

Diesel Car Modified To Run On “Veggie Oil”

Dave Wetzel, Decatur, Ill., burns used french fry oil in his 1985 Volkswagen car, which is powered by a diesel engine. He collects the used vegetable oil from fast food places such as McDonalds, burning 8 to 10 gallons per week.

His “McDiesel” car gets 40 mpg on the veggie oil.

Wetzel modified the car to heat the oil to 160 degrees, which allows the unusual fuel to be used during summer and winter. He starts the car in normal fashion using conventional diesel fuel. Once the vegetable

oil is heated up it automatically switches to veggie oil.

He equipped the car’s fuel tank with a coil of copper tubing and runs heated water from the engine through it. Once the fuel has been heated up to 160 degrees, a solenoid opens a valve, switching from diesel to 100% oil. The heated fuel is piped forward along a heated line. No modifications were made to the engine itself. Wetzel runs the oil through a cotton filter before fueling up.

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Oil from a restaurant is filtered through a cotton filter (available from restaurant supply houses). Veggie oil tank in trunk is filled via PVC gooseneck. Oil is piped to rear tank and then forward after being heated to 160 degrees.



Architect Mark Clipsham turned this used 14-ft. dia. grain bin into a combination garden/storage shed and playhouse that’s complete with a second floor and a narrow spiral staircase. Note porthole-style windows all around.

Grain Bin Structure Inspires Architect

Architect Mark Clipsham, Ames, Iowa, likes building with curves, domes, and spheres but he doesn’t get much chance to do it in today’s world. So he recently bought a used 14-ft. dia. grain bin and set it up in his back yard. “We moved it the hard way, disassembling and reassembling the sections by hand,” he says.

“These small bins aren’t of much use to farmers these days,” he says. “But they can be used to build projects that wouldn’t be affordable if built conventionally.”

Clipsham turned his bin into a combination garden/storage shed and playhouse.

His first step was to pour a concrete base over 3-in. blueboard insulation. Then he set up the bin and built in a second floor.

To do this, he installed an old perforated drying floor at about 8 ft., supporting it on posts and braced beams. This second floor belongs to the kids. To access it, he installed a narrow spiral staircase under a round second floor door. A door opening was cut into the bin side. Then an old clothes dryer door was fitted to the frame. Seven more commercial style stainless clothes dryer doors with tempered glass make porthole style windows all around the playhouse.

Over the bin’s center fill hole, he constructed a cupola from ribbed steel arches out of an old grain dryer. To let in sunlight, the cupola is topped with safety glass salvaged from a tractor cab.

The first floor is the storage area. To let in more light than filtered down through the perforated drying floor, Clipsham added some old windows left over when he remodeled his house.

Finally, he made a porch over the storage shed door by clipping on a couple of arched bin sections for the roof and supporting them on grain auger tubes which sit on tapered concrete bases.

“I made the playhouse/shed just to show people what grain bins could become. I can see them used as towers on houses, as sheds or garages, dormitories for colleges, and cabins or guest houses,” he says. “We can use them when people want something fast, that is strong, maintenance free and inexpensive.”

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Professor Ted Peck at the University of Illinois discovered some 30,000 soil samples that had long been forgotten in the basement of a building on campus. The soil samples date back to 1861.

Professor Discovered Forgotten 141-Year-Old Soil Samples

Four years ago, Professor Ted Peck at the University of Illinois discovered some 30,000 soil samples that had long been forgotten in the basement of a building on campus. The soil samples date back to 1861.

The University of Illinois is already home to the oldest continuous agricultural research fields in the U.S., going back to 1876. Now it can claim some 30,000 soil samples that go back even farther.

“This find has enabled us to describe baseline environmental conditions in Illinois before man-made environmental changes became common place,” says Peck.

The soil samples were originally analyzed for acidity, limestone, total carbon, total nitrogen, total phosphorous, total potassium, and acid soluble P and K.

Peck sees each jar as a snapshot of the condition of the state’s most valuable resource. He says that someday we may want to get serious about our environment, and we may want to know something about base levels.

Peck is now in the process of archiving his



All samples are kept in jars. Peck sees each jar as a snapshot of the condition of the state’s most valuable resource.

find. His goal is to establish what will be known officially as the Illinois Archival Soil Collection.

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