"It's built sturdy and keeps my tractors out of the weather," says Shane Myrick, who used car and truck tires to build this 20-ft. sq. shed.

Shed is open in front with 7-ft. high "tire walls" all around. The metal roof is supported by a steel frame that also helps anchor the tire walls.

By Bill Gergen, Senior Editor

Tractor Shed Built Out Of Tire "Bricks"

"I had a lot of old tires laying around which would've been a hassle to dispose of. Instead, I used the tires to build a shed to house my three utility tractors," says Shane Myrick, Pleasanton, Kan.

"It's not the fanciest shed in the world, but it's built sturdy and keeps my tractors out of the weather. And, it only cost about $1,000."

The one-of-a-kind building measures 20 ft. square and is open in front, with a gravel floor. The metal roof is supported by a steel frame and slopes from 15 ft. high in front to 10 ft. at the back. The walls are made from tires filled with crushed rock and measure 7 ft. high, with an opening between the walls and roof.

The car and truck tires overlap and interlock with the row below, just like bricks. The tires in the first 2 rows line up with each other, with the next 2 rows overlapping them.

The roof is supported by a series of steel trusses welded to 4 steel posts, one at each corner of the building. The roof is screwed onto 2 by 6 and 2 by 8 rafters on 16-in. centers.

To build the walls, Myrick first laid a row of tires on the ground. Then he used 4 short 1 by 4 sticks (old hardwood flooring) to prop each tire open, jamming the pieces between the tire beads to prop the sides of the tire open. That way, when crushed rock was dumped out of a loader bucket it wouldn't flatten the tire out. Once the crushed rock was dumped, he removed the sticks and then used longer sticks to finish working crushed rock into the tires.

To contain crushed rock where the tires overlap, he cut circles out of tractor inner tubes and laid them in the bottom of each tire.

"I built it in my spare time. It took a year but it was worth it," says Myrick. "I have a small welding shop and do some tire repair work, and over the years I accumulated a lot of old tires. It would've cost $3 apiece take car tires to the dump, $5 for truck tires, and $12 for big tractor tires.

"The weight of the crushed rock-filled tires keeps the walls so solid they're bullet proof. I used 39 tons of crushed rock all together at a cost of $375."

"Packing the tires was the most labor-intensive part of construction. It took at least 20 minutes to pack each tire. I never counted how many tires I used. It would probably be better to overlap each row of tires, but I didn't have enough inner tubes," he says.

He stood in a loader bucket and used a sledge hammer to drive the steel posts into the ground, without using any concrete as anchors. To help keep the roof from sagging, in some places he welded horizontal steel plates onto the posts. "The plates are wedged in between the tires so the posts won't sink into the ground," notes Myrick.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shane Myrick, 17758 Vail Rd., Pleasanton, Kan. 66075 (ph 913 757-3309).

Run Gas Motors On Propane

Propane conversion kits are common, but bi-fuel kits are not. The new Green Conversion Kit lets you convert a wide variety of 4-cyl. gas engines to propane while retaining the option of running on gas.

"Our kit fits like a gasket between the carburetor and the engine with an intake for propane and a second one for gas," explains Jon Richmond, Run Propane, a division of PumpBiz, Inc. "If you run out of propane, just turn off the propane valve and turn the inline gas valve back on."

Richmond says the advantages of propane make it very attractive on small engines and large. Unlike gas-fueled engines, propane engines produce no carbon monoxide or other toxic gasses. Another advantage is reduced maintenance and extended engine life and performance.

"Propane burns about 80 percent cleaner than gas with no carbon emissions and is, on average, 40 percent less expensive than gas," says Richmond. "Landscapers who have converted equipment say they see a return on investment in about 3 to 4 weeks."

And propane doesn't go bad, he notes. "Propane is ideal for generators or seasonal equipment," says Richmond. "Leave an engine sit for months with gas in it, and it breaks down, often gumming up the engine. With ours, everything stays clean, and engines that are gummed up often clean up when run on propane."

Run Propane offers about 20 different adapters to fit a wide variety of engines from 1 to 45 hp in size. Customers are asked for engine brand, model and the type of equipment.

"Our 20 adapters are fairly universal and can be used on 100 different engines," says Richmond. "We have them for single barrel carburetors and double barrel as well."

Installation is simple. The kit consists of a regulator system, fuel supply line and intake adapter. Because the adapters don't require engine modification, they also don't affect warranty.

"If you have a problem with the engine, simply remove the adapter and take the engine in for service," says Richmond.

Run Propane offers special brackets to hold 1-lb. cylinders on weed whips and 5-lb. units on walk behind lawn mowers. Stationary engines, such as those on generators, when equipped with adapters can even connect directly to larger propane tanks.

New, refillable 1-lb. propane bottles from Manchester Tanks make the conversion systems even more economical (see story below). Propane users will be able to refill their own 1-lb. bottles.

The Green Conversion Kits are priced at $252 each. Run Propane estimates payback on the units at 8 weeks or less, depending on use.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Run Propane, 1945 Techny Road, Unit 7, Northbrook, Ill. 60062 (ph 224 406-8711; www.runpropane.com).

Special brackets hold propane cylinders on walk-behind mowers 1-lb. weed whips, and other equipment. When needed want, you can easily switch back to gas.

Refillable 1-Lb. Propane Cylinders

There's never been a propane tank like these new refillable units that may make disposable tanks obsolete. Manchester Tank has introduced two new designs sized to fit most applications.

"Our 1-lb. refillable cylinder is unique to the cylinder industry," says Scott Viebranz, vice president, sales. Manchester estimates their refillable container will pay for itself in just 16 hours of use. Currently, disposable containers cost more to recycle than it does to make them.

"I used torches for soldering water and refrigeration lines and for lighting pilots," says Frank Lane, director, Research and Development. "My greatest frustration was when I ran out of propane for my torches. I thought it was such a waste to throw away cylinders and buy new ones."

Lane turned his frustration into cylinders that can be filled in 50 to 70 sec. The company also developed portable dispensers for filling containers, as well as dispensers to fill vehicle-mounted propane tanks such as on many forklifts.

Unlike disposables, each Manchester refillable features a positive on-off valve, a relief valve and a fixed maximum liquid level gauge. The safety fill valve ensures that dispensers can't be used with disposable containers.

Manchester is working closely with companies like Run Propane that make propane conversion kits (see story above). Jon Richmond with Run Propane expects the refillables to make propane use much more user friendly for smaller applications like leaf blowers, hand torches and recreational use.

"Customers will be able to buy a 33-lb. cylinder and five 1-lb. cylinders and refill them themselves," he says.

Initially the refillable units are expected to be filled only by trained retailers. Getting prospective dealers interested and trained is the current bottleneck to ready availability.

"It will take some time to establish the infrastructure for consumer availability," suggests Leslie Shorter, marketing manager. "We are working with different companies to provide parts and pieces of the system needed."

Prices of the cylinders and suggested refill prices are not yet available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Manchester Tank, 1000 Corporate Centre Dr., Suite 300, Franklin, Tenn. 37067 (ph 615 370-6300; toll free 800 640-6327; sales@mantank.com; www.mantank.com).

Refillable 1-lb. propane cylinder eliminates the need to throw away cylinders and buy new ones.