

Flowering Farm Equipment

Jackie Dahl plants flowers in old farm equipment and tools. She started with a few petunias in her grandfather's old corn sheller.

"I was thinking about my grandfather and what I could do with his old corn sheller and other implements he used," recalls Dahl. "I set it out in the yard and liked the way it looked with flowers."

By this past year, her farm equipment flower beds have expanded to include an old grain elevator, manure spreader, potato planter, stock tank, hay loader and more. All overflow with wave petunias and are displayed around the Dahl's 10 acres. Still more flowers adorn a wall with sections devoted to livestock and crop-connected displays.

"The wall concept started with an old

chicken feeder, then I added cow, horse and crop-related equipment," says Dahl. "I picked up items at flea markets and auctions and added them to the wall."

Dahl has started a new display garden in honor of her late father, centered on his 1946 Hudson pickup. A life-long farmer, she says, he came to admire her flower displays.

"The truck was going to be sold for salvage," she says. "We dragged it home, and my husband pounded the dents out. I filled it with flowers. I have other things my father used and am planning a garden where I'll be able to sit and think of him."

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Jackie Dahl plants flowers in old farm equipment and tools. She started with a few petunias in her grandfather's old corn sheller.



Her farm equipment flower beds have expanded to include a manure spreader and an old grain elevator.

Artist Makes "Custom" Tractors Out Of Glass

Hummingbirds and roses may be mainstays for most glass blowers, but Larry Hodgson has discovered there's a market for tractors made out of glass.

Every Christmas season, the Minnesota artist sets up at a busy shopping mall to demonstrate and sell blown glass pieces. A couple years ago, he also set up there for Mother's Day when an antique tractor show happened to be held nearby. He saw an opportunity and started making tractors. Sales were good, and he quickly learned one thing. "Farmers like lots of details on the tractors," he says.

With a couple of Ertl models and customer photos, he was able to add battery boxes, engines, hitches, the right kind of seats and even dents like the ones on a customer's tractor.

Hodgson takes custom orders and requests five photos from every angle to get the details right. Prior to shows, he makes parts – steering wheels, tires, etc. He keeps them

warm in a glass blower's kiln "garage" while he makes the chassis, then adds the parts to the still-warm chassis. Hodgson paints the bodies with stain and tires and other parts with enamel paints.

He makes tractors in four sizes based on the size of the back tires: \$15 (1-in.), \$28 (2-in.), \$60 (3-in.), and \$150 (4-in.). He also makes a tractor oil lamp that can be filled with any color oil the customer chooses for \$60 including a funnel and permanent wick. He regularly ships through the mail or UPS.

"Glass is not as fragile a medium as you think. Everything can be fixed," Hodgson says, noting he rarely breaks any of his work when he packs it up for the many art shows, harvest festivals and the Minnesota Renaissance Festival that he attends each year.

So far, the most challenging tractor he's made was a large MTA Super Farmall with 4 to 5-in. rear wheels. He likes the challenge of custom orders, such as a Deere 3010 tractor



Larry Hodgson has discovered there's a market for custom tractors made out of glass. His tractor oil lamp can be filled with any color oil the customer chooses.

with adaptations for a farmer with disabilities.

Windmills that stand about 3 ft. tall are another popular item with rural buyers. Hodgson has one in his home that even squeaks like a real windmill when it spins.

He also makes cars, semis and will try most any idea customers suggest.

"Just when you think you've made everything, someone asks for something new," he says with a laugh.

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Frank Orr's home-built skid loader-mounted subsoiler breaks up packed soil; then he attaches a bucket to scoop up the dirt.

Subsoiler Shank Breaks Up Hard-Packed Ground

Scooping up hard-packed dirt is easy if you bust it up first. Frank Orr's homemade subsoiler breaks up packed soil with a skid steer before he attaches a bucket and scoops up the dirt.

"I used an injection shank and knife from a liquid manure spreader," says Orr. "I mounted them to a quick-attach plate for my skid steer."

Backing up with the spring shank lowered into the ground breaks up packed soil. Orr can also attach a V-blade to the shank to lay tile.

"The plow is about a foot wide, and it can be used to tile about 2 ft. deep," says Orr. "In hard dirt, I can use the shank with the knife first and then slide the plow on to create the

furrow."

Orr also designed the quick-attach plate for alternative uses. The steel plate has gusseted mounting plates welded to its front side. In the case of the subsoiler, the frame for the subsoiler bolts to the mounting plates. The shank bolts to the frame and to a solid steel shaft that extends forward and through the plate. On the skid steer side, the shaft is pinned to mounting plates. The entire subsoiler system can be removed with four bolts and the pin.

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Lori Wilson makes beds out of pallets for her young daughters. Using pallets creates spaces under the bed and in the headboard/footboard to store stuffed animals, and books.

"Free" Bed Frames Made Out Of Pallets

When Lori Danelle Wilson made toddler beds out of pallets for her young daughters, she had no idea how much attention the beds would attract.

Wilson was inspired by a simpler version of a pallet bed she saw on the internet (www.ashleyannphotography.com). She wrote up her own design on her blog, complete with photos and directions.

She says it's important to use heat-treated and not chemically-treated pallets. Pallets are stamped with the type of treatment they receive.

She uses an orbital sander to remove splinters, yet leave the dark patina on the wood.

She used a circular saw and a reciprocating saw to cut the pallets, and she bolted them together to make a base big enough to support a 28 by 52-in. toddler mattress and the headboard and footboard.

Using pallets creates spaces under the

bed and in the headboard/footboard to slip in stuffed animals, shallow baskets or organizers.

Though Wilson provides specific directions on her website (<http://loridanelle.com/diy/toddler-pallet-bed/>), she cautions that pallet sizes/styles vary greatly, so measurements will be different.

Wilson emphasizes that the pallets must be heat-treated and carefully sanded.

"It's also good to know what was shipped on them," she notes, adding they could be sealed or painted as well.

Wilson left the pallet beds natural, and they stayed as good as the day she made them until recently when her daughters, now 3 and 5, decided to paint them – with markers.

"This is why we don't buy toddlers expensive furniture," she laughs.

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