

# Reader Letters



I'm originally a farm boy from Sublette, Ill. I joined the Air Force in April, 1988 and I'm still in, leaving the family farm for my younger brother to handle. I truly miss farming but have a good life with the USAF. The one thing that always makes me feel close to home is my FARM SHOW subscription, regardless of where I'm stationed. It truly keeps me in touch with my farm past. My parents renew my subscription every Christmas, which is a wonderful gift. Keep up the good work and God bless. (Brian Sondgeroth, [blsondgeroth@hotmail.com](mailto:blsondgeroth@hotmail.com))



I enjoy FARM SHOW and have passed it along to others. But I'm concerned about a story in your last issue about a reader who cheated death after crawling down into a septic tank to install a liner, apparently without respiratory protection. Some years ago, while working as a firefighter, I had the unfortunate experience of responding to an incident where 3 generations of a family – grandfather, father and son – died after the son passed out from "sewer gas" and the dad and grandfather climbed down to save him.

I've seen other unfortunate examples of people who made unthinking errors. (Dan Tucker, Wasilla, Alaska)

I use a reciprocating metal-cutting saw to cut old tires in half. Then I put the two halves around small trees and shrubs to hold compost and moisture. Makes them easy to handle and remove later. (Charley Burfoot, Rush, Texas)

I've got a couple comments on the last issue of FARM SHOW.

In response to the reader who uses old bike spokes in his string trimmer, I'd like to point out that if one of them would break from hitting a rock, centrifugal force could easily send the wire right through his leg. Don't risk your limbs this way.

In response to the reader who uses old motor oil in his chainsaw, this will only work on old, fairly slow speed models. On higher speed saws the chain will sling the oil off the tip of the bar, leaving the bottom rail with little to no lubrication – and that's where most of the cutting takes place. That's why good bar oils are sticky. (Mike Hostetter, New Oxford, Penn.)

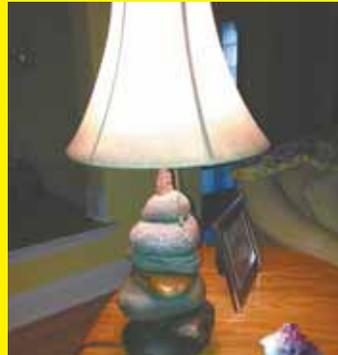


Due to health issues, I needed to reduce the height of the first step on my Deere 3020 tractor. I moved the right hand step, which was never used, to the left side. Using some flat iron, 4 bolts, and welding an angle brace, I was able to reduce that first step by 8 in. The ground to first step is now 17 vs. 25 in. The same idea can be used on a 4020. (Ron Roberts, 1518 S. Prairie Rd., Stillwater, Okla. 74074, ph 580 371-5333).

I'm a retired 91-year-old gardener and use an old modified wheelchair to make life easier. I removed the backrest fabric from the chair and simply sit over the big wheels. I move along by turning the wheels by hand. The chair will straddle one row of beans or peas so I can pick three rows at a time. I added a pair of wood handles on back, which makes it easy to move the chair from place to place. I make sure not to till the ground close to picking time so the ground remains as smooth as possible.

I'm 6 ft. 4 in. tall, so I really appreciate how this wheelchair saves my back. (Homer Robertson, 549 Dean Church Rd., Ozark, Ala. 36360)

Here's my recipe for a mouse and rat bait. Mix equal amounts of corn meal and powdered cement together. The moisture in the rodent's bodies sets it up. Works great. (Lavern Knori, 6951 Explorer, Perry, Okla. 73077)



I enjoyed the story in the last issue of FARM SHOW about the woman who "turns rocks into money" by making small fountains out of field rocks. I thought I'd show your readers how I turn rocks into attractive table lamps.

I look for a variety of rocks that fit together in a nice stack, with larger ones at the bottom, and then buy lamp parts at a hardware store. Next step is to drill a hole down through the rocks that's 1/16 in. larger than the lamp rod. The final steps are to insert the rod, epoxy all the rocks together, put small rubber skid pads under the bottom rock, and spray a light coating of polyurethane over the rocks. On the lamp in the photo I wrapped some decorative copper wire around the lamp rod at the top of the rocks.

These lamps make great gifts for friends and relatives. I don't sell them but I've seen similar ones on sale at flea markets for \$250 or more. (Gary Nelson, Two Harbors, Minn., [nelsog@msn.com](mailto:nelsog@msn.com))



Early this summer, when the weather turned hot and our family started getting irritated with each other, I fashioned a 30-ft. long water slide to stretch from the hay mow in our barn out into the yard. Using some old poly barrels reclaimed from a friend's barn, and some discarded 2 by 4's from our wood shop, we found a way to beat the heat and save a trip to the water park.

I cut the ends off the barrels on a table saw and then used a circular saw to cut them in half lengthwise. I overlapped the barrel halves to create the chute and then used carriage bolts to fasten them together. After creating a 2 by 4 framework to support the chute, I hoisted one end into the mow with a rope. I laid some heavy black poly over the chute and then turned on a garden hose at the top of the slide.



For only the cost of the carriage bolts our family is happy, and the summer heat doesn't seem so formidable. (Jon Gingerich, White Pigeon, Mich.)

As a long-time reader who much appreciates FARM SHOW, I just wanted to warn you of a potential hazard in one of your articles. A reader in Vol. 37, No. 3 wrote about adding a teaspoon of sugar to each cell of a weak battery to extend its life. Though this may work temporarily, it can create a rather violent chemical reaction and generate a considerable amount of heat. Check out this 2-min. video at YouTube.com to see what happens: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOedJgqTT9E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOedJgqTT9E) (Jim Glemboski, Springville, Penn.)



I wanted to let your readers know that we have a new mailing address, even though we just moved our business across the road. Thousands of FARM SHOW readers have contacted us over the past few years about our repower business, putting diesel tractor engines in pickups to get up to 50 mpg. We've also had tremendous interest in our project to burn regular gas in diesel engines. (Gary Brown, 2831 Hwy 41N, Ft. Valley, Ga. 31030; ph 478-954-1283; [www.shadetreconversions.com](http://www.shadetreconversions.com))

Your readers may get a kick out of this old 3 hp Sears Craftsman riding mower that I recently restored. I rode it in a parade this summer at the Little Log House Show near Miesville, Minn., where it attracted a lot of attention. The riding mower has only a 24-in. cutting width and was made in about 1950. I bought it at an auction for \$275. It had sat in a silo for many years and didn't run, so I took everything apart

and cleaned it all up and got it running.

The riding mower rides on hard rubber wheels and has a steel seat, with the operator using an S-shaped metal rod to steer. The 3 hp engine has a built-in Sears Craftsman starter on top. The operator turns a crank built into the top of the engine to set a spring, and then pulls on a lever to start the engine. The engine belt-drives the mower blades and chain-drives the rear wheels. To drive forward, the operator lifts up on his foot to tighten a drive belt. (Dick and Jane Molander, 1725 West Fourth St., Red Wing, Minn. 55066; ph 651 587-3544)

To catch a cloud of gnats or other flying insects outside, especially when sitting on the porch, I use a big garbage bag. Just open the mouth of the bag and sweep it around to easily catch tons of bugs. Crush the bag to kill them. Works great. (Tim Schmelzer, 1604 Maynard Ave., Waterloo, Iowa 50701)

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