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Self-Propelled "Motorized Wheelbarrow"

"It's easy to use and saves me a lot of work," says Cliff Brandenburg, Beecher City, Ill., about the self-propelled "motorized wheelbarrow" that he built out of an old garden tractor.

The 3-wheeled wheelbarrow, which has a dump-style hopper in front, is powered by a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine. The operator stands behind the cart and uses control levers to make the rig go forward or backward and to dump the cart. Brandenburg uses the rig around his yard to pick up leaves and lawn clippings and to haul garden trash.

He bought the garden tractor cheap at a junkyard. He stripped it down to the frame and rear axle, reversing the direction of the axle so the gears are reversed. He mounted a 1-ft. high caster wheel in place of the front axle and equipped the rig with a horizontal shaft Briggs & Stratton engine. He connected a gear reduction box to the transmission in order to change the direction of the shaft and to give the engine more torque. The transmission belt-drives the gearbox.

The dump box came off a commercial pull-type cart. He mounted hinges to allow it to dump to the front. He mounted a steering handle over the front steering wheel and fitted it with a throttle, hand brake, and clutch.



Dump box came off a commercial pull-type cart and dumps to the front.

"It has a lot more capacity than a conventional wheelbarrow and is handier than a pull-type cart because you don't have to keep getting on and off the tractor," says Brandenburg. "There are three forward gears and one reverse. It doesn't go very fast – its fastest speed is only a brisk walking speed. However, it does have a lot of power. If I'm carrying a big load and put the transmission in low gear, the drive wheels will often spin."

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"Sock Gloves" Fight Sun's Rays, Leave Middle Fingers Free

"Sunlight can be very intense in Hawaii and this frequently causes skin damage. I've developed the concept of 'shaka' gloves and have been using them for several years. It's a simple way to protect the back of your hands, which are particularly susceptible because they're frequently exposed to direct sun. Many people would rather wear gloves than put on sun tan lotions, but they cover up your fingers so you lose dexterity," says Bernie Kratky of Hilo, Hawaii.

Shaka gloves are made by cutting a worn-out sock into two pieces. The heel-to-toe piece becomes a tube with elastic at the upper part. The closed toe section of the sock is cut off from the heel-to-toe piece. You now have two short cloth tubes.

Two small holes 180° apart are cut into one end of each tube. The tube is then drawn over your hand. The thumb and little finger conveniently fit into each of the holes to hold the glove in place. It keeps your gloves in place but leaves your fingers free. The fabric covering the palm of your hand can act



Shaka gloves are made by cutting a worn-out sock into two short cloth tubes.

as a cushion when using a wrench or shovel. You get two shaka gloves from each sock. Kratky points out that Shaka is a Hawaiian term for a friendly greeting where the thumb and little finger are raised and the middle three fingers clenched.

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New Products Especially For Women And The Farm, Ranch Home



"Trail Trike" has two front wheels, which makes it much more stable than a regular bike, says inventor Ervin Matzke.

Double Front Bike Easy To Ride On Rough Roads

"Lots of older people give up bike riding because it's too dangerous, especially on gravel roads. This new design is much more stable and you're in an upright position just like on a regular bike," says Ervin Matzke, Rochester, Minn., about his new "Trail Trike" which has two front wheels.

Matzke built his prototype by combining three identical 10-speed bikes. He built a support bar that runs across the front of the bike and mounted a complete front fork on each end of the bar. Steering rods run from the original front steering fork to the two add-on fronts, so the bike steers normally with the existing handlebars.

He also uses the existing brake lever to activate the brakes on both wheels. He did it by attaching the brake cables on each wheel

to a single steel ring just below the center of the handle bars. The cable running from the original brake lever pulls on this ring, activating the brakes on both wheels.

"It handles unbelievably well. Just like a regular bike but much more stable. It's easy to get on and you can sit on it at a stop or move along at a crawl and it won't tip over. It's only 28 in. wide so you can ride safely on the side of the road, or on sidewalks, and it'll fit through a normal width door," says Matzke.

"I know there's a huge market out there for a bike like this that's easy to ride, and safe," he notes.

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"Floppy-Top" Fence Defeats Garden Munchers

"Last summer a pair of voracious groundhogs made my garden their personal salad bar until I discovered a humane way to defeat them," says Cathy Sabol, Oak Hill, Va.

"First, I put up a fence, but they easily burrowed under it. Finally I came up with this special design. The groundhogs were thwarted from climbing over the fence by the loose, floppy top, and prevented from digging under by the wire 'floor' at the bottom. It works great." (*Organic Gardener*)

