

Reader Letters



One of your readers made a good point in your last issue when he brought attention to the dangers of using treated wood to build garden beds due to arsenic and other chemicals. We got around the problem by building planting beds and lining them with plastic used on wood foundations, which keeps soil water and roots away from the treated wood. (John Malcomson, Davison, Mich.)



An article in your last issue showed a hedge trimmer made out of a push-type lawn mower powered by a Briggs & Stratton engine. I wanted to point out that walk-behind mowers and the engines that power them are produced with features that meet mandatory federal and industry safety standards and these features appear to be bypassed through this modification. Briggs & Stratton Corp. does not condone the modification or use of a walk-behind lawn mower as a hedge trimmer. (Brian Brunelli, Briggs & Stratton Corp., Milwaukee, Wis. Brunelli.brian@basco.com)

To keep birds from building nests in our unloading augers, we tie a short length of light truck tire inner tube over the top of the discharge spout. No more bird mess up there. (Bryce Worley, Holyoke, Colo.)

We use garden hose reels to wind up electric fence wire. They will hold up to a mile of electric fence and make the wire easy to roll and unroll. We purchase them at yard sales and auctions. They work great and are inexpensive. (Jerome McNary, Mitchell, S. Dak.)



After several strained muscles, I built a posthole auger holder using 4 by 4 posts for the frame. A 3 1/2-in. muffler clamp, with a short loop of chain attached to it, attaches to the frame of the auger. The chain hooks over a clevis hook that's eye-bolted to the top crossbar. Makes hooking and unhooking easy. (Larry Allen, Crane, Ore.)

Here's an easy way to feed birds. Just throw a towel down on the ground or in any comfortable nook and toss bird feed on top and watch them enjoy. It's easy to shake snow off or change spots as needed. (Abe W. Yoder, LaGrange, Ind.)

FARM SHOW recently featured a story about using a foam swim noodle as a sling to support newborn calves that can't stand. It looked like a neat idea but I find that a shot of Vitamin A and D takes care of the problem in minutes. I also use the vitamins on cows that can't get up after a difficult birth. (Ruth Nina Merja, Sun River, Mont.)

To suck maple sap from gravity tubs in the woods to up to 100 ft. away, I power 2 manual bilge pumps from an adapted pto coupler and off-center pin, running at about 120 strokes per minute. A turnbuckle in the shaft adjusts the throw to center. A threaded rod mounts to adjust height – solid-mounted to the rear-end housing of the tractor. This pump setup would work with any light-viscosity fluid. (Keith Mabee, 140 Loney's Lane, RR 2, Gananoque, Ont., Canada K7G 2V4 ph 613 382-3145)

As a veterinarian and frequent reader of FARM SHOW, I often compliment your publication and pass it around to friends. Sadly, I'm writing today to say you really messed up with the article, "Wolf Rescue Farm Also Sells Wolf Hybrid Pups" in your last issue. First, no true animal rescue operation makes money breeding animals. If they do they're just using the term "animal rescue" to make themselves look better to the public. Secondly, the mix of wolf and dog frequently leads to an emotionally confused animal. As a vet, I've been called on to euthanize quite a few for behavioral issues. I believe it is a person's unbalanced ego that drives him to want to possess and pen up a wild animal and nothing good comes of it. Other animals often get hurt, maimed or killed. (Lynne V. Swanson, DVM, Maysville, N.C.)



My son, Andy, and I operate a fall fun park on our farm near Chase Mills, N.Y. One of the highlights is this 51-ft. tall giant scarecrow that's made mostly from salvaged materials. It's supported by a big ash tree and stands at one end of the park. The entire scarecrow is stuffed with hay bales as well as loose hay and stands on 20-ft. tall wooden legs anchored in the ground. The head alone is 8 ft. tall and weighs 200 lbs. The body contains almost 2 tons of hay. We think it's the world's tallest scarecrow and might submit it to the Guinness Book of World Records. (Andy Maslin, 513 Co. Rd. 44, Chase Mills, N.Y. 13621 ph 315 250-3484; juand@verizon.net)



Art Pascale's Mini Dozer



Brian Stanley's Mini Dozer

Editor's Note: We made a whopper of a mistake in our last issue. On page 35 we ran a story about a mini dozer built by Art Pascale, Monson, Mass. Unfortunately, due to a mixup on the editor's desk, we ran a picture of a mini dozer built by another reader, Brian Stanley. We'd like to apologize to both men and congratulate them on the nifty machines they built. Pascale's machine, as we detailed in the last issue, was built on the frame of a Cub Cadet and has 4-in. wide steel tracks with a 48-in. wide blade.

Brian Stanley's machine is loosely patterned after a Deere 850 dozer, built with miscellaneous salvaged parts. He used heavy-gauge sheet metal to make the 4-in. wide tracks and pipes and bushings for the idlers. The dozer is driven by 2 hydraulic pumps, one to run the hydrostatic transmission and one to raise and lower the blade. Both pumps are belt-driven off the dozer's 18 hp. Kohler engine. The blade was cut out of a 250-gal. propane tank. (Brian Stanley, ph 712 350-0338; Art Pascale, ph 413 267-9982)



Japanese beetles were damaging the raspberries and strawberries we grow on our 12-acre gardening operation. The beetles attack late in the season, damaging plants which are growing for the next year.

We went on the internet and discovered that guinea fowl have a reputation of eating just about any kind of bug. So we bought a flock of white baby guinea fowls. They've really helped. However, you should be aware that they become very raucous at anything unusual, kind of like watch dogs. (Bill and Jill Beyer, 9024 Harrison Rd., Winnebago, Ill. 61088 ph 815 629-2126)



I replaced the original 10 hp engine on my Deere 318 garden tractor with a Buick 6-cyl., fuel-injected engine out of a 1994 Pontiac Bonneville. It has 170 hp so it'll really go. A shaft leads from the engine back to the tractor's hydrostatic transmission. Top speed is only 20 mph but it's really fun to drive.

The big engine was a very tight fit. I had to stretch the tractor's frame 2 in. and raise the hood 3 in. I also had to move the battery back behind the rear end.

To keep the engine noise down I installed pipes on each side that go down underneath. The tractor's radiator is off a Deere Gator. I bolted 2 flywheels together on the car's flex plate to give it more weight.

I installed 9 1/2-in. wide wheels on front and 15-in. wheels on back – twice the width of the original tires – for added traction. The rear wheels are off a pickup. I had to make an adapter for them to go from a 5 to a 6-bolt wheel pattern. I kept the original front wheel rims but cut and widened them 3 in. to make the

new tires fit. (Pat Prom, 12661 Pioneer Trail, Eden Prairie, Minn. 55347 ph 952 944-9266).



I often take my collection of old engines to antique tractor shows, where people get a big kick out of a giant homemade mouse trap that I set next to my engine display. The trap measures 2 ft. wide by 4 ft. long. A nearby sign says "Beware of the Thing", and the post that it's mounted on looks all chewed up. I used a real Victor mouse trap as a model for my trap. First I cut a piece of plywood and painted a red "V" on it for Victor. Then I used a torch to heat 1/4-in. dia. metal rod and bent it into a square before welding it all together. I heated up 1/4-in. dia. steel rod and wrapped it tightly around part of the square to make the spring.

A lot of people stop and take photos of family and friend next to it. (Dean Fritz, 10620 Spring St. N.E., Viola, Minn. 55934 ph 507 876-2895)

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