

Walking cane planter has aluminum ice cube tray bolted on top of long hollow tube.

## “Walking Cane” Garden Planter

“I never have to bend over when planting garden seeds or seed corn test plots. I’ve used it for years,” says Merle Bowers, Oreana, Ill., about his “walking cane” seed planter.

Bowers, a retired farmer, says he’s able to plant big plots of corn and other vegetables each year thanks to the ease with which he can put the seed in the ground. In fact, for the past couple years he’s used it to create a profitable business putting in test plots for seed corn companies.

After seeing a corn variety test plot in 1990, he sent letters to seed corn companies and talked to dealers to see if he could hire out a test plot of his own. The first year he signed up 30 companies. Last year, he signed up 37 seed companies and tested 104 varieties on an 85 by 190-ft. plot. All corn was planted and harvested by hand and he used horse manure from a local stable for fertilizer. All weeds were pulled by hand. At harvest, he weighed each ear on a kitchen scale and saved the four best ears from each variety and a jar of seed. He then typed up all test results. This winter Bowers took his results to farm shows and sold them to seed company representatives (you can get a copy of the 1992 test results by writing Bowers).

Bowers also plants a 65 by 180-ft. plot of popcorn as well as a sizable garden.

His walking cane planter consists of a long hollow tube with a curved upper end that serves as a handle. The bottom end of the tube rides between two in-line, 1-in. dia. rubber wheels. An aluminum ice cube tray is bolted to the upper end. Bowers drill a hole in the bottom of the tray to feed seed into a plastic funnel that empties into a hole drilled into the top side of the long seed tube. He pours seed into the tray and pushes them down the hole as he walks along the row.

“First I make a row with a V-hoe and then I run the planter down the furrow. With beans and peas, I just fill the tray with enough seeds for a row and use them all up going down and back. With corn and other seeds that I plant in hills, I just push in so many seeds per hill. I marked the rear wheel with yellow tape and put in sheet metal screws on each side of the wheel that make a noise when they hit the brace bar each time they come up. That helps space the hills,” says Bowers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Merle Bowers, Rt. 1, Box 261, Oreana, Ill. 62554 (ph 217 877-9406).

## “PEOPLE CAN’T BELIEVE THEIR EARS”

### Train Whistle Doorbell

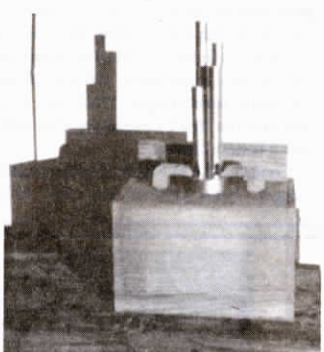
“It’s unique. People can’t believe their ears when they ring our doorbell and they hear a train whistle,” says Charley Sommerfeld, Lajunta, Colo., who made his first train whistle doorbell 10 years ago and now sells them at antique farm machinery shows.

The train whistle sound is made by four metal pipe chimes mounted in a 5/1/2 by 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 in. wooden box. Inside is a small 110-volt vacuum cleaner motor that creates the air flow through the pipes.

“When I first got the idea I tried all kinds of fans but nothing worked as good as a small vacuum motor,” says Sommerfeld.

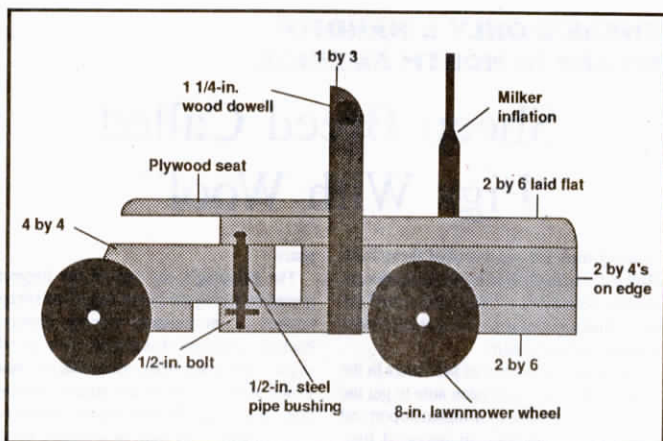
You can mount the doorbell anywhere - on a wall, table, in the attic, etc. All you do is replace the standard doorbell button with a heavy-duty button wired to household 110-volt circuit. A press of the button instantly activates the whistle. “You can adjust the sound from a gentle far-off sounding whistle to a window-rattling wail that’s loud enough to let the neighbors know you’ve got company,” says Sommerfeld.

Sells for \$73. Sommerfeld also makes a model with wood chimes that sells for \$53.



Train whistle sound is made by four metal pipe chimes mounted in wooden box. Small 110-volt vacuum cleaner motor creates air flow through the pipes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Charley Sommerfeld, 702 Lincoln, Lajunta, Colo. 81050 (ph 719 384-2959).

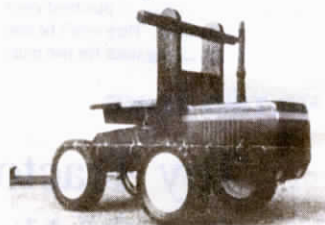


## Easy-To-Build Articulated Toy Tractor

“I started building these toy tractors 15 years ago and I’ve made about 20 to give to friends and relatives,” says Glen Woodside, Thorndale, Ontario, about his easy-to-build articulated toy wooden tractor.

He says they’re durable and can be painted to match any brand of tractor, although he usually paints them “Deere” green.

The main body of the tractor is made out of 2 by 6 boards laying flat top and bottom with 2 by 4’s on edge in between on either side. The articulated pivot joint in the middle is made out of a 1/2-in. bolt under the seat with a nut on the bottom. The bolt goes through a short piece of pipe set inside the 4 by 4 which forms the back half of the tractor. The seat is plywood and the steering handle is made out of 1 by 3’s on either side with a 1 1/4-in. dia. dowell running through them. Axles are made out of 1/2-in. dia. shafts fitted with 8-in. lawnmower wheels.



Main body of tractor is made out of 2 by 6 boards laying flat top and bottom with 2 by 4’s on edge in between on either side.

He used rubber milking inflations to make the exhaust stack.

“I’ve never heard of one of my tractors breaking and I’ve even seen some parents ride them,” says Woodside.

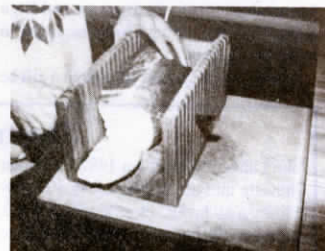
Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Glen Woodside, Rt. 3, Thorndale, Ontario N0M 2P0 Canada (ph 519 284-3509).

## Nifty Way To Slice Home-Baked Bread

If you bake a lot of bread at home, you’ll like this easy-to-make slicer-box.

Vern Deviney, Hubbard, Iowa, made it by simply cutting slots every 5/8-in. in 1 by 6-in. guide boards that fasten to either side of cutting board. He uses an electric knife to slice fresh-baked loaves that sit between the boards.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Vern Deviney, 207 W. Walnut St., Hubbard, Iowa 50122 (ph 515 864-2608).



Slots are cut every 5/8 in. in 1 by 6-in. guide boards that fasten to either side of cutting board.

## He Turns Farms Into Golf Courses

A FARM SHOW editor recently spotted this small ad in the back of a Midwestern farm magazine:

“**Golf-Farming** - Your sandy farm might be greener than you think. Imagine creating your own profitable golf course just like a professional. Call 517 291-3322.”

We dialed the number and reached Kermit Bohn in Sheridan, Mich., who bills himself as “the most unusual golf course architect in America”. For the past 30 years he’s been building golf courses all over the country working almost exclusively with farmers who have good locations, the right kind of soil (sandy), and the willingness to work hard to create a lush green golf course out of ordinary farmland.

“Farmers are ideal for this because they understand soils and because they have heavy equipment that can be used for con-

struction,” says Bohn, who also builds the courses he designs, unlike most golf course architects.

Once he finds a farmer to work with, he helps obtain necessary financing. He says his courses usually get built for much less than other courses because farmers who own the land usually help out, using tractors, disks, planters and other equipment to shape the land.

Bohn would not reveal any financial details of his arrangements with farmers and says that to be a candidate, a farm must meet certain criteria including location (must be near a large enough population to be profitable), soil type, terrain, and so on.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kermit Bohn, Box 172, Sheridan, Mich. 48884 (ph 517 291-3322).