

Resaw Recycles Barn Timber

Barnstormerswood has built a national reputation turning old barn timbers into flooring, false beams and other construction uses. Along with metal detectors and a denailing crew, the key to the process is a good "resaw". Karl Kirven of Barnstormerswood swears by his Baker Products Resaw.

"The Baker is a great machine, adaptable and easy to run," says Kirven. "We resaw a lot of rustic beams. We got started when contractors were looking for barn wood to make cabinetry and flooring. Now we take old boards and timbers and resaw them into whatever is needed."

Clyde Reed, Baker Products, says resaws are ideal for using wood that might not otherwise find a market. "What's neat about the Resaw is that you can hit a 16 penny nail and cut right through it," says Reed.

The Baker Resaw fits in a 3/4-ton short bed pickup truck. Motor sizes range from 15 to 30 hp. It features a 6-in. wide conveyor, powered hold down and hydraulic, variable feed speed control of 0 to 120 ft. per min. Baker Resaws start at just under

\$17,000.

"We don't put a lot of bells and whistles on our Resaw," says Reed. "However, it has the right balance of power, blade, blade wheels and blade tension system. At the system's heart is the band blade 'guide plate' that guides and supports the blade during the cut. Add to that a quality feed system that delivers material to the cutting head evenly and consistently."

Kirven says resawing is the key to adding value to barn wood. "Until it has been dismantled, denailed, processed and stored, old barns are white elephants," he says. "There may be 8,000 to 12,000 board feet of wood, but only 6,000 to 8,000 that are useable. With a resaw, what you get depends on the quality of the wood."

While Kirven sells lots of barn board and timber without resawing it, the process can extend the value of rare, hand-hewn beams and lumber that were originally cut with a circle saw. The surface marks left on both are increasingly popular as they become more rare. The hand-hewn beams can be used intact or surface slabs (skins) removed and



Baker Products' Resaw works great for resawing old boards and barn timbers into whatever is needed, says Karl Kirven.

reassembled into false beams.

Kirven uses a resaw to slice 2 by 4's originally cut with a circle saw. This gives him two valuable marked surfaces for use as flooring. "We run them through a rip saw so they are uniform and then through a moulder for edging" explains Kirven. "When they are laid down and buffed, the circle saw marks are clear. It has a great look."

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Creative Log Stacking Helps Grow Mushrooms

If you love mushrooms and like to experiment, growing shiitakes, oyster and other mushroom varieties might make a perfect hobby — and maybe even a profitable sideline business.

We contacted Rebecca Hargrave, extension educator at Cornell University, after seeing photos recently of some unusual looking log stacks used to grow mushrooms.

"We really encourage everyone to experiment with growing arrangements. This is still a relatively new arena of science," says Hargrave. Demand outweighs supply, making mushrooms the perfect crop to add diversity to farm operations. Since the "planting season" is late winter/early spring, it's usually a less busy time for most producers.

Holes are drilled in freshly cut trees and then filled with preinoculated dowels or sawdust mushroom spawn. The logs are stacked in moist, shady areas and should be watered during dry periods and protected from the winter sun.

After one to two years, the mushrooms can be harvested. The logs will keep producing for 2 to 6 years depending on the type of wood.

"Typically oyster mushrooms are

grown on poplar, and shitake are grown on oak," Hargrave says. "But shitake have also been grown on ironwood and beech. It's easy to experiment."

For space reasons, some growers stack logs in a crib style. Others keep them low during winter so they get a good snow cover. When the mushrooms start to grow, it's helpful to lean the logs upright for easier harvest.

While profits may be less in local and farmer's markets, oyster and shitake mushrooms can bring as much as \$11 to \$16/lb. at farmer's markets in large cities.

When Cornell offers mushroom workshops, sessions fill quickly, Hargrave says. Growing mushrooms is popular with market gardeners as well as people who just want to grow them for themselves.

"Growing mushrooms works well alongside vegetable production," Hargrave says.

For mushroom growing and marketing tips, she suggests going to mushrooms.cals.cornell.edu, a site for the Northeast Forest Mushroom Growing Network.

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To grow mushrooms, holes are drilled in freshly cut trees and then filled with preinoculated dowels or sawdust mushroom spawn (above). Logs are stacked in moist, shady areas.



Buyers Pay For Wool Before Sheep Are Sheared

Melissa Todd can't hedge her wool on a future's market, but she has something better. Her customers pay in advance for their wool and woolen products.

"About 80 percent of the wool we produce goes to the members of our Fiber CSA (community sponsored agriculture group)," says Todd.

"There's very little risk for shareholders," says Todd. "The number of skeins of yarn the shareholder receives will vary with the wool harvest, but to not get any, the flock would have to die."

Reducing risk or even sharing it was never Todd's goal. She had been successful selling her woolen products via craft shows. Her website drew in customers

from around the U.S. and even Europe. However, she wanted to connect with local fiber users.

"We live near Eau Claire, Wis., and there are a lot of knitters and weavers there, so I decided to try a new approach," she says.

The first year she handed out fliers at craft shows and *The Country Today*, a statewide newspaper, did a story on her plans.

"I had a lot of people call to share stories about raising sheep, and knitters called about the wool," says Todd. "They liked the idea that I didn't use any dyes, just the natural colors of the wool."

Todd's 30 head herd includes Scottish Blackface, Shetland and a few Icelandic animals. All are raised for fiber produc-

tion. Some are white, some black and some mottled. As a result, when the processed wool comes back from the woolen mill, she has a range of straight to blended color, as well as spun and unspun (roving) wool.

"Each shareholder gets a variety of colors of yarn and a sample of roving," says Todd. "They also get notecards with pictures of sheep and the farm."

Todd also sends out quarterly newsletters to shareholders. The goal is to help them feel a part of the farm and the entire year's wool production. The effort seems to be working.

Todd sold her entire 26 shares for 2009 and is already getting inquiries for 2010. Shares are priced at \$96 each. "We get a lot of requests from people wanting to give them as

birthday and Christmas gifts," says Todd.

Todd still markets her wool via the internet. One of the unique products she offers is her Felted Soap Kit in a Jar. The jar contains a bar of soap and a combination of died and natural wool roving. At \$8.50, it has proven very popular.

"When you wet the wool, it shrinks around the soap," says Todd. "It's like a wool wash cloth with soap in the middle."

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