

Reader Letters



I thought the reader in your last issue had a good tip about a foot-operated drill press switch until I read, "Just don't use a 3-prong outlet as it could be dangerous". As an electrician, I take strong exception to the reader's statement. He should know that there's a very good reason that 2-prong outlets are harder to come by. They're not safe! The green wire in that 3-prong plug is the "safety". Always make sure it's connected at both ends. Tie it to the metal case of whatever you are connecting to and make sure that there is a continuous metal path to connect both ends together. It will direct stray energy away from the user, possibly preventing a deadly accident. (*wdfarm@ptsi.net*)



I made this covered hay feeder to save hay and keep bales dry. It measures 11 by 6 1/2 ft. with a 15 by 15-ft. roof over the top and a metal floor. The main frame is made of 2 3/8-in. drill pipe while the dividers are 1-in. sucker rods. Gates at each end swing open to load bales. The 2 by 8 boards lift out on each end to clean out. (*Benjamin Stolarski, Sealy, Texas ph 979 885-6786*)

Reading about the mechanical steer in your last issue that's used to practice roping skills, I thought you'd be interested in this mechanical bear I read about in a Swedish paper. It's being used to test and train bear hunting dogs. It's made of an electric wheelchair equipped with remote steering. A larged stuffed bear is placed on top of the chair. (*Bengt Knutsson, Edsbyn, Sweden*)



A ladder from an unused grain bin makes it easy to check inside our grain wagon. It simply bolts to the side of the hopper. (*Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa*)



I was interested in the idea in your last issue for blowing cool air from a basement up to the upper floors of the house to provide "free" summer cooling. I've had a 13 by 17-in. register in the floor of my workshop for 30 years. An overhead fan pulls cool air up through the register from the crawlspace below. The shop is 20 by 28 ft. and the other day it was 91° outside but stayed 74° in the shop. (*Alfred Neiner, North Judson, Ind.*)



I mounted a truck mirror on the leading edge of the rear fender on my tractor. It helps me see around towed wagons. That's especially handy on the highway. (*Al Doering, 19828 310th St., Hubbard, Iowa 50122 ph 641-864-3554*)

I wired a "hot" cigarette lighter to my ATV to power a 12-volt sprayer. When I'm spot spraying weeds I can shut the ATV off and walk through the infested areas around buildings and machinery. (*Tim Darr, 11194 Hwy. 83, Big Fork, Montana 59911*)



Here's a handy way to store extra garden hose. We had already made a "Tennessee-style" compost barrel out of a plastic drum, mounted on a pipe and with a hole cut in one side. So we simply wrap the hose around the barrel and turn the barrel to roll it up. (*C.F. Marley, Nokomis, Ill.*)

Joseph Ranagan, writing in your last issue, stated that add-on hydrogen violates the laws of thermodynamics because you can't get more power out than you put in. But a car is not a closed system, as evidenced by the plumes of hot exhaust gasses emerging from the tailpipe. Add-on hydrogen units could produce real, but modest, fuel savings in at least three ways:

1. Using a source of unused energy for electrolysis, like hot exhaust or braking energy.
2. Enhancing diesel combustion efficiency. Propane injecting systems make diesels run 10 to 20 percent more powerfully, but only a portion of the extra power comes from the chemical energy in the propane. The rest is from burning the diesel fuel faster and more completely, so the engine can harvest more of that power in the powerstroke.
3. Reducing emission control losses. Hydrogen charging, like propane charging, should make fuel burn cleaner. Since modern engines lose a significant portion of their energy to pollution control equipment, burning cleaner should increase efficiency.

All that said, my scam detector goes off, too, when I read about add-on fuel savers. (*E. Cronquist, Skull Valley, Arizona*)

Concerning Joseph Ranagan's letter poo-pooing hydrogen-generating units, an internal combustion engine isn't a "closed system". They're about as efficient as a severely leaking bucket. It's my opinion that continuously operating the alternator wastes energy over and above what's needed to keep a car's electrical system operating. Generating hydrogen simply captures some of that wasted energy. (*Bob Huebner, Kamiah, Idaho*)



Enclosed is a picture of my garden. I have a bad back and legs so I decided to raise my garden so I could walk up to it. I used an old grain elevator that measures 50 ft. long, 21 in. wide, and 7 in. deep. It works great and is a pleasure to work. (*Kenny Koenigs, 4620 Angle Rd., Stacyville, Iowa 50476*)



I needed a place to store my collectibles, so I built this storefront building to resemble an old-time country store. It's made entirely from sawmill lumber and measures 20 by 30 ft. I tried to make the building look as authentic as possible with signs from old service stations. There are also a couple of old-time Gulf gas pumps on the porch, a windshield wiper stand where wiper blades were stored, and an old air compressor out of a Gulf service station. One sign lists gas selling for 33 cents per gallon. I keep all kinds of things inside the building including toys, pedal tractors, and an old oil can collection. There are old glass oil jars that were once sold by service stations, and a pump that was used to fill the jars. The jars had a built-in funnel that was used to pour oil into the vehicle's engine. Once the jar was empty you then returned it to the service station. There's also a collection of gas pump-shaped knives inside the building.

At one time there were a lot of these old country stores in our area, but unfortunately very few still exist. (*Dink Taylor, 4921 White Store Road, Wingate, N.C. 28174 ph 704 624-5605 or 704 291-0160*)

I bought this old double dump rake at an auction sale and am wondering if anyone knows who made it, and when? I've



never seen one like it. The rake was originally made to be pulled by horses, but someone added a hitch to pull it behind a tractor. When it was new it probably had a seat and caster wheels on front.

The rake is equipped with two sets of teeth. When the rake fills with hay the operator trips a lever, which causes one set of teeth to come up and dump the hay. At the same time the other set of teeth drops down to catch any unraked hay, eliminating skips.

Judging by the color of the paint on this rake, I think it was made by either New Idea or Farmhand. (*Henry Rohrich, 1655 77th St. S.E., Linton, N. Dak. 58552 ph 701 782-4367; rohrichs@bek.tel.com*)



I always wanted a garden tractor equipped with a Deere 2-cyl. engine, so recently I mounted an LUC engine off a Deere 12-A combine in a Deere 318 garden tractor. It's chain-driven and has a hydrostatic transmission. (*Norman Kielsmeier, Rudd, Iowa 50471 ph 641 395-2668*)

To keep the temperature from getting too hot inside my greenhouse, I use a temperature control that was designed for a furnace and is equipped with a mercury switch. I turned the control upside down so it turns on fans when it gets too hot. I use an 18-volt transformer to connect to 110 volts. Then on a 110-volt plug I can plug in fans, lights, motors, etc. I use the idea in my garage, too. (*A.J. Poirier, 1145 Dakota St., Suite 106, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2N 0A4*)



I built this 3-pt. mounted "lay-off plow" to plant potatoes in my garden and use my 1950 Ferguson 85 hp tractor to pull it. The unit consists of two 16-in. dia. discs mounted on a frame that's made from 3/8-in. thick, 2 1/2-in. angle iron. The discs are spaced 1 1/2 ft. apart and hill up the soil about 6 in. high.

The vertical shaft that supports each disc slides up inside a bracket and is held tight by a set screw. The brackets are mounted on a hinged length of metal. By removing a pin, the bracket and discs can be folded up out of the way. I can also remove the discs and mount them on another 3-pt. mounted frame that I use to plow my garden.

My friend Richard Chamberlain helped out. (*Eugene Holloway, 384 Orr Branch Road, Robbinsville, N.C. 28771 ph 828 479-2576*)