

We've tried everything we can think of to solve the problem but with no success, so we replaced it with an **Earthway** push planter. We're more than willing to sell the Covington planter at an attractive price."

**David Donarski, Minong, Wis.:** David likes the **Anbo Grapple Rake** he uses on his New Holland LX565 skid loader (ph 866 684-3330; www.anbomanufacturing.com). "Last summer we had a storm with 100 mph straight line winds and about 100 trees came down. I had 13 trees laying across one



driveway and 6 across another driveway. To remove the trees my son operated the Anbo grapple rake and I used my **Stihl MS390** chainsaw, which is another best buy. Within an hour we had both driveways open. I also used the loader-mounted grapple rake to lift a tree off my house. It works great for moving rocks, brush, logs or just about anything else."

**Stephen Esch, Lititz, Penn.:** "Our 1996 **OMC** bale saw does a great of cutting round bales in half. No problems. We just set the bale on its round side and cut down through the bale to the middle until the bale falls apart, which allows us to pick up the hay in layers. It makes round bales a lot easier to handle and has greatly reduced our feeding time. It takes about 1 to 1 1/2 minutes to cut a bale in half. The saw is 35 in. tall with a 19-in. wide blade and weighs 33 lbs. It's powered by an electric motor. A great investment."

**Robert and Lorene Smith, Royalton, Ill.:** They have 10 years experience raising strawberries in **Verti-Gro** garden towers, which are designed for greenhouse and pick-your-own operators who want to do more in a limited area (ph 800 955-6757; www.vertigro.com). The hydroponic tower system consists of stackable pots mounted on a swivel plate. The Smiths use both well and city water in their farming operation, but prefer to irrigate with city water because they can get 50 to 60 lbs. of water pressure. Their vertical growing system uses up to 7 pots mounted on top of each other. Water works its way down from top to bottom.

The biggest advantage of the system is that it allows stand-up picking. Also, the system makes it possible to get ripe berries 4 to 6 weeks earlier.

The Smiths run a U-pick operation. Customers like the idea of being able to pick strawberries standing up. They can pick berries from one place by rotating the stack. Another advantage is there's less danger of frost and hail. The Smiths have also successfully experimented with tomatoes and peppers.

**Emil and Mary Kalvoda, Mandan, N. Dak.:** "It's the nicest riding car I've ever owned," says Emil about his 2012 **Ford Focus** 4-door. "On a recent 400-mile trip this car got more than 40 mpg. I had the cruise control set at 70 mph all the way.

"Our 2008 **Deere Z245** zero turn riding mower does a good job of cutting grass and is comfortable to operate. It's an excellent machine in every way."

**Melvin Lepper, Weldona, Colo.:** "My 1953 **IH Farmall Super H** has a nice balance of power, handling, economic operation, low maintenance, easy starting, travel speeds, etc.

"My 1961 **IH Farmall 560** is a good all-purpose tractor in the 60 hp range. It has good lugging power, and the transmission's 10 speeds are all I need in this class.

"The hydraulic drive system on my **Allen** twin hay rake doesn't work smoothly, and the reels keep wearing out the bar mount bearings. Several times the bars broke in the center and damaged other bars or components on the basket. After using the rake for one season I parked it for good next to a fence."

**C.W. Crowe, Boring, Ore.:** "It has great digging power for a small track hoe," says C.W. about his **Case CX31**.

"My **Deere 4610** is a great tractor, but the plastic hood and nose on it fell apart after just 600 hrs. The dealer wouldn't help so I contacted the company but got no help. We keep the tractor inside a shed whenever it's not being used so it's been well taken care of."

**Paul C. Jirak, Calmar, Iowa:** "My worst buy was my **Aqua-Care** walk-in bathtub. The company did sloppy installation work and then promised to make it right, but it took eight calls and seven months before they showed up again and then they never finished the job. An unreliable company with a poor product."

**John Tapert, Duvall, Wash.:** "I paid \$1,423.45 for my **DR** self-propelled commercial string mower equipped with an 8.25 Briggs & Stratton engine. However, this mower is so slow that even at top speed it moves at a snail's pace. It cuts ragged and leaves half the grass uncut. The machine looks great on TV but in reality, it's overrated. It's also hard to start."

**Todd Case, Skiatook, Okla.:** "My 2008 **Dixie** Chopper 2760 riding mower has plenty of power, great craftsmanship, and it's built tough. Sometimes U.S.-made products cost a little more, but it's worth it.

"I've had problems with my 2000 **Deere G110** riding mower equipped with a 25 hp engine and 54-in. deck. I'm meticulous about maintenance, but this machine nickel and dimed me to death on repair parts. It had 110 hrs. when I sold it."

**Ward Attebery, Archie, Mo.:** "My 2005 **Montana 4540** 4-WD tractor does everything I ask it to and is easy on fuel."

**Troy Dubs, Ashby, Neb.:** "My 2007 **Atchison 12-bale** hay trailer is well built. It rides on tandem dual wheels and can handle twelve 1,400-lb. round bales with ease. I use a 3/4-ton pickup to pull it across all types of terrain with ease. It self-dumps the bales and is simple to operate.

"My 821 **Ford** diesel tractor is a real stud when working in hay fields. I use it with a 42-ft. Rowse dump rake. No problems. It's also fuel-efficient.

"I've had problems with my 1993 **Ford F-250** 4-WD pickup. I have to replace the slave cylinder on the hydraulic clutch almost every fall when the first cold weather arrives. I quit counting after I replaced 13 cylinders. Also, the body material on it is inferior. The pickup has less than 70,000 miles on it."

**Dan Schmitt, Gilmar, Wis.:** "Two years ago I bought a used **Kubota L2850** 4-WD loader tractor. I use it to till 45 to 50 gardens in the spring and to mow trails all summer. It always starts right up and runs great. No problems."

**James Navrat, Lehigh, Kan.:** "In 2000 I bought a **Massey Ferguson 283** tractor. The day it was delivered my son took it to the field to cultivate, but he came back just an hour later saying the tractor wouldn't shift gears. The dealer took it back to the shop the next day. He split the tractor and found a shaft with too close tolerance. When the shaft warmed up it would swell enough to prevent shifting

## Hunter's "Listener" Device Doubles As Quickie Hearing Aid

By C.F. Marley, Contributing Editor

"Recently I experienced temporary hearing loss in my right ear. Distressed by not being able to hear and by getting feedback from a non-functioning ear, a hearing specialist suggested I try low-cost hearing amplifiers used by hunters.

"I bought a Loud 'N Clear device at RadioShack for about \$12. It was amazing how I could turn up the volume and override the closed-up ear.

"I looked around and found out Walmart sells a smaller listening device that's also only about \$12. And RadioShack carries other varieties of it.

"After about 6 weeks my hearing cleared up and I won't need any of these products. But I'm glad to know I won't be shut out if my ear problem should return."

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C.F. Marley shows the low-cost Loud 'N Clear listening device he uses as a hearing aid.

of the gears."

**Mike Stonicher, Boaz, Ala.:** "My 1996 **Kuhn 600** hay mower and 2003 **Kuhn GMD 5001** hay tedder are two pieces of farm machinery that have exceeded my expectations."

**Robert F. Lang, Waterford, Ohio:** "I bought a used **White American 60** 4-WD tractor with a Bush Hog loader with 388 hrs. on it. Now it has about 5,000 hrs. but still runs good."

**Erwin Nelson, Roseau, Minn.:** "I still use my 1973 **New Holland 1500** combine every year. Works great for harvesting bluegrass."



**George Holmes, Trumansburg, N.Y.:** "I like my **Horstline 18-ft.** dump trailer (ph 613 646-2807; www.horstline.com). I originally bought this trailer to replace two gravity grain wagons, but now I use it to haul silage whenever the ground is too wet for a truck or when the truck breaks down. I also use this trailer as a fertilizer wagon as it has an auger next to the grain door."

**Carlton P. Christopher, Hopewell, Penn.:** "Several years ago we bought a used **Vermeer 504G** round baler. From the get-go this baler required too much power, and the bale would jam in the starting chamber. We finally solved the problem by modifying the drive sprocket to slow it down. Now the baler works fine."

**Omar Feeler, Saint Louis, Mo.:** "My 2001 **Dodge Ram 1500** 4-WD pickup has more than 200,000 miles but still runs great. It requires only routine maintenance. There have been some air conditioning problems, but they were fixed."

**Raymond E. Miller, Paris, Tenn.:** "I'm well satisfied with my 2008 **Hypertherm Powermax 1000** portable plasma cutter (ph 800 737-2978; www.hypertherm.com). It's easy to use and makes near perfect cuts on sheet metal. It also works great on stainless steel and aluminum."

**William Kraker, Pelkie, Mich.:** "It makes working cattle a non-traumatic experience for both man and beast," says William about

his **RAU** electronic animal immobilizer (ph 888 750-6154; www.igd-usa.com). It's an electronic device with a rectal probe that's used to immobilize cattle, making it much safer and easier to hold animals motionless for branding, castrating, de-horning, hoof trimming, and other jobs. "No more bent needles, jammed fingers or stepped-on toes," says William. "Where it really pays for itself is training a fresh heifer to be milked. We've used it for several years and wouldn't be without it. We affectionately call it the 'Rectalfier'."

**Gary L. Gilbeck, Coon Valley, Wis.:** "My **Kubota RTV 900** utility vehicle is really handy. When I recently had trouble with my combine, I loaded up my charger and generator on the RTV and hauled them to the field. It saved a lot of steps."

**Ron Carey, West Chester, Iowa:** "In 2003 I bought a 1999 **Ford F-250 Super Duty FX4** pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter Powerstroke diesel engine. It had about 97,000 miles when I bought it and recently turned 250,000 miles. The engine works great. I brew my own biodiesel and run this pickup on 100 percent biodiesel during the 8-month warm season in Iowa. The only problem is with the bearings in the pickup's front wheel hubs. I've had to replace the bearings four different times, and it costs about \$1,000 for both hubs. What's more, I rarely use 4-WD any more.

"I like the pickup's 7.3-liter Powerstroke diesel engine. And I love using biodiesel, especially when it costs only about \$1 per gallon to make. All in all, except for the wheel hub problem this is a great pickup.

"I love the 1986 **Mercedes Benz 300** SDL car I bought used equipped with a diesel engine. It has about 90,000 miles on it. I bought this car because we were spending more than \$400 per month on gas to commute in my wife's 2011 **Kia Sorento**. I run it on 100 percent homebrewed biodiesel during the warm months. Commuting in the Benz instead of the Kia is saving us \$300 per month in fuel costs."

**Gerald Sundberg, Duluth, Minn.:** "I like my 2011 **Ford Ranger** pickup equipped with a 4-cyl. engine and manual transmission. It looks nice and is twice as fuel efficient as the Dodge pickup I previously owned.

"My **Harbor Freight** chainsaw grinder does a good job on chain sizes ranging from .325 to .404."