



Needing to mow steep ditches along a busy highway near his place, Dave Braun built this ditch mower out of a spare riding mower deck.

## He Built His Own Yard Equipment

When Dave Braun built a new home on 5 acres near Sheboygan, Wis., he had some steep ditches to mow along the busy highway that runs by his place. He decided to make a ditch mower out of a spare mower deck.

"I had to run belts behind the tractor to run it, and I wanted it to tilt either way and go up and down," he explains. "I made an angle iron frame and made it work -- eventually."

Braun also built a big lawn vacuum after suffering from sticker shock when pricing new vacuums. He turned to his shop and stash of parts. He started with his neighbor's old wood chipper and modified it with a pivoting vacuum that chops and sucks leaves into a chest freezer he mounted on top. He cut the end to make a door, cut an angle on top (similar to commercial models) and painted it green, so the "neighbors wouldn't think I was pulling a freezer around," Braun says.

"It holds a lot of leaves because it chops them up first," he notes.

He also completed a couple of smaller projects -- mounting an old pull-behind sprayer on the front of his tractor and making a wagon from the frames of two junked Deere riding mowers.

With lots of labor, a few purchased parts and fasteners, Braun's "John Deere" fleet has cost him very little money and keeps his yard in great shape.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dave Braun, W2289 Playbird Rd., Sheboygan, Wis. 53083 (ph 920 565-7221; braund@tds.net).

## Portable Rope Winch Works Anywhere

At 35 lbs. the Portable Winch is truly portable. But its light weight doesn't affect its power, says Christian Pelletier, one of three partners who started the Portable Winch Co. several years ago. As previous owners of a forestry equipment business, they weren't satisfied with any of the winches they used. The winch they developed has all the features they wanted.

With 3 to 4 wraps of rope around the rotating capstan drum, the operator creates the friction needed by pulling on the free end of the rope as the object is moved.

"There's no limit to the rope length," Pelletier says. "You always have the same pulling power, compared to other winches that have less power when all the cable isn't out." With a breakpoint of 8,100 lbs., the double-braided, low-stretch polyester rope is made to withstand friction and heat. With a single line, the winch pulls 2,200 lbs. (1,136 kg). Adding pulleys and rope lines doubles and triples its power.

Powered by a Honda GXH-50 cc engine, the



He modified a neighbor's old wood chipper to build this big lawn vacuum.



Braun mounted an old pull-behind sprayer on front of his Deere garden tractor.



He made this wagon from the frames of 2 junked Deere riding mowers.

winch is fast and can be worked continuously. It can be secured to a vehicle's ball hitch or to a tree, rock or other solid object using a polyester sling. That comes in handy for pulling logs or even wild game shot in remote areas.

Pelletier and his partners first focused on forestry and agriculture applications - pulling out logs, dead livestock and stuck equipment, for example. But the winch is also useful for arborists, hunters, moving construction and heavy equipment, pulling cables through conduit, pulling in boats and docks, and even in rescue operations.

"The winch is unique, and we offer a broad variety of accessories," Pelletier says.

One of them is a rugged polymer cone that only weighs 11 lbs. Slipped over the end of a tree -- or a moose shot in the swamp -- it eases the pull through brush, snow and all types of terrain.

The Portable Winch comes with a 5-year warranty and starts at \$1,395 (U.S.). Portable Winch Co. is headquartered in Quebec, but



2-wheeled cart can be fitted with a variety of tools, allowing it to do everything from pulling up buckthorn to digging out rocks and hauling firewood.

## Wheeled Cart Uses Leverage To Do Many Jobs

You can do everything from pulling up buckthorn to digging out rocks and hauling firewood with this 2-wheeled cart that can be fitted with a variety of tools.

Vermont entrepreneur Gerry Hawkes has developed a number of successful products through his company, Eco Systems Inc.

"It's based on pretty simple principles that I think have been overlooked," Hawkes says. He had been thinking about the design and was inspired to create it after the Haiti earthquake when he saw that people didn't have any way to move the debris. He uses low center of gravity and fulcrum/lever principles in the design along with unique sockets in the front and rear to mount tools, handles and hitches. Powder coated and made of 2 by 2, 11-gauge square tubing and schedule 40 pipe, the unit is designed to last.

A basic 1-wheel dual pry bar system with frame, handles, stainless steel axle and one flat-proof tire starts at about \$490. A second wheel can be added as well as an optional trailer hitch that allows the cart to be pulled



Sockets in the front and rear can be used to mount tools, handles and hitches.

by a garden tractor.

Charts on the company website guide customers through the components they need for the work they want to do.

"I have a lot more attachments coming, but I'm also thinking people will come up with even more ideas once they understand the versatility of this tool. I'm expecting a lot of user creativity," Hawkes says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gerry Hawkes, Eco Systems, Inc., 796 Wayside Road Ext., Woodstock, Vt. 05091 (ph 866 638-7337; www.wheeledhandtoolsystems.com).

## Ice Helps Handle Heavy Load

"I recently came up with an idea that I think would work well with all types of heavy equipment," says Larry Goodman, Ionia, Mich.

"I was moving a 750-lb. hot tub and had to lower it over a wall in order to set it down on a concrete surface. The problem I had to figure out was how to remove the straps I was using to lift it. The other problem was getting it positioned just right on the concrete.

"I took 4 metal 8-in. square baking pans, poured 1 1/2 in. of water into each one and then froze them. I placed one big ice cube under each corner of the hot tub and it worked great. I was able to remove the straps and the unit slid around with ease so I was able to position it. Once the ice cubes melted it sat perfectly, right where I wanted it."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Goodman, 3112 Welch Road, Ionia, Mich. 48846 (ph 616 755-1473).



Portable Rope Winch is secured to a tree or other solid object using a polyester sling.

also has a warehouse in New Hampshire or U.S. orders. The winch is sold through a variety of dealers and catalogs. Check out the website for more information and for videos of the winch in action.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Portable Winch Co., 1170 Thomas-Tremblay St., Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada J1G 5G5 (ph 888 399-7855; www.portablewinch.com).