

used at an estate sale for \$3,000. It's equipped with a box blade and a front-mounted, 7-ft. wide bucket as well as a 2-prong round bale hauler that can pick up two 6-ft. bales at a time.

My 2006 **Sears Kenmore** 370 water softener is my worst buy. The electronic board goes out about every three months, and it takes two weeks to get a service man out to look at it. It takes seven more days to get the electronic board, and then another two weeks for the serviceman to come out again to install it."

**Bennett White, Winton, N.C.:** "One of my best buys ever is my **Kioti CK205** compact tractor equipped with a little 3-cyl., 22 hp diesel engine. It starts and runs great and has done everything I've asked of it. The front-end loader works like a charm. Anyone considering a tractor purchase should give this brand a chance. It's a well built machine that's designed for easy maintenance."

**Larry A. Bauman, Connell, Wash.:** "My 1994 **Deere** 7400 row crop tractor has about 9,000 hours on it but still has the original engine and transmission. I use it with a planter and cultivator, and it has also harvested hundreds of acres of onions. It's definitely my best buy."

**Herb Berteche, Woodburn, Ind.:** "I'm still using my 1986 **Deere** S92 riding mower. All I've replaced is a starter, the lower main seal, and a couple of batteries. This machine has a rear engine so it steers easy. I use a grass catcher with it which also works great for leaves. I removed all the safety switches so I can get off the machine and leave it running. If they made new mowers like this, I'd buy one."

**Phil Vesey, Kingsville, Ohio:** "I like my three **Husqvarna** chainsaws - models 36-41, 2-340, and 394. We've used the smaller saws to cut many cords of firewood and we use the larger one with an Alaskan sawmill to cut hardwood logs into lumber. We use the lumber to make work benches and picnic tables."

**Richard Stuckey, West Unity, Ohio:** "My 1964 **Deere** 4020 tractor has 15,500 hours on it but still runs like new. The engine was overhauled at 7,200 hours. I've had newer and older Deere tractors and all of them have worked great, but this one is special. It still gets the most use of any of my tractors."

**Ed Billiaert, Deloraine, Manitoba:** "It's one of the best vehicles I'll probably ever own," reports Ed about his 1987 **Dodge** Dakota pickup equipped with a V-6, 3.9-liter engine. "I bought this pickup used with about 25,000 miles on it. I've put on tires, belts, a set of brakes, and a new alternator. Now it has about 200,000 miles on it but still runs like new. It doesn't burn any oil and gets up to 26 mpg."

**Steve McCue, Hope, Ind.:** Steve's the proud owner of a 2001 **Honda** Rubicon ATV and a 2002 **Honda** Rancher 350 ATV. "I've put about 1,200 miles on each one and they've required only routine maintenance. They perform flawlessly and are very reliable. They come in handy for riding fences and moving empty wagons."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Dremel** rotary tool. "The grinding wheels and accessories for it are expensive but they only last a few seconds. This tool doesn't have much torque."

**Roman W. Zagorski, Slidell, La.:** Roman likes his **Sears** LTX-1000 tractor mower equipped with a 20 hp Briggs & Stratton 4-cycle engine and a 42-in. deck. "The engine is virtually indestructible, and parts for the tractor and mower deck are always available."

**William S. Geertson, Naples, N.Y.:** "I really like my **International** Harvester Cub

Low Boy tractor, which I bought used. It's equipped with a cab, 5-ft. mower deck, and 5-ft. snowblower. I like the over-and-under 2-speed transmission. The cab is equipped with a heater and fan. I can mow my lawn in less than one hour and clean the snow from our driveway in comfort.

"I bought my 1990 **Ford** F-150 pickup used equipped with cruise control, cap, and bed liner. All I've ever had to do is check the oil and fill up on gas. The automatic transmission works fine. The pickup has only about 65,000 miles on it."

**Gene Sandmeier, Akaska, S. Dak.:** "My 1993 **Honda** 4-WD mini truck is my best buy. I was so impressed with its quality that I became a dealer. It has a push button 4-WD which works great. I buy Daihatsu and Suzuki trucks mostly now as they have high-low range and 4 and 5-speed transmissions. They're tough and require very few repairs."

**Steve Reeves, Benton, Ky.:** "My 2000 **Kubota** B-21 loader tractor with backhoe is built rugged and has never failed me. It always starts, even in the coldest weather. I can say the same for my **Kubota** 3710 tractor loader.

"However, my 2006 **Kubota** RTV 900 tractor is underpowered. The parking brake

### "The gears are hard to engage and the transmission failed at 100 hours."

is in the way of the cab's exit path. This tractor is very noisy and stops too quickly when I let off the throttle. The gears are hard to engage, and the transmission failed at 100 hours when the transmission relief cable froze up. Also, there's no cover plate over the rear hydraulic tank. It's a real lemon."

**Albert Yoder, Dunnville, Ky.:** "My **Drill** Doctor is my worst buy. It might work alright with more practice, but I had problems with it taking the cutting edge off and damaging some bits. I think it costs too much for the amount of time and practice that's required to use it."

**Ben Beaman, Polo, Ill.:** Ben likes the **Meg-Mo** blades that he uses on his riding mower (ph 877 625-0125 or 815 625-0125; www.meg-mo.com). The round disc blades replace the blades on most any mower. It consists of a central steel disc with four "fold-back" cutting blades attached. You simply remove the original blades on your mower and replace with the cutting discs. The company says they eliminate the time and expense needed to maintain conventional mower blades. With conventional single blades, when the blade wears out you have to replace the whole blade. With the Meg-Mo system, you keep the disc and replace only the knives, which last considerably longer than conventional blades.

"I have a poorly landscaped yard which is difficult to mow. The Meg-Mo system helps even out my lawn," says Beaman. "As a result, my mower works less and the blades last longer. It's a beautiful system."

**Martha Sherman, Salem, S. Dak.:** Martha's the satisfied owner of a 2004 **Deere** LT 160 riding mower equipped with a 42-in. "Freedom" deck. "We use it to mow about seven acres in our campground. We have to mow around trees, water, electric poles, etc. Since there's no discharge on this mower we can get close to objects on either side, and we don't have to worry about throwing gravel at windshields. We haven't had any mechanical problems. The Freedom deck mulches even damp grass."

## Empress Splendor Trees

Maurice Leighton of Placerville, Calif., recently wrote to FARM SHOW saying that he'd had a bad experience with World Tree Technologies, an Arizona company mentioned in our Vol. 31 No. 1 story about fast-growing Empress Splendor trees.

The 85-year-old wanted to add some of the unique trees to his existing collection of 35 different tree varieties. He has a 500-tree nursery, which he cares for with an innovative watering system and other tools he designed.

In mid-February, Leighton sent a check to World Tree Technologies in Arizona, ordering a small number of Empress Splendor trees. Separately, he also phoned John Garbini of Wonder Earth Partners in Myrtle Creek, Oregon (Garbini was featured in the same FARM SHOW article since he's an Empress Splendor distributor for World Tree Technologies). Leighton says Garbini was very helpful with providing information, and sent him a planting guide.

Although his cheque to World Tree Technologies was cashed, Leighton never received any trees from them. Five subsequent phone calls to president Wendy Burton resulted in empty promises of immediate delivery, before she finally said she'd refund his money. A month later (in June), he still hadn't received anything so Leighton mentioned to Garbini that he planned to contact his local TV station's "consumer trouble shooter" and have a story done.

Leighton went ahead and did an interview, and the troubleshooter's call to the Arizona company was not returned. But just a few days later, Leighton received a full refund along with a written promise that his trees will be provided free of charge next April. Leighton's pleased with this development, but will have to wait and see if the trees arrive in the spring, as his trust in the company is shaken.

When we contacted Wendy Burton for her side of the story, she told us that her company did initially send trees to Leighton by priority mail, but for some unknown reason, he didn't receive them. After double check-

**Douglas Coveny, Byron, N.Y.:** "My **Honda** EU 2000 generator starts easy and is light enough to carry with one hand. It has enough power to keep refrigeration and heat going during power failures and works great in our camper. It's quiet and runs 10 to 12 hours on a gallon of gas."

**John C. Reckart, Bruceton Mills, W. Va.:** A 2006 **Kawasaki** 3010 Mule utility vehicle rates as John's "best buy". "It takes the place of a pickup around our horse farm. It has two seats so we can take four people for a Sunday ride in the mountains. The bed provides a place to haul stuff to the field and a place for our dog to ride. We've put about 185 hours on this machine with no problems."

He nominates his 2005 **Deere** 990 tractor equipped with a front-end loader as his "worst buy". "This tractor doesn't have enough hydraulic power, and the fenders started showing rust at about three months. We got no help from the dealer with either problem. Then, when the tractor was two years old, the dealer called and said he had replacement fenders for us. So I guess it takes Deere two years to figure out they really have a problem."

**Scott Horist, Elk Grove, Ill.:** "My **Oscar** 28 sawmill from **Hud-Son Forest Equipment** is my best buy (ph 800 765-7297; www.hud-son.com). I own a log furniture company and this small sawmill does all I ask of it."

**John Faust, Richards, Texas:** "I bought



Fast-growing Empress Splendor trees are sold by World Tree Technologies.

ing the address, they then sent another tree shipment with the same unfortunate results.

"We do our best to provide top quality customer service, and I'm pleased with the way we handled this situation," Burton says. "We only fill orders twice a year - in April and in September. This is because deciduous trees need to be planted in either the spring or fall. We provide a one-year guarantee with all of our trees - if they die, we'll replace them as long as the customer sends us back the dead tree."

Since FARM SHOW's first story about Empress Splendor trees, Burton says the company has been "totally inundated with inquiries and orders."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Maurice Leighton, 6560 Lindberg Ave., Placerville, Calif. 95667 (ph 530 626-0965) or World Tree Technologies, Inc. (ph 888 693-8733; 480 948-0188; www.worldtreetech.com) or Wonder Earth Partners (ph 877 960-5969; www.wonder earth partners.com).

my **Gravely** mower from an 80-year-old gentleman who could no longer pull start it. I think this machine is even better than the new DR mowers. It's pto-driven and sometimes has more power than I need. I recently had surgery and can't pull start it any more myself, so I'm now putting an electric starter on it. In my opinion it's better than most mowers on the market today."

**Bob Otto, Mapleton, Iowa:** Bob's the proud owner of a **Deere** 7520 MFWD tractor equipped with a **Deere** 741 self-leveling loader with joystick. "This tractor is equipped with a Power Quad 20-speed transmission with a left hand shuttle, which is a delight to operate. We use it every day in our livestock operation with no problems. It's our first MFWD loader tractor, and I'd find it difficult to part with."

**Mike Takeuchi, Columbus, Mont.:** Mike's happy with his 1980's **Kubota** 6100 tractor. "This little tractor has done everything I've asked it to and is easy on fuel."

**Loring Kufahl, Wheaton, Kansas:** "I bought my 2006 **Deere** 6420 tractor used with about 900 hours on it. It's a wonderful tractor to operate - no problems at all.

"My 2001 **Chevrolet** Duramax pickup equipped with an Allison transmission has 89,000 trouble-free miles on it. It has plenty of power to pull a 24-ft. livestock trailer and gets 18 to 20 mpg empty on the highway."

(Continued on next page)