At first Tim Brown tried using a three-wheel pedal cart to pick strawberries, but found it difficult to steer. So he made an electric-powered four-wheel cart that he can steer by simply flipping a toggle switch to go forward or back.

**Sit-Down Cart Makes Strawberry Pick’n Easy**

Picking strawberries is a lot easier for Tim Brown since he built his electric-powered, sit-down picking cart.

“It’s better than bending,” says Brown, who knows a lot about bending. With his wife Marcia, he produced 10,000 quarts of strawberries on their berry farm in 2004. They also sold 2,500 pints of black raspberries, 500 pints of red raspberries and 3,000 pints of blueberries.

Brown had once tried a three-wheel pedal cart, but found it difficult to steer. With his new cart, all he has to do is flip a toggle switch to go forward or back or leave it in the middle to stop.

The cart consists of a 4 by 6-ft. frame, a 12-volt gear reduction motor, and the battery runs off. The frame is made from 3 by 3-in. steel tubing. At the front and rear, two uprights about 3 ft. high are connected at the top by a cross beam with wheels mounted on the other ends. Two 6-ft. side rails connect the front and rear ends. One side rail mounts at about the 2-ft. height, while the other is only 12 in. above the ground and hosts the operator seat. An expanded metal rack for setting filled containers is mounted just ahead of the operator. It is attached to the front posts and rests on a leg attached to the left side rail.

The motor and battery are attached to the rear cross rail. A roller chain connects the motor to a sprocket on the drive shaft. The drive shaft extends through bearings on the two rear uprights and is capped with sprockets at each end. Initially, roller chains from these sprockets drove sprockets on the rear wheel spindles mounted between the wheels and the uprights.

“Without a differential, a chain would jump off the outside sprocket every time I turned,” says Brown. “I found that powering just the wheel behind my seat was enough.”

To steer the rig, Brown recycled an old garden tractor’s tie rod and steering gear mechanism, including the front wheels, and adapted it to fit the front end of the frame. The tie rods extend the width of the cart.

**Strawberry Huller**

If you hate using knives to hull strawberries, you might want to look at the huller invented by E. J. Meyer, St. Louis, Mo. He fashioned his tool after the one that his late mother, Mary, used to clean berries years ago.

The Easy Berry Cleaner is a strip of aluminum that’s about 1 in. wide and curved at end to easily scoop out strawberry tops. Meyer hand-makes each one in his basement workshop.

He says it works better than other hullers because it cuts out less fruit. “I had one woman who used it say that strawberry cleaning went so fast and easy she didn’t want to quit,” he says.

The huller also slices berries and can be used to clean seeds out of peppers and remove eyes from potatoes. “One person even used it to remove clams from their shells,” Meyer says.

A 6-in. strawberry huller sells for $3.90. Meyer also sells an 8-in. berry huller and a cherry pitter combo for $5.90 and a strawberry recipe book and cleaner combo sells for $5.95.

**“Mini” Manure Spreader For ATVs, Garden Tractors**

If you’ve got a small farm and need a manure spreader, you’ll be interested in the Loyal Compact Spreader.

The galvanized steel spreader weighs 385 lbs. and is 95 in. long and 46 1/2 in. wide so it fits through horse barn doors.

Any 10 hp garden tractor or ATV can pull this ground-driven unit.

“Unlike other small manure spreaders on the market, you don’t have to get off the machine to engage this spreader because the lever is right behind the seat,” says Tom Roth, owner of Roth Manufacturing.

**Hitch “Helper” Makes Hookups Easy**

“It’s the one-person, easy as A-B-C hitch-locating device,” says Jack Juler, about the Easy Hitch, a device he invented that lets one person easily hitch up trailers.

All you do is attach one rod to the trailer hitch and the other to the ball hitch. Then, back up your vehicle, watching the tops of both rods in your rearview mirror. When the ball and hitch meet each other, the rod on the ball falls over and you can secure your trailer. Both rods have flashing lights on top (batteries included) so they can be used at night.

Sells for $19.99 (Can.) or $16.95 plus S&H.


**Simple magnetic hitch guides stick to ball hitch and trailer tongue.**