



Ken Sunderland spends as much as 700 hrs. to build one scale model threshing machine with actual moving parts. "I can make them out of metal or wood," he says.



He draws up plans to scale, cuts the materials, and then puts them together. On metal machines parts are welded together; on wood machines they're glued.

Replica Threshing Machines Look Like The Real Deal

"I started building replica toy threshing machines 25 years ago and have been doing it ever since," says Ken Sunderland, a retired mechanic who worked at Northwest Airlines for nearly 40 years. These days he spends as much as 700 hrs. to build one authentic scale model threshing machine with actual moving parts.

"I can make them out of metal or wood," Sunderland says. "It takes about the same amount of time with either one. I draw up plans to scale, cut the materials, then put them together. On the metal ones, I braise or weld the materials. The wood machines are glued together."

Sunderland's models, which are made to 1-in. scale, look incredibly real. One of his larger replicas is nearly 4 ft. long. He made one model from wood that he salvaged from a full-sized antique threshing machine. Others are made from sheet metal, tiny metal brackets and aluminum. Wood pulleys he

cuts with a scroll saw and wood shafts he turns on his lathe. Metal pieces he cuts with a shears or with the scroll saw. He uses special leather for authentic looking belts. Each leather piece is cut to the correct size, then fastened together and carefully placed on the pulleys.

"It's time-consuming work," Sunderland says, "but I've got plenty of time." He has crafted replicas of Case, Minneapolis Moline, McCormick-Deering and Deere machines. He displays them at farm shows and craft events and also takes them to nursing homes to show how farming used to be. "As a young kid I remember threshing on our farm and it was always something special," Sunderland said. "I decided to see if I could make one to scale and have been at it ever since."

After building a few of the threshing machines, Sunderland decided to try his hand at old tractors from the early 1900's. In 20 years he's built replicas of old steam engines,



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early model Deere's, McCormick-Deerings, Farmalls and Case tractors. "There's not as many moving parts on my tractors," he says, "but the wheels turn and I use a small DC motor so they actually run. They look real nice next to the threshing machines," Sunderland says. "People of all ages enjoy looking at the models," Sunderland says,

"and kids can't believe something so small actually has moving parts. I really enjoy showing them to people and I think people enjoy seeing what that equipment used to look like."

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Milk Crate Truck Garden Has Internal Watering System

Who says you need tillable land to farm? Riverpark Farm in the heart of New York City grows food in a milk crate truck garden to serve local Riverpark restaurants. Thanks to a watering system developed by Barb Neal, a George Washington University professor, milk crate gardening can be done anywhere.

"The system is fully portable and works just fine on pavement and decks," says Neal.

Her idea is to slip a bucket (cut down to about 6-in. tall with a lid on) inside a milk crate. She drills two 1-in. holes in the lid and cuts two pieces of 1-in. pvc pipe. One is slightly longer than the bucket height, and the other is nearly as tall as the milk crate. She drills a few 3/8-in. holes around the bottom of both pipes.

Then she cuts 4 strips into one half of a washcloth, leaving the other half intact. She wraps a rubber band around the top and slips that end into the top of the shorter tube, which is caulked in place. She spreads the cloth strips on top of the lid and pushes the long pipe through the other hole into the bucket. She fills the bucket with water through the pipe, and covers it with a pvc cap.

"You then add about 4 in. of soil above the bucket so the plants have plenty of soil to grow in," Neal says. The buckets she uses hold enough water to last about a week.

Each milk crate is lined with geotextile fabric and weighs about 35 lbs. Pour in composted soil, then mix carefully to make sure the washcloth strips stay spread out in the soil, Neal says. The milk crate planter can be carried or moved with a dolly to inside shelter on cold nights to extend the growing season. By positioning the plant-filled crate on an empty milk crate, it is the perfect height for someone gardening from a wheelchair or to stand comfortably without having to bend over, Neal adds.

Used milk crates can often be found for free or crates can be purchased new for a few dollars. Because they are square and already have drainage, they are an inexpensive, practical way to create a modular garden anywhere, Neal says.

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Riverpark Farm, in the heart of New York City, grows food in a milk crate truck garden to serve local restaurants.



Bucket is cut down to fit inside milk crate and fitted with a lid that has two holes in it for two pieces of pvc pipe. Neal cuts 4 strips into one half of a washcloth, leaving the other half intact, and shoves the intact end down into the short pipe.



Neal spreads the cloth strips on top of the lid to wick water out of bucket and then covers the entire bucket with about 4 in. of soil. The longer pvc pipe, which extends up above the soil, is used to fill the bucket with water.



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