

## "Made It Myself" Wood Splitters



Splitter consists of a 6-in. dia., 8-ft. long, heavy-walled steel pipe with a fixed wedge at one end. Push plate slides back and forth on the pipe.

### Skid Loader-Mounted Log Splitter

"It lets us use our skid steer loader to split logs up to 4 ft. long. Works fast and the operator doesn't even have to get out of the cab," says Wayne Zimmerman, McBride, B.C., about his hydraulic-operated log splitter.

The splitter consists of a 6-in. dia., 8-ft. long, heavy-walled steel pipe with a fixed wedge at one end. The push plate slides back and forth on a pair of steel collars, powered by a 5-in. dia., 4-ft. stroke hydraulic cylinder. The cylinder operates off the skid loader's auxiliary hydraulics.

"It has a lot of power," says Zimmerman, who burns the 4-ft. lengths in his outdoor wood burning furnace. "We've used it to split logs up to 2 ft. in diameter with no problems using a Bobcat 773 with a 49 hp Kubota diesel. It slices through big, frozen cottonwood logs like butter. And it's so safe my 11-year-old grandson often operates it."

The splitter mounts on a home-built, quick tach adapter plate that attaches to the skid loader's original quick tach mounting brackets. "The adapter plate lets us use several Deere tools - such as a bale wrapping machine, bale spear, and silage bucket -



Push plate slides on a pair of steel collars and is powered by a 5-in. dia., 4-ft. long hydraulic cylinder.

interchangeably between the Bobcat and our Deere 2755 4-WD tractor," says Zimmerman. "We prefer to use the Deere tools on the skid loader because it's much more maneuverable than the tractor."

"The adapter plate is equipped with a 12-in. hydraulic cylinder that has a clamp bolted onto it at each end. Extending the cylinder closes the clamps and attaches the tool. Retracting the cylinder opens the clamps and disconnects the tool," he notes.

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### Junked Baler Makes Great Wood Splitter

When Frank Zacharias needed a wood splitter, he went shopping in his brother's junk pile.

"I had sold him a used New Holland model 68 baler several years ago. He ran it until it wore out and then junked it. I figured I could make a wood splitter out of it, so I bought it back for 25 bucks," he says.

The La Crete, Alberta, farmer stripped off the hay pick up, knotters and needles, and then cut off the bale chamber just behind the axle. He stripped off the insides of the bale chamber, too, taking off the plunger, but leaving the crank in place. What remained was the PTO drive, the flywheel, part of the bale chamber, and the axle.

"The crank ran the opposite direction I wanted it to in order to split wood, so I turned the entire bale chamber upside down," he says. While he was at it, he shortened the axle, too, so it's just wider than the bale chamber.

To make the stripped down baler split wood, Zacharias made an axe-shaped wedge of steel plate and welded that to the plunger crank. He made a base plate at the back of

the cut-down chamber to hold wood as it is being split. And, using steel tubing, he built a guard around the plunger to protect people working with the splitter.

"The tractor pto is used to drive the plunger-mounted wedge up and down through a gap that separates a pair of half-moon shaped steel plates. With every revolution made by the plunger, the wedge comes down on top of the log to split it in half. The two halves are then split again.

"We use it with a Massey Ferguson 65 tractor, running just a little faster than an idle," he says. "It doesn't take much power to split wood with it. We cut the logs 14 to 20 inches long which is the ideal firewood length for us."

"Everything I used to make it was scrap, so the only expense I had was buying back the baler. The rest was just labor and time," he says.

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### 3-Pt. Mounted "Vertical" Splitter Handles Big Logs

"It splits logs up to 45 inches long, and I never have to lift them off the ground," says Keith Switzer of Wright, Minn., about his home-built, 3-pt. mounted "vertical" log splitter.

The splitter consists of a 6 by 8-in., 9-ft. long steel I-beam with a welded-on base made from 1-in. thick diamond steel plate. The splitting wedge is powered by a 32-in. long, 4-in. dia. hydraulic cylinder. The cylinder is operated by a remote lever that's connected by linkage to the tractor's hydraulic lever.

"I've worked with log splitting equipment my entire life, and this is the slickest piece of equipment I've ever used," says Switzer. "I built it because I needed an easy way to make firewood 42 in. long, which is the ideal length for my Aqua-Therm outside wood-burning furnace. However, many of the trees I cut are up to 20 inches in diameter so they're heavy."

"I use my Oliver 1650 tractor to operate it and made the splitter's mounting bracket to match the tractor's Cat. II 3-pt. hitch. One advantage of using a Cat. II hitch is that it does have a side plate so the hitch doesn't bang back and forth whenever I drive the tractor in the woods. When I'm on a sidehill I can crank one of the lower lift arms down in order to keep the splitter vertical. I welded a hook onto one end of the drawbar mounting bracket so I can use a 'logger's choker' to skid trees to a landing. I cut the logs up and then back the tractor up, splitting the logs as I go."

"I bought the I-beam used for about \$50. My total cost for materials was about \$150. My father-in-law did the welding."

"My vertical log splitter is very top heavy, so when I take it off the tractor I have to be careful that I don't hurt myself. I generally use a chain to hang the splitter from a truss inside my pole shed. I set it up so that the chain tightens up just as the splitter contacts the ground."



Splitter is operated by a remote lever that's connected by linkage to tractor's hydraulic lever. Hook welded onto drawbar mounting bracket lets Switzer use a "logger's choker" to skid trees.

The I-beam's mounting bracket is connected to the tractor's 3-pt. lower lift arms and also to the drawbar. Switzer used lengths of 3 by 1/2-in. angle iron to reinforce the mounting bracket. He used 1/2-in. by 3-in. angle iron and 1-in. thick steel to make the splitting wedge.

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"It works fast and is easy to use," says Frank Zacharias, who converted a used New Holland model 68 baler into a low-cost log splitter (above). He stripped off the insides of the bale chamber, taking off the plunger but leaving the crank in place. Then he turned the bale chamber upside down and welded an axe-shaped wedge of steel plate to the plunger crank. To split a log, he places it on a base plate at back of machine (right). The plunger-mounted wedge comes down on top of the wood to split it in half.

