



Home-built “root piler” moves everything from 2-in. dia. roots to 12-in. dia. logs up to 8 ft. long. It makes an 8-ft. wide swath.

## “Root Piler” Machine Makes A Comeback

A root piler that William W. Janzen invented in 1984 is making a comeback because there’s a new rush to clear farmland in northern Alberta, Canada.

Janzen remembers picking roots by hand when he homesteaded in 1964. He knew there had to be a better way so he eventually created the root piler. He used it to do custom work, piling roots for other landowners. He made a second machine in 1986, which is still in use.

“With all the land being cleared this spring, I could see there was more demand for these machines,” Janzen says. More than 800 quarters will be sold and cleared in MacKenzie County in the next few years.

Janzen’s friend, Jake Driedger has a welding shop and has started building the root pilers, with slight modifications of Janzen’s

original design.

“We’ve made it easier to take off parts, and the bearings are easier to change. I added a hydraswing on the hitch for transporting on the road,” Janzen says.

The piler looks similar to a round baler. It has 6 horizontal rollers (or beaters) running at 400 rpm’s that are 4 in. apart with three rows of 3 to 4-in. teeth that spiral from the outside to the middle. The rollers kick the roots forward and the dirt falls back behind the rollers. With the heavy-duty frame built of 3/8-in. wall 8 by 8-in. square tubing, the piler moves everything from 2-in. dia. roots to 12-in. dia. logs up to 8 ft. long.

With shields on the side, the piler takes an 8-ft. swath. The operator drives slowly as the piler rolls roots ahead of it until the pile reaches 3 to 4 ft. high and can’t roll any more.



Root piler has 6 horizontal rollers spaced 4 in. apart, with 3 rows of teeth that spiral from the outside to the middle.



Operator drives slowly as piler rolls roots ahead of it until pile reaches 3 to 4 ft. high and can’t roll any more. Then he backs up, drives around pile and continues.

Then he backs up, drives around the pile and continues. A half-mile swath typically takes 1 1/2 to 2 hours and leaves about 20 piles. Once piled, the roots can be dried and burned.

A 90 hp tractor is adequate to pull the piler,

Janzen says.

The root pilers sell for about \$40,000.

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## Groomer Perfect For Narrow Trails

Peter Mysko built a snowmobile trail groomer to maintain trails for the local snowmobile club’s annual vintage snowmobile derby. The machine turned out to be a great machine to just cruise around on near his Roblin, Man., farm. With a heated cab and other bells and whistles, he can comfortably operate it without a jacket at 40 degrees below zero temperatures.

As a member of the Roblin Snowmobile Association that hosts the vintage derby, Mysko had a need for a compact grooming machine for some of the narrower, winding trails the club uses. “I couldn’t find a proper small groomer on the market, so I decided I’d whip up something myself,” Mysko laughs.

After drawing an idea on a napkin, 3,000 hrs. of work and a wide variety of parts later, Mysko groomed his first trail.

“I lost track of all my donor machines,” says the former Polaris snowmobile dealer, who runs a small engine repair business, and buys and sells parts on eBay. “I’ve used

parts from all sorts of things in this groomer – even Chevy, Nissan, Oldsmobile and Deere components.”

The twin tracks and rear suspensions are from mid-90’s Polaris SKS snowmobiles, and the front suspension uses some pieces from an Arctic Cat Thundercat snowmobile. The groomer is powered by a 440 Polaris liquid-cooled engine that Mysko plumbed to direct heat into the cab. A transmission from a Sportsman 700 ATV is used in conjunction with Polaris clutches to provide high, low and reverse gear ranges.

“It’s very maneuverable in the tighter trails and is amazing in deep snow. Weighing in at nearly 1,600 lbs., it has no business going through the deep snow that it seems to handle with ease,” Mysko says. “It also steers very well, though it’s a twin track design with no differential.” He mounted the skis further ahead of the tracks than on a conventional snowmobile in order for the skis to attain more steering leverage to counteract the



Home-built snowmobile trail groomer has a heated cab, allowing Mysko to work without a jacket in temperatures down to 40 degrees below zero.

formidable traction of the two tracks.

Mysko sits on a comfortable SP swather seat, which he purchased at a discount store, listens to his stereo and watches the snow drag on one monitor, while also being able to see what’s happening in the engine bay on another monitor. He formed the dashboard from plastic puckboard and molded in some heat vents, which he rescued from a buddy’s

demolition car. The air intake stack is from a Deere 4030 tractor. For durability and scratch resistance, he chose aluminum diamond plate for the body panels.

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## Home-Built Cab Makes Kubota Cozy

With plywood, square tubing, Lexan glass and a nice paint job, Bob Holt built a cab for his Kubota tractor that keeps him cozy when he plows snow in temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero. He has an electric heater inside, but rarely uses it.

“I needed a cab and wanted to buy a Kubota cab, but the price was hard to justify so I built my own,” says the Colebrook, N.H., resident.

He used thin wall 1-in. square tubing to build four sections for the frame. The back section fits on the roll bar with nutserts, and he bolts the other frames together. He built the walls and door out of 3/8-in. plywood and used Lexan for the windows. He welded a 6-in. hinge on the tubing to hold the door.

Holt notes he removes the Kubota roof, assembles the cab, and replaces the roof in about 25 minutes. He only uses the cab in the winter for plowing snow and hauling firewood. The rest of the time, he stores the cab sections inside a building.

Protected with good automotive paint, Holt expects the cab will last for years; and it only cost him about \$400.

“It works great,” he says. “I know a guy with a smaller Kubota who wants me to put one together for him.”

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Bob Holt built a cab for his Kubota tractor that keeps him cozy in temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero.