



Doug Strouse converted a 6-row, pull-type Allis Chalmers planter into this 2-row, 3-pt. mounted model.

6-Row Planter Converted To 2-Row

Converting a 6-row Allis Chalmers planter to a 2-row didn't require much more than a cutting torch, says Doug Strouse. The retiree wanted a planter for sweet corn, Indian corn and popcorn. When a friend offered him an older, pull-type, 6-row planter, it was more than Strouse needed, so he cut it back.

"I chopped the toolbar back to about 6 ft., enough for two planters on 30-in. rows," he says. "I fabricated a 3-pt. hitch for it, made a couple of minor changes, and gave it a fresh coat of paint."

One of the changes he made was to convert the insecticide box to starter fertilizer. Strouse bored out the discharge holes and replaced the plastic impellers with a set he fabricated out of steel.

"The impellers needed to be heavier duty to break up any fertilizer clumps," says Strouse. "The holes needed to be bigger, but I left the discharge chutes the same."

The pto-powered blower with its airflow placement of kernels was retained. However, Strouse plugged every other hole in the planter plates to ensure at least 8-in. spacing between kernels.

Strouse made cardboard templates for his 3-pt. hitch. "I made the hitch pieces out of inch plate, and they slid right on," he says.

Strouse sells the different types of corn and pumpkins at his roadside stand. His "new" planter will make it easy to expand the volume and at very little cost.



He chopped the planter toolbar back to about 6 ft., enough for 2 planters on 30-in. rows (above). He also fabricated a 3-pt. hitch for it.



"At \$75, the Allis Chalmers orange acrylic enamel paint was my biggest expense," says Strouse.

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Trailer holds up to 32 big square bales and is equipped with a hydraulic-operated clamshell, which opens for loading and then closes down on one side of trailer for transport.

Bale Trailer Cage Holds Big Loads In Place

This "made it myself" big square bale trailer from England features a clamshell cage that holds big loads of bales in place. We spotted it in the British farm magazine, Practical Farm Ideas (www.farmideas.co.uk).

The 32-ft. tri-axle trailer holds up to 32 big square bales and is equipped with a hydraulic-operated clamshell, which opens for loading and then closes down on one side of the trailer

for transport.

Inventor John Goodfellow loads bales 4-high onto the trailer with a JCB telehandler. The steel frame on one side of the trailer forms a stop for the bales.

The clamshell moves smoothly up and down, and the trailer's tri-axle air bag suspension smoothes out any load bounce, says the inventor.



Chapalote corn is the oldest known variety of U.S. corn, dating back 4,000 years. It was grown in the arid regions of Arizona.

Oldest U.S. Corn Making A Comeback

It's likely you have never heard of Chapalote corn, despite the fact that it's the oldest known variety of U.S. corn, going back 4,000 years. It was found in the arid regions of Arizona.

With renewed interest in local foods and heritage seeds, farmers and organizations in that region are growing Chapalote again and discovering that it's a variety worth saving.

"It has a number of interesting features," says Chris Schmidt, Ph.D., Director of Conservation for Native Seeds/SEARCH. "It's very drought tolerant so it's good in arid regions. It's productive, nutritious and delicious, with a unique brown color."

Because it's a flint corn, Chapalote kernels can be popped, but they tend to be very crunchy. It's usually toasted, then ground into flour.

"Traditionally it was eaten raw as trail

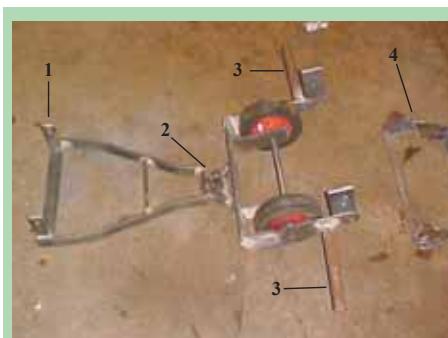
food," Schmidt says. "It's delicious and has a nice sweetness and smokiness. People also bake with it."

Native Seeds/SEARCH received a grant to work with growers to increase the seed base and experiment with best growing methods. They're doing similar studies with White Sonora wheat brought into the U.S. in the late 17th Century by Spanish missionaries.

"The idea is to have a more sustainable and more resilient agricultural system based on arid-adapted crops," Schmidt notes.

Arizona gardeners interested in growing Chapalote should contact Native Seeds/SEARCH about packets and bulk quantities of seed available for sale.

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Jerry Maddock's sod cutter fits under his garden tractor, and Maddock's weight provides down pressure. Cutter attaches to frame of tractor (1). Pivot point adjusts to ground contour (2). Feet go on foot pegs to apply down pressure (3). Cutting blade pins to back end of frame (4).

He Cuts Sod With Garden Tractor

Jerry Maddock's sod cutter is perfect for small-scale removal of sod from a garden or pathway. The compact unit fits under his garden tractor, and Maddock's weight provides down pressure.

"I hook it under my Simplicity tractor where the deck mower would go," explains Maddock. "When I get to the section of sod I want to remove, I just stand on the foot bars, and the cutting bar slices into and under the sod surface."

The sod cutter has an A-frame hitch that hooks to the belly of the tractor. When making a second cut, the tractor wheels on one side will be riding where the sod was removed and the other wheels will be on top of the sod being cut. A pivot point on the hitch keeps the cutting bar parallel with the ground.

The 3-sided depth control section rides on two small wheels mounted to the sides of the frame. Steel rods are welded perpendicular to the sides and slightly behind the wheels. These are the foot bars.

Three sides of the cutting bar section are made with the same steel strap as the rest of the sod cutter. The fourth side is a straight cutting edge with rounded ends that prevent the edge of the sod from tearing.



Unit has a straight cutting edge with rounded ends that prevent the edge of the sod from tearing.

"The wheels ahead of the cutting bar keep the bar level," says Maddock. "The pivot point is the weakest point in the cutter. If I hit tree roots, it can break at the pivot point. Otherwise, it has worked well."

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