

Reader Letters



I used to turn old cars from the 1930's and 40's into housing for a sow and her pigs. I'd remove the engine, wheels, axles and seats so the car would sit flush with the ground. We'd set up a pellet feeder and drinking container in the trunk and block it off with 2 by 6's so only the pigs could get back there to feed. The kids could feed the pigs by simply opening the trunk. We used the idea for years. Worked great. **(Henry Bradford, 215 30th Road, Brookville, Kan. 67425)**



Here are a couple gardening ideas FARM SHOW readers may be interested in.

April Probst, who lives nearby in Filmore, Ill., raises several thousand plants each spring for area gardeners in a hoop house on her farm. She also gardens for herself and she likes to experiment. Her latest idea is raising leaf lettuce and radishes in lengths of plastic rain gutter. She says you can mount the gutters at a convenient height so they're easy to plant and harvest, and she mounts them at a slight angle so she can water the entire trough by pouring water in one end.



We think this is the best-looking mailbox in New Hampshire. A box and post mounted on front of a Deere 110 riding mower. **(John Crowell, P.O. Box 71, Hancock, N.H. 03449)**



This is my version of William Russell's 3-way tomato cages that I saw in your last issue. I built mine out of old lumber from a back porch I tore down years ago. I planted tomatoes around the sides and bottom. In the tops I planted 9 plants of cucumbers and one red bell pepper. My wife planted leeks and a Mexican bell pepper in it and they seem to be going crazy. **(J.T. Bond, Dayton, Texas)**

I have been using a pellet stove for 7 seasons now. The quickest and easiest way I have found to light it is to use a small propane torch. Just drop a handful of pellets in the firebox and hold the torch on them until a small flame starts. Usually just 15 to 20 seconds does the job. Of course, for safety store the torch away from the stove. **(Willie Jaster, Pine City, Minn.)**

The "Best & Worst Buy" section of FARM SHOW can be entertaining at times. But many complaints about a piece of equipment are often a result of poor basic maintenance. Recently a producer complained about his Deere 8000 Series tractor. I own two of these tractors and they're ahead of every other brand and have the latest technology integrated into their design. The things he criticized would be considered desirable features by the other 99 percent of us. Example: armrests, toggle switches, location of gauges, and so on. I believe as an editor you have a responsibility to do a better job substantiating some of the claims made by your readers. **(A former subscriber)**



I had my own idea, after having read about several raised garden beds in FARM SHOW. I realized a picnic table would be just the right height for a raised garden so I built some boxes on top of a table and mixed up peat, vermiculite and compost to fill the center compartments. At either end I simply cut open two bags of potting soil and planted directly into them.

I positioned the picnic table near a hydrant and drilled 1/16-in. holes into a hose to make a simple drip irrigation system. To keep water from squirting out too fast, I simply tied strips of cloth around the holes. The hose lies across the garden so it's easy to keep it moist.

I like using the picnic table because it's the right height when standing and I can sit down on the benches when tired. **(C.F. Marley, Nokomis, Ill.)**



When a UPS truck comes to our place, the driver doesn't even have to get out. Instead, he just drops the package into a box that we made out of an old barbecue gas grill. The driver raises a flag on the grill to let us know a package is waiting.

We removed the shelves from the grill and replaced the original support pole with a 4-in. dia. metal tube that sets in the ground. To deliver a package, the driver just raises the grill's lid and drops the package inside. We also mounted a smaller box at a lower height for U.S. mail drivers, whose trucks are set lower to the ground.

It's really handy. Drivers don't have to worry about dealing with our dogs, and we don't have to worry about packages left out in the rain. **(Alan Shelbourn, 7570 - 288th St. N.E., Kingston, Wash. 98346 ph 360 297-3779; kshelb4647@aol.com)**

Thanks for the story in your last issue on how I attach a 22-in. push mower to the side of my garden tractor, allowing me



to cut grass on steep hillsides. These photos do a better job of showing what I did. I bolted a boat winch onto the rear fender of the tractor and bolted safety belt anchors to one side of the mower, on front and back. Then I made up a 15-in. long chain with a hook at both ends, and attached each end to an anchor.



I drive the tractor along the top of the hillside so the mower follows along below me. When I reach the other end, I make a U turn to bring the mower back up. Then I crank the winch again to lower the mower and make another pass.

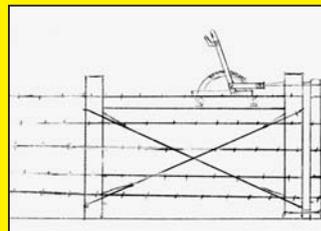
I came up with the idea because we have a long steep hill in front of our house, and I didn't want anyone to get hurt trying to mow it. **(Fred A. Will, W4889 Pope Road, Merrill, Wis. 54452 ph 715 536-8940)**



A local farmer gave me this grain bin, which now serves as my 'pig house'. It has plenty of room for 2 feeder pigs, with a window providing ventilation.

I converted the angle iron frame of an old feed bin, and a discarded manure spreader, into a narrow trailer for bringing logs out of the woods. It dumps by means of a manual hydraulic jack. **(Don Bogardus, 3375 Hwy. Rt. 20, Sloansville, N.Y. 12160)**

I made my own one-handed gate tightener using the adjustment handles off an old harrow or springtooth cultivator.



It's handy on barbed wire gates that tend to sag a lot.

I attach the adjustment handles to a length of strap iron, which I screw onto the gate's wooden cross brace or weld onto a metal cross brace. Then I hook galvanized cable or smooth wire to the handle and loop it around the gate post.

Squeezing the handle releases a "dog" and then I pull back to tighten the gate. By releasing the handle, I can easily remove the loop from the gate. If any slack in the fence or gate develops later on, I can use the adjusting handle to take up the difference. I've used this idea for 30 or 40 years now, on many different gates, and it works great. **(Harold L. Penner, Rt. 1, Box 86, Fairview, Okla. 73737 ph 580 227-0279)**

I made an aluminum rack for my 1997 Dodge 2500 Ram 4-WD diesel pickup to protect the bed from logs that I cut into



firewood. I made the rack higher in front so I can haul more wood. I also use the pickup to haul my ATV and canoe so I welded 8 tie-down lugs onto the rack.

The rack is built from 1 1/4-in. dia. schedule 40 aluminum pipe and 2 by 3 by 1/4-in. thick aluminum angle iron, with an aluminum expanded mesh rack protecting the cab's rear window. The rack bolts to the top of the bed sides with four 1/2-in. bolts. My home-built rack is built solid and cost only about \$300 to build. I work at a local shipyard so I was able to get the materials for cost. **(Larry Genge, 134 Main St. N., Glovertown, Newfoundland, Canada A0G 2L0 ph 709 533-2798; l_dgenge@yahoo.ca)**

We like to turn junk into back yard art. For example, we turned an old fiberglass boat into a great looking flower bed. It's a real conversation piece.



We also came up with this giant, one-of-a-kind bicycle that's welded to the highway guard rail fence in front of our home. The wheels are two 5-ft. high wagon wheels off a hay rake and the sprockets are a pair of old buzz saw blades, with 6 ft. of corn picker chain riding on them. The frame is made from 3/4-in. dia. pipe. The rider sits on the seat off an old potato digger. **(John and Theda Zaborny, 5441 E. Michigan Ave., Jackson, Mich. 49201 ph 517 414-3596; jszaborny@yahoo.com)**