



“Tumbler” Dresses Up Metalwork

When blacksmith Brian Johnson finishes a custom metalworking job, he likes to soften edges and polish the steel. His homemade parts tumbler filled with waste from a metal punch press does just that.

“It gives the pieces I make a nice burnished appearance before I clear coat them,” he says. “I made some pot and pan hangers out of steel strap and square stock for clients recently. The tumbler took the sharp edges off and added eye appeal.”

The tumbler drum, which rotates at about 42 rpm’s, is fashioned from a 30-lb. propane tank. Johnson cut one end off – after first purging all gas from the tank – and remounted it with hinges and a latch. It rides on steel bearings mounted at the ends of four arms made from square tubing. A fifth bearing mounted to a rear arm rides against the tapered end of the barrel.

“That fifth bearing helps to keep the tumbler from walking as it rotates,” says Johnson. “I covered the bearings with rubber hose material. I think that along with the drive belt, it helps hold down the noise.”

Power to rotate the tumbler is supplied by a 1/2 hp electric motor. A worm drive gear reducer transfers the power with more than enough torque to the drive belt.

“I picked up a 20-in. pressed steel pulley and cut out a hole roughly the size of the tank,” says Johnson. “I pounded it in place over the tank and it fit tight. I’ve never had to weld it or secure it in any way.”

A 3/4-in. belt runs from the pulley on the gear reduction pulley and around the tank pulley. Belt tension is maintained automatically.

“I mounted the motor and the gear reduction case on a steel plate and hinged one end of it to the frame,” says Johnson. “The weight is enough to keep the belt tight.”

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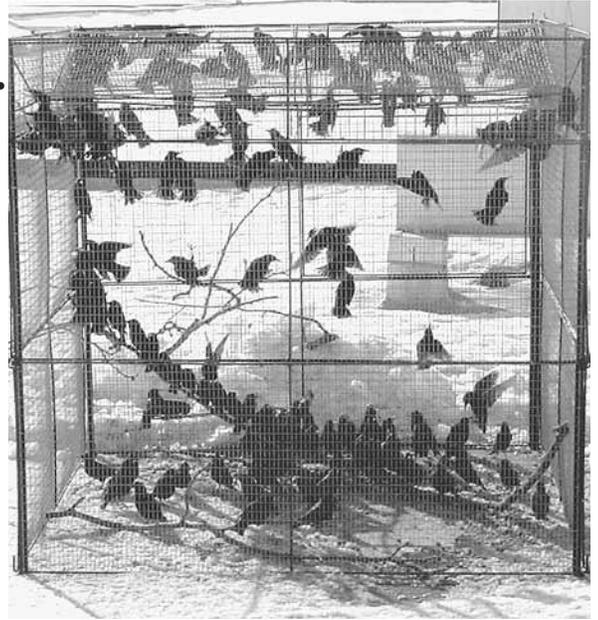
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Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, JWB Marketing, 2308 Raven Trl, West Columbia, S.C. 29169 (ph 800-555-9634 or 803-939-9622; www.birdtraps.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 156

Garden In A Barrel

“A lot of people want to have a garden but don’t have enough space. Barrel gardening may be the answer, even if you only have a few square feet to work with,” says Nathaniel Burson of Big Sandy, Texas.

He’s come up with a low-cost system that lets you convert used plastic barrels into highly productive container gardens.

“Lettuce, beets, carrots, strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, and many other kinds of plants can be grown in barrels. You can grow practically an entire garden in just one barrel,” says Burson.

The idea is to make “pockets” around the outside of the barrel, and then fill it with soil. Plants grow in the pockets and also on top. The bottom of the barrel is punctured to create drainage.

To make the pockets a heat gun is used to heat the plastic, then a saw is used to cut 6-in. long slits at intervals into the barrel. A specially cut wooden brace is then wedged into each slit to make the pocket. Once the plastic cools down the braces can be pulled out.

“The beauty of this system is that every available square foot is used,” says Burson. “A 30-gal. barrel will produce enough lettuce for the average family to have a salad a couple times a week. The barrels can even be stacked on top of each other for more efficient use of space.

“A 55-gal. barrel will hold 72 plants on the outside and a lot more on top. If you’re



Plants grow in “pockets” on outside of barrel and also on top.

really cramped for space, you can also use plastic 5-gal. buckets,” says Burson.

Burson sells an instructional Plans/DVD set that shows in detail how to make a barrel garden for \$29.95 plus \$4.95 S&H. A video preview is available on his website, along with other gardening ideas.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Easiestgarden.com; 10758 St. Hwy. 155 S., Big Sandy, Texas 75755 (ph 903 576-6800; www.easiestgarden.com/barrel-garden).

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