# Reader Letters

Hats off to FARM SHOW for the fine article, "Owner's Report On Making Compost", in your last issue.

The report furnishes a lot of valuable information for anyone interested in getting into composting, and I'm sharing it with colleagues who are working on various composting projects. For example, some of our staff members are looking into mixing fly ash from a local power plant with yard waste and sludge cake from antibiotic production, and want to know how to handle windrows. Your report will make a good starting point as they "shop around" for a turner. Likewise, I'm sharing the report with area farmers and county agents who call frequently with questions concerning composting.

Congratulations on a job well done. ***(Stephen Hawkins, Assistant Director, Purdue University Agricultural Centers, West Lafayette, Ind. 47907; ph 765 494-8367)***

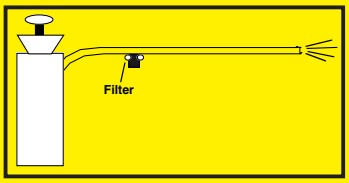
Thanks, FARM SHOW, for enlightening me on composting. I've worked on farms that compost and I plan to begin composting yard waste and horse manure at my own 8-acre organic vegetable farm within the next year.

Your report provided me with plenty of information to digest before I start, particularly in regard to the wide variety of windrow turners available. I'll likely be looking for the smallest machine available and your report tells me exactly where to look to find one.

As with all FARM SHOW "Owner's Reports", I really appreciated hearing about composting and composting equipment firsthand from farmers who are actually doing it.

Thanks again. Keep up the good work. ***(Scott Reed, 197 River Rd., Sunderland, Mass. 01375-9552; ph 413 665-2042)***

My yard man loves the filter system I added to his 2 1/2-gal. hand sprayer. It eliminates plugged-up nozzles so it saves him a lot of time.




I used a 3/4-in. short barrel T-type strainer with round screw-on 40 mesh screen and sediment bowl I bought for $9 from CT Farm Country (3915 Delaware Ave., P.O. Box 3330, Des Moines, Iowa 50316; ph toll-free 888 828-2376).

To install it on the sprayer, I cut the rubber hose in the center and simply attached it to the hose with two 1 1/2-in. clamps.

Before coming up with the idea, my yard man was constantly tapping the sprayer nozzle to clear it. Now, all he has to do is empty the sediment bowl when it gets full. ***(Arthur Griffin, 421 1-2 SE Litchfeld, Willmar, Minn. 56201-3634; ph 320 235-7242)***

Generic hoppers that go on the bottom of grain bin augers can also be used to put a "roof" over the top of an auger to keep rain from coming in the fill hole on bins. All you do is turn the hopper upside down, lay it on top of the auger and wire it to the bin roof.

We've found poly hoppers work best because they're lightweight and don't rust. ***(Robert A. Kuehl, 5820 Forest Grove Dr., Davenport, Iowa 52807; ph 319 355-7897)***

I was looking for a way to organize earrings and jewelry in my slim vanity drawers, but all the commercial "organizers" I looked at were $20 or more and weren't exactly what I was looking for. Almost by accident, I discovered that ice cube trays do the trick quite nicely.

I simply used heavy shears to cut the plastic trays into custom shapes to fit my vanity drawers. Since the trays are naturally stackable you can use them one-on-top-of-the-other in deeper drawers, too.

Since coming up with the idea, I've also discovered they work well in narrow toolbox drawers to store valve stems, caps, small O-rings, washers and carburetor parts. ***(Collette Jessen, 6620 Rd. 216, Pine Bluffs, Wyo. 82082; ph 307 245-3446)***

The seventh annual edition of the Scrap Tire & Rubber Users Directory is now available. It contains more than 1,900 listings which include the company name and mailing address, telephone, fax, contact person, and an outline of the main activities or services provided by the companies. Copies mailed in the U.S. sell for $49; copies mailed to Canada sell for $59, and copies mailed overseas sell for $69. Prices include S&H. All orders are prepaid in U.S. dollars. Send check or money order in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank payable to us. ***(Recycling Research Institute, Box 2221, Merrifield, Va. 22116, ph 860 668-5422; fax 5651)***

Here's a 1948 Cockshutt model 30 row crop tractor that I modified to handle a "mini" grader blade I built to grade roads and push snow.

I bought the tractor from a neighbor for $300 and overhauled the blown engine. Next, I extended the frame 4 ft. with iron off an old Ford 3-ton truck frame. I had the hood extended and painted to look like the original at a local machine shop. I replaced the original front axle with a 3-ton truck axle and replaced the original pony wheels with 900 by 20-in. truck tires to handle the lengthened wheelbase. Next, I installed a power steering unit, which runs off the fan belt, from a 1/2-ton GM pickup.

I made the 10-ft. blade to belly-mount under the tractor out of a 25-in. length of 24-in. dia. steel pipe. I cut it into five sections and welded them together end to end. I made a cutting edge out of the worn out cutting edge of a regular road grader.

The blade attaches to the tractor with a 4-ft. long wishbone-shaped bracket I built out of channel and flat iron. The bracket acts as a yoke to push the blade, which pins to it, from the rear axle. A hydraulic cylinder mounted on the driver's side of the tractor lifts the blade, up to as high as frame level, for ditching work. A second smaller hydraulic cylinder mounted behind the blade angles the blade left to right, up to 85 degrees. The hydraulic lift and swivel cylinders run off the tractor's original hydraulic system.

I finished the project last spring and got a chance to push some snow and, so far, have made $300 with it grading local roads. My "mini" grader works every bit as good as a full-size grader but is a lot more maneuverable because of its size.

Out-of-pocket expense was $1,900. ***(Morris Oerlemans, P.O. Box 43, Bridge Lake, B.C., Canada V0K 1E0; ph 250 593-4393)***

Discarded carpet makes a great, low-cost alternative for plastic mulch in my strawberry beds. I can get all I want for nothing from our local carpet dealer when they replace worn out carpet in homes.

I use only foam-backed carpet because it allows water to filter through it. I cut and/or piece the carpet into 4 ft. widths so there's approximately 1 ft. left uncovered on each side of my 35-ft. long strawberry rows. The carpet works better than black plastic sheet-

*(Continued on next page)*

Here are a couple of machines I couldn't get along without in my 350-acre tree-farming operation.

First is what I like to call my "diesel powered" Ford 8N. It's actually the rear end of a 1952 Ford 8N coupled to the front end of an old Massey 35, which had a broken rear axle housing. I bolted the Ford's rear end to the Massey transmission housing, which was simple to do since both use the same bolt pattern. I lengthened the Massey's hood 5 or 6 in. to accommodate the Ford's steering column, which is at a different angle than that of the Massey. Then, I painted it Ford 8N colors.

I use the tractor to cultivate trees with my 6-ft. cultivator and it works great. It gives me six speeds instead of four. It's also diesel-powered which I prefer to gas. It cost $100 for the Ford rear end and $120 apiece for new rear rims.

Second is the heavy-duty Dutchmaster tree spade I mounted on my C5 Treefarmer log skidder. It handles a lot bigger trees and is more maneuverable than the commercial tree spade mounted in a truck I used before.

The 50-in. dia. spade easily handles trees with 5-in. in dia. trunks. Worked great all winter relocating trees and there was nothing particularly difficult about mounting the spade on the log skidder.

A somewhat bigger job was the repowering job I did on the skidder. It was originally equipped with a 4-cyl. 220-cu. in. Ford engine, which didn't have enough power for my needs. So I repowered the skidder with a 350-cu. in. Oldsmobile diesel engine and an automatic Turbo 400 transmission. The hardest part of the job was getting the engine to drive the tree spade's hydraulic pump. To do so, I got a used water pump off an old car and put it on a metal plate to raise it to drive the ra-

diator fan. I had to do that because the crankshaft on the original engine sat too close to the pump to drive the fan. Cost was under $30,000, including the new tree spade. ***(George Craib, R.R. 1, Bolton, Ontario, Canada L7E 5R7; ph 905 859-0695)***