

# Reader Letters



We would like to thank all the generous FARM SHOW readers who sent money, cards and handwritten notes of encouragement for Carol McBrady and the orphaned children in Zambia that she takes care of by growing food on a small farm (Vol. 34, No. 4). Some readers called with interesting suggestions for Carol and the kids to try in the future.

We are working with a shipping company that will allow us to send a barrel of donated items for free. We hope to send more barrels of supplies in the future, especially with the idea of helping them to add chickens and other livestock to the farm in the future. (**Mike McBrady, Action for Children-Zambia; ph 952-373-1351; www.afczambia.org; mmcbrady@imagetrend.com**).

I got tired of constantly washing the filter on my window air conditioner, so I started using a pleated automotive air filter, which can be taped in place. The one I used measures 7 by 14 in. and sold for \$12 at the auto parts store. It'll last a long time and is 99 percent efficient, keeping the inside air cleaner and more healthy. (**A Florida subscriber**)

Here's an idea that I've used to unravel round bales so cattle can eat without wasting energy. I use a handheld circular saw with the blade reversed to cut about halfway through the bale. Opens it up into a loose stack of hay that's easier to access. (**Fred Redman, 1000 Pine St., Athens, Wis. 54411**)

A few years ago FARM SHOW published a story on dumping ordinary corn meal into lakes to clean up algae in the water (Vol. 29, No. 6). The idea is that the corn meal competes with the algae for available phosphorus, starving the algae to death.

I tried the idea on a 1/2-acre pond on my property, and it works great. However, buying corn meal from the grocery store gets expensive. I was spending about \$80 per month. To reduce the cost I switched to using ground corn chicken feed, which I buy at a local feed mill. The corn is screened very fine. I buy 100 lbs. at a time. Using a scoop that I made out of a 1/2-gal. milk jug, I toss the ground corn over the side of my paddleboat. I do this about every 2 weeks from April until September.

The ground corn clears up the water clarity within a few days and helps kill off pond weeds. The 100-lb. bag of ground corn costs less than \$10.

Because my pond receives runoff from heavy rains, I sometimes need to also add Cutrine Plus granular algicide and pond dye as needed. (**Bob Wenzel, W7619 Coyne Rd., Fond Du Lac, Wis. 54937 cell ph 920 238-1099**)

I'm amazed that people who should know better still use pressure-treated lumber to build containers for growing food. Haven't they heard about the arsenic, chromium or copper that's often found in pressure-treated lumber?

In FARM SHOW's Vol. 34, No. 3, there's a story about raising tomatoes in elevated cages made mostly out of pressure-treated 2 by 4's. I'd like to know how much arsenic and other toxins gets into food grown in such containers. I wouldn't want to get pressure-treated wood anywhere near my garden. (**Arlo Lusby II, sutterchip@yahoo.com**).



We get your magazine and love it. My 3-year-old grandson gets so involved with all the photos. He asks questions and studies every magazine by taking each page out and looking it over. Here's a photo of him at work. Thanks for such an interesting publication. (**Teresa E. Williams; ph 256 390-2292; tewilliams@gmail.com**).

We've planted heirloom gourds and various sorts of pumpkins in the same patch for years. Two years ago we decided to save the gourd seeds. When we planted the seeds the next year, one



or two plants produced what looked like two-tone pumpkins but had very hard gourd-like rinds.

This year all the offspring are large, but only about 40 percent are two-tone. The others are plain green. One of the two-tone hybrids is as large as a medium pumpkin – 30 in. in circumference – and doesn't seem to have a hard rind. We think that with careful breeding these two-tone hybrids may become a new species, which we've decided to call "gunkins".

We probably won't have any seeds available for a few years, but anyone who wants to experiment with this sort of crossbreeding should certainly try it. Keep in mind that crossbreeding doesn't show up in the current year's fruit. (**Tom Monsen, 7485 Dahlgren Rd., Chaska, Minn. 55318 ph 952 466-2089; rimonsen@wvdb.org**)



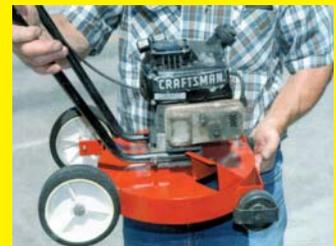
I pass out copies of FARM SHOW at lawn and garden tractor pulls here in Virginia. I've even made up a small advertisement for FARM SHOW on a disc on front of my Wheelhorse pulling tractor. (**Jeff Lang, 111 Deep Water Cove, Newport News, Va. ph 757 873-1662; jhunsch@gmail.com**)



This is a 12-in. lawn mower I made from scratch because I couldn't find a small mower for use around my garden and fence. The engine came from a small rotor tiller that I found in the trash.

I made the sides of the deck out of strips of 2 by 1/8 in. flat steel. The top of the deck is made from 14-ga. flat steel. I had to build a bearing housing for the blade. The wheels came from an old mower. I had to machine the engine and clutch housing with a lathe to fit the bearing and blade housing.

This little mower has all but replaced my string trimmer. Works very well to clean up small areas and is very light-



weight and maneuverable. (**Bob Brickz, Box 1436, Thompson Falls, Mont. 59873 ph 406-827-3437**)

I just received your last issue. Imagine my surprise when I saw the photo of my Deere 110 garden tractor mailbox, sent to you by John Corwell of Hancock, N.H., who photographed it when he happened to drive by. I thought I'd tell you this tractor still starts and runs like a top. I'd mow my yard with it if I could find a good mowing deck for it. (**Scott MacKenzie, Peterborough, N.H. ph 603 801-3325; autorepairanywhere@yahoo.com**)



Thanks for the story on my wheel painting tool (Vol. 34, No. 4). Here's another photo that shows the unit holding the wheel. The wheel is held in the center where the tube goes. The wheel can be turned in any direction so the paint will hit it. I've painted at least 2,000 to 3,000 wheels with this tool. It's inexpensive and simple to build. (**Loren Smith, 16033 County 5, Spring Valley, Minn. 55975 ph 507 421-9996**)



Old swimming pool ladders can be used to cross fences where you don't have a gate. It's not very pretty, but it works when you want to cross a 4-ft. high barbed or

woven wire fence. In the photo, I set up a white rope at the top of the fence to make it more visible. (**Tom Trenary, 2090 Keefer Lawrenceville Rd., Corinth, Ky. 41010 ph 859 824-6216**)

We have a rock garden that has turned into a bit of a weed patch. We tried using a weed whacker but it was hard on the trimmer and we couldn't keep up. Then we hit on the idea of using our Honda high pressure washer. At 4,000 psi and using the washer's small pin point nozzle, it cuts through the weeds like a hot knife through butter. It also works well to work up the soil. It's a bit messy but really gets the job done. (**John Carson, ph 780 464-7475; jcarson@wildroseinternet.ca**)

One time while I was moving some metal bars, I was surprised to find my hands were coated with hundreds of tiny metal slivers. Washing my hands several times only worsened the situation. Then my wife suggested using strips of duct tape to pull out the slivers. After 3 or 4 applications almost all the slivers were gone except for a few large ones, which I was able to remove using tweezers. (**Harvey Fisher, P.O. Box 385, Warburg, Alta., Canada T0C 2T0**)

I'm 70 years old and have a garden that's 75 ft. long. To make the work easier I came up with this simple tool for planting peas, corn, beans and other small seeds without having to bend over. I use a length of 1/2-in. dia. pvc pipe, with a small 4-in. dia. plastic funnel on top, to drop seeds through. The funnel fits into the swollen end of the pipe. I just place the pipe into the furrow and drop the seeds 1 1/2 in. apart. In no time at all the seeds are planted. (**Sam A. Miller, 276 Plaint Lane, Blackville, S. C. 29817 ph 803 284-4251**)

