"Puckey Sucker" Cleans Up Pastures And More

Sam McNair, Jr. cleans up his pasture with what he calls his Mark 2 Puckey Sucker. The homemade, tow-behind vacuum turns horse manure into a fluffy, dry material that's ready to compost. It also works great on leaves, branches and stones.

"It costs less than $600 to put together and I haven't found anything it won't pick up," says McNair.

Getting a power unit was the easy part. He picked up a 50 cc Husqvarna leaf blower. The tougher part was deciding what to use for a vacuum vessel. He decided to use heavy-duty Rubbermaid utility cart tubs. The tubs had the volume and heavy-duty construction needed.

"You can't use something too light, or it will implode under vacuum," explains McNair.

McNair mounted what would be the bottom half of his tank on an angle iron frame with its handles forward. Heavy-duty wheels and axle salvaged from an old Sears riding lawn mower were mounted underneath the frame with a hitch for towing and a latch that allows the tub to tip to the rear. Tube steel bolted to the tub's rim forms the bottom mating surface.

The second tub, with its handles pointed to the rear, became the top half. McNair bolted angle iron to its rim to create a flange to overlap the tube steel lip of the lower tub.

"The steel rims provide a mating surface, but also serve to reinforce the tank when it's under vacuum pressure," he says.

At the front of the tank, the top tub's angle iron extended forward several inches to hinge with the lower tub.

Weatherstripping on the overlapping flange and caulk on both rims helps ensure a near airtight seal.

Sam McNair's homemade, tow-behind vacuum turns horse manure into a fluffy, dry material that's ready to compost.

To get vacuum pressure McNair cut a hole on the top half of the tub and bolted the leaf blower's intake to it. A second and larger hole was also cut in the top tub.

"The opening is about 16 in. by 24 in. and covered with double layer nylon screen framed with 2 by 2-in. wood. You need enough surface area to ensure that the velocity of the air flow slows so material drops into the tank."

"Any entrained dust particles small enough to come through the screen continue through the blower fan and exhaust without a problem," he says. "The screen is loose enough that when the vacuum pressure shuts off, it flexes and releases any material caught against it."

McNair cut 3 more holes in the top tub, one in the wheel housing and 2 in the debris capture area of the tank, one in front and one in the rear. A piece of stove pipe with a cap inserted in the housing hole lets McNair clean out any debris that finds its way past the screen.

"Pucky Sucker", as McNair calls it, uses a heavy-duty Rubbermaid utility cart tub and a 50 cc Husqvarna leaf blower.

He inserted a piece of plastic pipe into the hole on the front of the tank. The external stub serves to mount the vacuum hose. Sections of pvc pipe at the end of the hose are used to suck up manure and debris. McNair has fabricated a number of hose ends similar to those that come with shop vacs.

A piece of clear plastic mounted over the hole in the rear of the tub provides a viewing port to check the amount of material collected. Gas springs attached between the two tubs hold them open when the bottom tub latch is released and they are tipped to the rear.

One problem McNair ran into was overheating of the blower motor. To get more airflow, he built a small motor shroud out of sheet metal. Using a short piece of flexible hose and a right angle elbow inserted into the blower's discharge, he redirected air under the shroud.

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Giant Air Horn Blows Folks Away

Dave Dam is known for turning old artillery shells of various sizes into amazing steam whistles (see Vol. 34, No. 5).

The Eau Claire, Wis., whistle expert recently turned a giant, 2-ft. long cast aluminum air horn made by the Westinghouse Air Brake Company into an attraction at antique engine shows. The flared end of the horn measures 10 in. in diameter.

"This air horn was originally designed to be used in trains and factories. I found it at a surplus store," says Dam. "The round end piece that contains the baffle - which causes the vibration that makes the sound - was missing so I made a new one out of aluminum. I also made a 5-in. baffle from stainless steel. I installed a pipe thread in the baffle and hooked a nipple up to it so I could attach an air hose.

"Sometimes I take my air horn to antique engine shows, where I hook it up to an air compressor tank in the back of my pickup. It sounds like a riverboat or a foghorn. I use a 100-lb. propane tank for an air tank and usually keep the pressure at 125 lbs."

Dam's collection of artillery shell steam whistles has about doubled in size since FARM SHOW'S first report. He now has about 45 in his collection, and has another half dozen 21-in. tall, 105 mm Howitzer shells on hand. The biggest whistles can be heard a couple of miles away. He takes them to antique engine shows to blow for the noon whistle.

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Dave Dam turned this giant, 2-ft. long cast aluminum air horn into an attraction at antique engine shows.