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Side-Mount Mower Reaches Steep Creek Banks

"I came up with a method of mounting a push mower on the side of my riding mower to cut grass on ditch banks and in other difficult areas," says Jim Joyce, Custer, S. Dak.

Joyce uses the side mount mower on his Deere 955. It lets him extend a 22-in. push mower as far as 4 ft. out to the side of his tractor.

With its handle removed, the mower fits into a frame that plugs into a receiver hitch mounted just ahead of the right rear wheel. The bottom end of the angle iron frame is hinged and is raised and lowered by a hydraulic cylinder. Another cylinder is used to change the angle of the mower. The two hydraulic cylinders operate off the tractor's auxiliary hydraulic outlets.

"It works really well for mowing along steep creek banks on my property," says

Joyce. "I chose an old Lawn Boy 2-cycle push mower because oil pressure at odd angles isn't a problem and because it's fairly light. The tractor's hydraulic pump was too big so I had to put flow reducers in the lines to restrict the quick movement. The tractor has a joystick hydraulic control located at my right side so I installed the rig on that side for better visibility. I installed small wheels on the carriage to help reduce scalping. Because of the added weight on the right side of the tractor, I experienced some loss of traction on steep side hills. I added a counterweight on the 'uphill' side for better balance."

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Push mower can be extended as far as 4 ft. out to the side of tractor.

Made-It-Myself Wheelbarrow

"I used a 20-lb. propane tank and a 55-gal. plastic drum to make a lightweight, stable wheelbarrow," says Richard Faber.

The Tiffin, Ohio man cut the drum in half the long way and used one piece as the bucket for the wheelbarrow. He bolted pieces of conduit to brace the drum to the arms and bent two pieces to make a stand.

A shaft through the center of the propane tank rides on bearings attached to wooden handles.

He says he spent about \$20 for it. "It makes a very good wheelbarrow," he says. "I've made a couple of them and I use them all the time."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rich-



Faber cut a 55-gal. plastic drum in half to make wheelbarrow bucket and used a 20-lb. propane tank for the wheel.

ard Faber, 1330 S. Township Rd. 113, Tiffin, Ohio 44883 (ph 419 447-7576).

Hand-Cranked Wood Splitter

"It sure beats swinging a maul," says Edwin Ruff, Moses Lake, Wash., who made a simple portable wood splitter out of scrap metal and a bottle jack.

He used heavy 3-in. sq. tubing for an upright which is welded to a sturdy base. The splitter rides on 8-in. pneumatic wheels.

Ruff welded two pieces of angle iron together to make a square slip-tube that welds to the 6-in. splitting wedge.

An 8-ton bottle jack, attached to the top of the wedge, powers the splitter. The jack pushes down against an adjustable stop at the top of the frame. A 7/8-in. bolt holds the stop in place, depending on the size of the log.

A pair of springs lifts the splitting wedge and jack back up after the log is split.

All Ruff has to do to split wood is pump the jack downward to crack the log, then release the hydraulic pressure in the jack so the spring pulls it back up.

Ruff says you could put a pump on it with hydraulics or use a tractor's hydraulics to power it.

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Portable wood splitter was made out of scrap metal and an 8-ton bottle jack, which powers the splitter.

Vinegar Dressing Too Hot For Weeds

Researchers are hot on the trail of the latest vinegar and oil combination, but for weeds, not salads. When Rafiq Islam accidentally sprayed some plants with what he thought was water and turned out to be vinegar, they died.

"Vinegar is an organic solvent that appears to dissolve the fats or lipids in the waxy layer of a leaf," says Islam. "Then it penetrates and kills the tissue."

Vinegar has long been a traditional cure for what ails you. Advocates claim it helps everything from weight loss, arthritis, gout and lethargy to cleaning kitchen drains and tenderizing meats.

Islam isn't the first to notice its affect on plants. Housewives and USDA researchers have all tried it. John Teasdale, one of the USDA researchers who have studied its herbicidal qualities, found that a 10 percent vinegar (or acetic acid) solution was needed to be effective. Store-bought vinegar runs about 5 percent, and researchers found it provided only marginal control.

Islam hopes to find out even more about vinegar. This past year he ran plots comparing mowing, Roundup and store-bought vinegar on weed control. Unlike the earlier USDA research, his trials found good control with the vinegar. It also produced slower decomposition than Roundup, creating a longer lasting mulch effect.

"This winter we are initiating greenhouse trials in different types of weeds with different timing and rates," says Islam. "We also are looking at how many times we have to apply. How economical and how effective is it?"

In the meantime, Ohio Department of Agriculture pesticide regulators are warning farmers that only products specifically labeled as herbicides or pesticides may be used on plants.

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Photo shows field five days after 4 1/2 percent vinegar application.



Photo shows field five days after Roundup application.