

Ring Supports Make Healthier Plants

Tie a plant up tight, and it grows tall and thin. That's as true of tomatoes as it is of young trees, says Amil Kleinert.

"If you can't move a muscle, it atrophies," notes Kleinert.

To give plants movement yet still provide support, Kleinert came up with a system of rings that snap onto standard "T" posts. He offers a three-ring (8-in., 10-in. and 12-in.) T-Mate-O system for tomato plants and a one-ring Tree-Mate-O system for young trees with up to 2 1/2-in. dia. trunks.

"All our rings are made in the U.S. of the highest grade UV-protected plastic," says Kleinert.

Snap-out sections make it easy to place the rings around existing plants. Durable rubber bands hold the stems or trunks at the center of the rings.

Kleinert's rings have caught on fast. Some large tree nurseries have bought tens of thousands of them for use with trees grown in the ground as well as trees grown in pots.

A third type of ring support can be attached to cable wire, rail or pipe. This sys-



Tree-Mate-O supports young trees with up to 2 1/2-in. dia. trunks. It sells for \$7.99.

tem works especially well for trees grown in pots. "Our tree supports survived hurricane winds in Florida when trees supported by other systems blew over."

Kleinert sells the 3-ring T-Mate-O set for \$8.99 and the single ring Tree-Mate-O support for \$7.99.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Amil Kleinert, T-Mate-O, 6921 Stacy Road, Charlestown, Ind. 47111 (ph 812 256-1069 or 888 854-5497; fax 812 256-9344; trees@cwgo.com; www.treesupports.com).

Custom Sculptures Feature Your Animal's Own Fur

The next best thing to having a live animal around may be a "touchable" sculpture or portrait made from that animal's own fiber, say people who've bought "fiber art" from an unusual artist in Silver Lake, Wis.

Sandra Nowicki lives on a farm with her own menagerie of animals and used fleece off her own sheep to make her first sculptures.

She has worked with a variety of fiber or hair, including horse, sheep, goat, dog, Angora rabbit, llama and even camel.

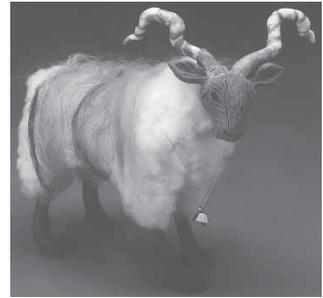
Clients can send photos of their pets, along with actual wool or hair clippings from that animal. Nowicki turns some of the hair or fur into felt and uses the rest "as is".

For the sculptures, she uses smooth fence wire to form the animal's frame and then inserts fiberfill stuffing. For most sculptures, she then molds their faces and legs from clay. The animal's own fiber is used to "clothe" it, retaining the same texture and color as the animal it represents. Nowicki sews all the pieces together, but says the stitches disappear within the fiber.

Another of Nowicki's hand-made visual arts items is the felt basket. She uses sheep's wool (either natural colors or dyed) to make the felt, and then forms it into a basket shape by using heat, pressure and a vinyl ball.

Nowicki fills custom orders for wool sculptures, wall hangings and felt baskets within six weeks. They're available in various sizes from 6 to 24 in. tall, and prices for most sculptures range from \$45 to \$175 plus S&H. All pieces are signed by the artist.

She also teaches classes in drawing, collage, sculpture and the ancient art of felt



Nowicki used fence wire to form the ram and dog frames. She filled them with fiberfill stuffing and molded their faces and legs from clay. The animals' own fibers "clothe" it.



making.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pegasus Studios, Sandra Nowicki, Box 1326, Silver Lake, Wis. 53170 (ph 262 889-4802; sannowicki@aol.com; www.pegasuspetsportraits.com).



Two-wheeled 36-in. wide cart has grips that easily catch and release pots, grow-bags and other containers. It sells for \$775.

Rolling "Pot Hog" Handles Big Loads With Ease

Move a few big potted trees or a couple of 250-lb. livestock protein tubs, and you quickly learn that bigger is not always better. That's especially true in the tree nursery business.

"When containers have to be pulled out of the ground, there are a lot of back injuries," says Amil Kleinert, former farmer and manufacturer of the Pot Hog. "We developed the Pot Hog to pull pots out of the ground, but find that garden stores and nurseries like them to move pots around above ground, too. We even sold one to the Belagio casino in Las Vegas."

Not only does the Pot Hog make life easier on the worker and the tree, it lets one person do the work of two or more. Just 36 in. wide, 36 in. long and 34 in. high, the secret of the two-wheel cart is in the grips that automatically catch and release pots, grow-bags, and other containers. A lever by the handles lets the operator widen or narrow the grip spread for different size loads.

The leverage effect of wheels and axle tucked next to the grips means even a small person can carry a big load. Pushing down on the handles instead of pulling up also reduces back and shoulder strain. Leveraging is magnified by the long handgrip handles that are spread shoulder width or more.

"My 125-lb. wife can move a 250-lb. pot without a problem," says Kleinert.



These Pot Hog Jr. grips get a good hold on big pots.

Pot Hogs are priced at \$775. They're available with a \$158 telescoping and hinged drawbar attachment for use behind ATVs, garden tractors and utility vehicles. A \$175 wheelbarrow attachment adds even more versatility to the cart.

A hydraulically-controlled tractor attachment for short wheel base compact skid loaders like the Toro Dingo is priced at \$4,950. The grips are available as hand tools called Pot Hog Jr. and Oink. They are ideal for grabbing and dragging pots shorter distances. They're priced at \$185 and \$170, respectively, for pairs.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Amil Kleinert, T-Mate-O, 6921 Stacy Road, Charlestown, Ind. 47111 (ph 812 256-1069 or 888 854-5497; fax 812 256-9344; trees@cwgo.com; www.treesupports.com).



You can learn to make this adult-size bent willow chair and end table in one of the many classes Dan Moffett teaches.

How To Start A Rustic Furniture Business

Willow furniture building is a skill that Kentucky craftsman Dan Moffett shares with others through various workshops and courses that he offers the public.

Moffett has been making what he calls "rustic twig" furniture since 1982. His business, Kentucky Rustic Furniture, is located in Danville, Ky., and has had nationwide success, with his work being sold in craft, garden and specialty shops across the country.

In a four-day workshop, he teaches how to make all of the following items: an adult-size bent willow chair, an ottoman, an end table and a garden trellis. But he doesn't stop there. Moffett also shares tips on how to go into the furniture business, with instructions on "how to price your work" and "where to sell your creations."

The registration fee for this workshop is \$399, but he points out that the value of the

furniture you will build and take home is over \$400 (all tools and supplies are provided).

Moffett also offers a two-day class where participants make only a chair. The fee is \$299.

Lastly, he offers a 4-day private session where students make four items and receive free wood cutting tools to take home. This one costs \$599 for one person or \$499 each for two or three people.

There are a number of bed and breakfast operations nearby (linked on Moffett's website), and a discount is available at a local hotel.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kentucky Rustic Furniture, Dan Moffett, Box 1684, Danville, Ky. 40423 (ph 606 346-9375; ky rustic@alltel.net; www.kentuckyrustic.com).