Giant Bird Feeder Made From Milk Can

Joe Gruber likes to know the birds he feeds will always have plenty to eat. So he made a giant bird feeder out of an old milk can. The can sits 6 ft. up in the air on a 3-legged wooden stand.

He used a torch to cut out the bottom of the can and turned it upside down, then bolted it to the clamp-on lid off a 55-gal. barrel that serves as a feeding tray. The lid has a rounded edge to keep the feed in. The gap between the bottom of the can and the lid can be quickly adjusted by turning 4 bolts. He drills 4 holes through the mouth of the can and through the lid, then bends the bolts into an "L" shape and inserts them through the holes. The bolts fit into nuts bolted on above and below the barrel lid.

To make a lid for the top of the feeder, he inserts a piece of treated plywood and screws a strip of rubber matting on around the outside edge of it.

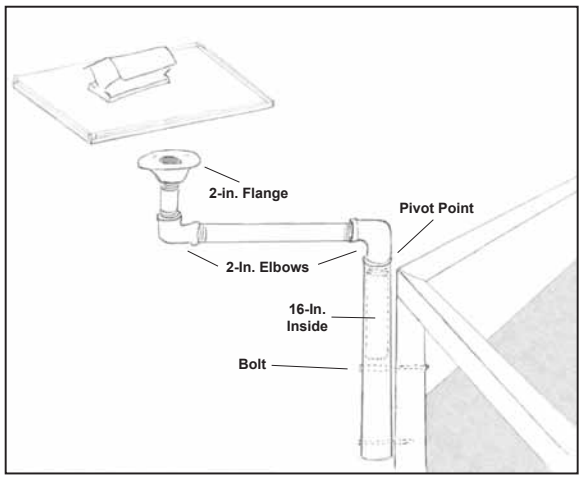
"They're quite colorful and draw a lot of attention and you don't have to fill them every day," says Gruber. "The milk can has a capacity of about 8 gal. and uses up most of a 50-lb. bag of bird feed. I generally leave a 1/4-in. gap at the bottom.

"I've made four feeders so far, painting them Deere, New Holland, and Minneapolis Moline colors. I also painted one light green for a neighbor lady."

The feeder's legs are about 4 ft. long and are made from treated lumber. "I install a large plywood shelf about halfway up the legs. In summer I place a plastic 5-gal. pail of water on it, and in the winter I add suet," says Gruber. "I use 2 by 6's to make the legs and shave them down to 2 in. wide at the bottom so the feeder isn't as heavy. It's light enough that I can easily move it by hand when I mow my lawn."

Giant bird feeder sits 6 ft. up in the air and is big enough to hold most of a 50-lb. bag of bird feed.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Joe Gruber, 218 2nd Ave. N.W., No. 201, Pierz, Minn. 56364 (ph 320 232-7297).



"Swing-out" bird feeder pivots toward the deck for filling and swings out over the yard for feeding.

"Swing-Out" Bird Feeder Keeps Seed Off Deck

It's fun to watch birds eat from a bird feeder on your deck. The problem is that you get a mess of seeds and shells that you have to clean up later. That's why Nicholas Creveling built a "swing-out" feeder that pivots toward the deck for filling, and swings out over the yard for feeding.

He used a 36-in. piece of 2 1/4-in. pipe that's lag bolted to a 4 by 4 deck post. A 16-in. length of 2-in. dia. pipe fits inside the 2 1/4-in. pipe and is threaded at the top, where an elbow forms the pivot point. From there a 30-in. length of 2-in. dia. pipe, threaded at both ends, leads horizontally to another elbow and a 2-in. flange that supports the bird feeder. The flange is threaded into the pipe and bolted to the bottom of the feeder, which is made from treated wood. It measures 32 in. long by 24 in. wide.

"I built it 8 years ago and couldn't be happier with it," says Creveling. "My only cost was $2 for the flange. The 16-in. length of 2-in. dia. pipe that rotates rests on a bolt that runs through the 2 1/4-in. dia. vertical pipe.

"To compensate for the weight of the swing-out feeder, shims or washers may be required between the pipe and deck post in order to keep the feeder level," notes Creveling.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nicholas Creveling, 3331 Solon, Cedar Springs, Mich. 49319 (ph 616 696-2597).

Drip Irrigation Garden Kit

The Irri-Gator 100 drip irrigation kit uses the same kind of drip tubing that's used in commercial agriculture. However, it's designed for garden use. It can irrigate up to four 22-ft. long rows spaced up to 4 ft. apart, or a flowerbed of up to 200 sq. ft.

The kit consists of a 100-ft. roll of drip tubing with pre-installed drip orifices every 12 in. Also included are 3 perma-loc tees, a perma-loc elbow, and a regulator/screen assembly. All you need to lay it out is a pair of scissors.

To install, you lay the drip tubing down each garden row and across one end of the garden plot, then cut the tubing to the desired lengths. Connect the tubing to the perma-loc fittings and regulator/screen assemblies, and then hook up a garden hose.

According to Steve Kutzley at Triple K Irrigation, the system uses 75 percent less water than a sprinkler and 20 percent less than soaker hoses. "Pressure regulation built into the regulator/screen assembly results in over 95 percent water uniformity from the beginning of the tubing to the end," says Kutzley. "Drip irrigation also reduces water evaporation and virtually eliminates water runoff."

Irri-Gator 100 drip irrigation kit can irrigate up to four 22-ft. long rows.

The Gator 100 kit sells for $42.95 plus S&H. Kits with 250 ft. ($68.25) and 1,000 ft. ($165) of tubing are also available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Triple K Irrigation, 12930 Ingall Hwy., Morenci, Mich. 49256 (ph 517 458-9741; www.gardensgrownright.com).

This Broadfork Won't Bend

Roger Seys made a 24-in. wide broadfork for his garden that won't bend. The heavy-duty steel teeth are more like angled steel chisels than fork tines. They slice through compacted ground and root clumps without a problem.

"The general idea is similar to commercial broadforks, but I made mine with 3/16-in. thick tines mounted on 2 1/2-in. square steel tubing," says Seys. "I used heavy-duty, 48-in. long, 1-in. dia. steel pipe for the handles. It's heavy duty, but it's not too heavy, and it slides right into the ground."

The pipes are bolted to an L-shaped piece of steel welded to the square steel tubing that holds the tines. The lip on the shorter leg of the L wraps partially around the pipe to reinforce it. Seys' first attempt used lighter weight pipe for handles and 1/2-in. bolts for tines. The bolts were too hard to get into the ground. He switched to 11-in. long, flat steel rectangles that he cut on the diagonal to get sharpened points. While he didn't need to sharpen them, he did find they bent if they hit a rock.

"I heated them red hot and then dipped them in water and that seemed to help," explains Seys. "I've also considered putting a 30 to 45° angle on the last inch or two to make a stronger tip. Right now they have a 10 to 15° angle."

Seys uses his broadfork in his conventional garden to break up compacted footpaths and zones around tomato plants. He pulls up chunks of compacted ground as the loose dirt falls between the tines.

"In the fall, I spread animal manure and compost over the top of the garden and then work it with my broadfork," says Seys. "As I fork it, a lot of the manure and compost drops into the soil profile while I am getting root clumps out of the ground."

Seys says using it is satisfying, as is knowing he fabricated it himself. "I made it to save money, but I like working with it," he says.

Seys' 24-in. wide broadfork is fitted with heavy-duty steel teeth that won't bend.

Teeth look like angled steel "chisels" and easily slice through compacted ground.

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Seat Belt Gate Closer

Dale Pringle, Doniphan, Mo., finds uses for old seat belts. He gets the belts out of junked cars and trucks.

One of the best uses he's found is as a gate closer. He attaches each side of the belt to the gate post with a lag screw. He can lengthen the belt as needed and then pull on the strap to tighten it, snugging the gate up tight.

He also uses seat belts to tie garbage can lids to the handle on cans so they don't get separated.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale Pringle, Rt. 1, Box 1860, Doniphan, Mo. 63935 (ph 573 354-2231).

Seat belt is lag screwed to gate post. Pulling on the strap snugs the gate up tight.