to the lip 10, either during initial installation of the adapter 22 or during subsequent rearward tightening of the adapter 22 on the lip to adjust for operational wear.

The foregoing detailed description is to be clearly understood as being given by way of illustration and example only, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited solely by the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Earth engaging apparatus comprising:

an elongated bucket lip having a front edge portion with a forwardly extending projection thereon;

a wear member operatively disposable on said lip by rearwardly moving said wear member onto said lip in a manner positioning a front portion of said wear member in a forwardly overlying relationship with said projection; and

a stabilizing structure mountable on said front edge portion of said lip for movement along the length of said front edge portion toward said projection,

said front portion of said wear member and said stabilizing structure being relatively configured in a manner such that during rearward positioning of said wear member on said lip said front portion of said wear member engages said stabilizing structure and moves ~~it~~ the stabilizing structure toward said projection.

2. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:

said wear member is an adapter.

3. The earth engaging apparatus of claim 2 wherein:

said adapter has a rear portion including upper and lower legs configured to straddle said lip when said adapter is operatively installed thereon.

4. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:

said stabilizing structure comprises first and second stabilizing block members slidably mountable on said front edge portion of said lip on opposite sides of said projection.

5. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 4 wherein:

said front portion of said wear member is configured to engage said first and second stabilizing block members and slide each of them toward said projection in response to operative rearward positioning of said wear member on said lip.

6. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 5 wherein:

said first and second stabilizing block members have pocket areas therein which are configured to shieldingly receive portions of said projection in response to movement of said first and second stabilizing block members toward said projection by said wear member.

~~7. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 5 wherein:~~

~~said first and second stabilizing block members are configured to inhibit undesirable side-to-side movement of said wear member when said wear member is operatively mounted on said lip.~~

~~8~~7. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 4 wherein:

each of said first and second stabilizing block members has a relatively narrow outer end, a relatively wide inner end, a rear side extending between said inner and outer ends, a front side extending between said inner and outer ends and being sloped relative to said rear side, and a pocket area positioned at the juncture of said rear side and said inner end and being configured to receive a portion of said projection in response to movement of the block member along said front edge of said lip toward said projection.

~~9~~8. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:

said stabilizing structure includes a stabilizing member and a magnetic structure for slidingly attaching said stabilizing member to said front edge portion of said lip for movement along its length toward and away from said projection.

~~10~~9. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:

said stabilizing structure includes first and second stabilizing members positionable on said front edge portion of said lip on opposite sides of said projection, and magnetic structures for slidingly holding said first and second stabilizing members on said front edge portion of said lip for movement toward and away from said projection.

~~11~~10. Earth engaging apparatus comprising:

an elongated bucket lip having a front edge portion with a forwardly extending projection thereon; and

first and second stabilizing members mounted on said front edge portion of said lip for slidable movement along its length toward and away from said projection, said first and second stabilizing members having pocket portions and being in an operative position on said lip in which opposite side portions of said projection are received in said pocket portions; and

a wear member removably mounted on said lip with a front portion of said wear member overlying said first and second stabilizing members and holding them in said operative position in which said stabilizing members shield said projection from operational wear ~~and inhibit undesirable side-to-side motion of said wear member with respect to said lip~~.

~~12~~11. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim ~~11~~ 10 wherein:

said wear member is an adapter.

~~13~~12. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim ~~11~~ 10 wherein:

said first and second stabilizing members are magnetically held on said front edge portion of said lip.

~~14~~13. Earth engaging apparatus comprising:

an elongated bucket lip having a front edge portion with a forwardly extending projection thereon; and

first and second stabilizing members mounted on said front edge portion of said lip on opposite sides of said front edge portion of said lip and having pocket portions formed therein, said first and second stabilizing members being slidable along said front edge portion of said lip toward said projection in a manner causing opposite side edge portions of said projection to enter said pocket portions and thus be shielded by said first and second stabilizing members.

~~15~~14. The earth engaging apparatus of Claim ~~14~~ 13 wherein:

said first and second stabilizing members are magnetically mounted on said front edge portion of said lip.

~~16~~15. A method of attaching a wear member to a bucket lip having a front edge portion with a forwardly extending projection thereon, said method comprising the steps of:

slidably mounting first and second stabilizing members on said front edge portion of said lip on opposite sides of said projection for movement along the length of said lip toward and away from said projection; and

rearwardly moving said wear member onto said lip, in an overlying relationship with said projection and said first and second stabilizing members, in a manner causing said wear member to forcibly move said first and second stabilizing members toward said projection.

~~17~~16. The method of Claim ~~16~~ 15 wherein:

each of said first and second stabilizing members has an end with a pocket area formed therein,

said slidably mounting step is performed in a manner such that said pocket areas face said projection, and

said rearwardly moving step is performed in a manner causing said portions of said projection to enter said pocket areas.

~~18~~17. The method of Claim ~~16~~ 15 wherein:

said slidably mounting step is performed by magnetically attaching said first and second stabilizing members to said front edge portion of said lip.

~~19~~18. The method of Claim ~~16~~ 15 wherein:

the first and second stabilizing members, when moved toward said projection by said wear member, function to shield said projection from operational wear ~~and inhibit undesirable side-to-side movement of said wear member relative to said lip~~.

~~20~~19. The method of Claim ~~16~~ 15 wherein:

said method is performed using an adapter as said wear member.