

Farm Equipment Assembly Business

Rick Mabeus operates a business assembling farm machinery in his shop for dealers and manufacturers. "The hitches I've built eliminate the need to keep getting off the machine to hook up," he says. Here are some of the hitches he's built:

Side Slinger

"In the past I needed two men to carry sections of auger tubing into the shop. My side slinger attachment makes it easy to haul tube sections from an outside storage area into the shop to place on tables for assembly."

The attachment is made from square tubing and channel iron. It's designed to slip over the skid loader's forks, with a pair of arms extending out to one side. A V-shaped length of sq. metal tubing is welded to the end of each arm.

Forklift Hydraulics

"I use the hydraulics mounted on the side of my large electric forklift to pump hydraulic fluid and also to lift assembled equipment. New equipment has to have the hydraulics assembled, plumbed, and primed to get it to work properly. This setup allows me to hook up 3 completed circuits all at the same time. I can run one set at a time by switching levers."

"The large tank on back allows me to pump hydraulic fluid into new cylinders and prime them. Once primed, the overflow fluid will come back into my reserve tank. I can get all equipment lifting and folding inside the shop with no fumes, since my large forklift is electric. I can pump as much as 28 gal. into new equipment."

Forklift-Mounted Mover

He built this attachment to use with a large forklift. "It allows me to move large farm equipment during assembly. The H-shaped frame slides over the forks and is equipped with a turnbuckle securing system."

The attachment can be fitted with a drawbar hitch for moving pull-type equipment; a skid steer plate for moving 3-pt. mounted equipment; or a 3-pt. quick hitch attachment.

Wide-Reach Unit

This attachment is designed to make loading and unloading long sections of flighting a quick and simple job. It, too, has slots for skid loader forks. "The width and length of the design allows me to reach all the way across trailers and stock piles. I simply drive up to a section of flighting, wrap straps around it, and lift," says Mabeus.

Auger Mover

This attachment was made to move assembled augers around in his shop. It consists of a rectangular metal frame with a pair of angled plates to contain the end of the auger, and a "quick hitch" pin. "I used one of the lower pins on a 3-pt. hitch and installed it vertically to make a quick hitch pin out of it," says Mabeus. "To move the equipment, all I have to do is drive up to the unit, come up from the bottom, and lift."



Wide-Reach Unit



Side Slinger



Auger Mover



Forklift-Mounted Mover



Hydraulic Module On Electric Forklift

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Rare Seed Business Thrives On Canadian Farm

"We try to grow the rarest of the rare so we're able to offer many seeds that no one else does. We make sure they are true to type, and we delve into the history of the seeds we sell," says Tanya Stefanec, owner of Heritage Harvest Seed, a farm-based business.

Growing and selling heirloom seeds combines her two passions — horticulture and history. Her success — a seed catalog with more than 600 heirloom varieties — is due to efficient organization skills and working full-time year-round.

"The preparation is the hardest part — to get it on paper before you plant," says the Carman, Man., entrepreneur.

Her garden stretches over 17 long acres — half a mile from one end to the other. Plus, her mother and other gardeners grow varieties for her. Plenty of space is a necessity, as heirloom varieties are open-pollinated, and varieties in each species need varying distances to ensure they don't cross-pollinate.

"Beans are one of the easiest," Stefanec explains. "They only need to be separated by 20 to 30 ft. Tomatoes need 100 to 150 ft. Squash varieties must be half a mile apart."

The purity of the strains is worth preserving as the seeds go back hundreds and even thousands of years. Stefanec records the history along with plant descriptions in her on-line and print catalogs.

For example: *Crapaudine* — *The oldest beet in cultivation, dating back to the time of Charlemagne (about 1,000 years ago).* Or, *Sweet Pea* — *In 1699, the Cupani Sweet Pea was originally found growing wild in Sicily and then sent by a Sicilian monk called Father Francisus Cupani to a teacher in Middlesex, England named*

Robert Uvedale. This is the original variety that all sweet peas originated from.

Gardeners appreciate heirloom seeds because they produce vegetables and flowers with the same characteristics year after year — unlike hybrids. Stefanec also finds them to be disease-resistant and hardier in a variety of conditions. She sells seeds for all different zones, and notes that if they produce in Manitoba's short season, they can make it practically anywhere.

"The taste is just phenomenal," says Stefanec, noting it's one of the main reasons for raising heirlooms. "There's so much variety — white cucumbers, purple potted peas, striped beans, tomatoes in all colors."

Winningsstadt cabbage has a pointed head. *Jaune de dours* is an old yellow carrot variety. One of her favorites is the super productive dragon tongue bean, yellow pods with purple stripes.

Stefanec's work is much like any other gardener, planting in the spring, and weeding and harvesting, with the exception that she has to keep track of each variety. As vegetables, flowers and herbs are harvested, her family eats the produce, and the seeds are saved and dried in the second and third stories of the Stefanecs' big, red barn. She uses an air compressor to blow off chaff from some seeds, soaks and separates pulp from seeds in varieties such as squash, and goes through a fermenting process to save other seeds, such as tomato seeds.

She packages and markets her seeds through the winter, with orders starting to ship in December.

Stefanec acquires her seed through seed exchanges and a network of heirloom gardeners. Some were commercially available more than 100 years ago. Others have been handed down from home gardeners



"The taste of heirloom varieties is phenomenal, and there's so much variety," says Tanya Stefanec, owner of Heritage Harvest Seed. She produces a seed catalog with more than 600 heirloom varieties. She acquires seed through seed exchanges and a network of gardeners.



and Native Americans.

One variety she is proud of finding through a European source is Early Scarlet Horn carrots, a variety from the 1600's grown in the early U.S. settlements. The seed is very rare, and this is the first season she has enough seed to sell.

Raising and selling heirloom seeds is very rewarding, Stefanec says. But it's a year-round job and has the same challenges as gardening. Wet weather is her biggest problem, because seeds will mold if it's

damp. They must be brought inside the house or other heated building.

For gardeners interested in trying heirloom varieties, she suggests ordering seed early as some seeds are in limited quantities. Catalogs sent to the U.S. cost \$2.

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