

Illinois Farmer Builds Fruit & Vegetable Equipment

By C.F. Marley

Dale Conrady is a grain and livestock farmer in Illinois who has been developing a "sideline" direct market fruit and vegetable business. He recently built two

machines to handle some of the work.

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Planter holds two riders. A pair of hoppers holds whatever's being planted. The tractor 3-pt. lifts the entire planter and riders.

Asparagus Planter Also Plants Trees, Potatoes

When Conrady decided to plant a field to asparagus, he knew he had to find a way to automate the process. He worked on a design and built a tractor-mounted machine from scratch.

Once the planter was built he realized it could also be used for potatoes, fruit trees and possibly other crops.

He used salvaged parts from several pieces of equipment, including 2-in. sq. tubing for the main frame, which is designed to fit a tractor 3-pt. hitch.

A no-till wavy coultter mounts up front on a bracket from a Deere 7000 planter. It cuts the ground ahead of a large V-shaped opener that follows behind. The opener is 10 in. wide and shaped like a box with high sides in front and along the sides. A cultivator sweep mounts on the leading point of the "V". As the opener moves through the soil, a large furrow is opened inside the "box" where the plants are put into the ground by hand.



A no-till wavy coultter cuts ground ahead of a V-shaped opener with a cultivator sweep on front.

Two large closing discs follow behind to pull dirt back over the row.

The planter holds two riders on either side. Two hoppers hold whatever's being planted.

In operation, the tractor 3-pt. lifts the entire planter and riders together. When it's in the ground, two rubber-tired wheels off a lawn mower act as gauge wheels to maintain proper depth.



One-row mulch remover works like a side delivery rake to pull straw mulch off strawberry plants at the end of winter. Conrady pulls the machine with a 4-wheeler ATV.

Strawberry Plant Mulch Remover

Conrady used a variety of parts to put together this one-row "mulch remover" that works like a side delivery rake to knock straw off strawberry plants at the end of winter. He pulls the little machine with his 4-wheeler ATV, which straddles the row.

Spring tines are welded to a small reel made out of steel rod. The reel is chain-driven at one end by a 3 hp Briggs & Stratton en-

gine that mounts on top. The motor is hooked up to a 33:1 reduction gearbox.

The frame of the machine is made from square tubing. It attaches to the cargo rack on the ATV with a couple of brackets. A single caster wheel on back, which came off a Deere cultivator, holds the reel at the proper height to peel straw off the row.



Mulch remover consists of spring tines welded to a small reel that's chain-driven at one end by a 3 hp motor.



New fence stretcher weighs only 1 1/2 lbs. and consists of a ratchet attached to a seatbelt-type nylon strap that has a hand loop in it.

Lightweight Fence Stretcher Fits In Your Pocket

Conventional stretchers can be awkward and hard to carry, especially in forests or rough terrain. This new fence stretcher weighs only 1 1/2 lbs. and is small enough that you can easily carry it in your pocket, says DSLA Co., Sisseton, S. Dak.

The "Fence Buddy" consists of a ratchet attached to a seatbelt-type nylon strap that has a hand loop in it. It's equipped with a pair of easy-to-use wire grips that can be used on either smooth or barbed wire. To repair a broken wire you fasten a wire grip to each end of the wire and use your fingers to tighten

the T-bolts. Then use the loop to pull the slack out of the wire by hand and use the ratchet to tighten the wire so that you can splice it together. The unit can also be used to stretch a wire to a post. You place the loop around the post and fasten one of the wire grips to the wire, then pull the slack out of the wire by pulling on the free end wire grip and ratchet until the wire is tight. Also works great on tough-to-open gates. Sells for \$35 plus S&H.

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Adding duals solves the tipping problem that's common with 3-wheeler ATV's, says Stuart Harvey, who added duals to his Honda Big Red 200.

Honda 3-Wheeler Fitted With Duals

"They greatly improve traction and stability," says Stuart Harvey, Oakland, Maryland, who added duals to his Honda Big Red 200 ATV 3-wheeler.

Adding duals solved the tipping problem that's common with 3-wheelers.

A spacer placed against the bead part of the rims holds the tires approximately 1 in. apart. Two pieces of 1/4-in. threaded rod per wheel hold the duals on.

The inside tires have slightly more air pressure when running on hard ground so they carry a bit more weight, reducing wear and tear on the machine. However, on soft ground

or snow, weight is carried across both sets of wheels.

"There's very little difference in steering and hardly any power loss. The only problem is that it does restrict passage through narrow gates and wooded trails. The machine has low range reverse and shaft drive, giving it more than adequate power for every day use. I liked it a lot before and I like it even more now," says Harvey.

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