



Grant Hanson helped turn a friend's silo into a "silo gazebo", removing the silo's cap and replacing it with a new 10-sided gazebo with a 4-ft. deck and railing.



Photos courtesy of Rachel Barduson and Sr. Perspective

Silo Gazebo A "Great Place To Relax"

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

A silo gazebo project took Grant Hanson to new engineering heights last year. Readers may recognize the Glenwood, Minn., inventor, who has been featured in FARM SHOW several times for past inventions.

He removed a silo cap and used it for the roof of the new gazebo, and then lifted the 8,500-lb. building back on top of the 36-ft. tall by 12-ft. dia. silo. He had plenty of details to work out from the moment he agreed to come up with a plan for his friend Marv Jensen near Kensington, Minn. Jensen had already converted an old barn to living space and figured he could turn his idle silo into a relaxing place with a birds-eye view of a lake and surrounding farmland.

Hanson knew he needed help from a "higher power" to figure out the logistics and wood working help from Allen Braaten, a semi-retired carpenter and good friend since childhood.

Hanson tackled the first phase by removing the cap with a telehandler stretched to its capacity.

Braaten spent most of the summer building the 10-sided, 12-ft. wide gazebo with a 4-ft. deck and railing and 6 by 6-ft. floorless entrance for an elevator.

"It got to be more of a project than I envisioned," he says. "I overbuilt it because of the elevation, and it had to be strong enough to be lifted into place."

With free reign on the design, he used durable building materials that are maintenance-free such as thermal windows



A crane lifted the gazebo to the top of the 36-ft. tall by 12-ft. dia. silo.

and composite siding and decking. He built two trap doors in the deck to access the silo chute and ladder for backup exits. Inside, he built a vaulted ceiling and spent hours cutting the right angles for the pine tongue-and-groove boards to fit on the walls and ceiling.

At the same time, he worked with Hanson to make sure the building could be safely lifted and placed on the silo.

"Inside the walls are four 5/8-in. rods that go from the roof through to the floor," Hanson explains. The top of each rod has an eye bolt large enough to hold a clevis for a crane to

Heritage Tomato Named After Gardener

Stephania Potter never expected to have a tomato named after her, but she is pleased that people now have access to a variety her family has enjoyed for 5 decades.

"We call it a toMayto because we start eating them in May," explains the Ridgefield, Wash., gardener. "It's a salad tomato, and the plant doesn't get very big either. It has an old-fashioned tomato taste."

A Skamania County extension agent gave the original seeds to her mother. He told her they came from the Andes Mountains in South America, which is where tomatoes originated.

Seeds were saved by several members of the family, including Potter, who has grown them in a garden at a 1,500-ft. elevation in the Columbia River gorge. She starts the seed in cells just before Christmas and later transfers them to 4-in. pots. In late February or March she moves the plants to soil-filled totes outside on the south side of her home and keeps them covered until April.

The red tomatoes start out with little tips on the end but round out as they grow and

ripen. The plants have "potato" leaves that are more oblong than jagged like most tomato varieties.

"They are just an all around little tomato. We use them for everything — in salad, for salsa," Potter says. The skin is firm and the tomato is sweet and juicy. Because it is an indeterminate variety, plants produce all season long. It is also hardy, Potter adds. She has picked tomatoes that were laying on the ground after a week of hard frosts. The only disease issue she has noticed is late blight that other varieties in her garden also have.

The family's variety name toMayto became Stephanía Heritage Tomato when she shared seeds with the Clark County Master Gardeners.

Potter grows the variety away from other tomato varieties so they don't cross-pollinate. She notes that she will sell seeds to FARM SHOW gardeners interested in trying the heritage variety.

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evenly and safely lift the building with 4 cables.

He adds that his biggest concern was how to center it on the silo once it was lifted. After prayer and a dream, he came up with the plan to secure oversized hand cart wheels on floor joist brackets positioned slightly less than 12 ft. apart to fit inside the silo.

With track already in place, plans are to install the elevator this year. It's large enough

to accommodate a wheelchair, so anyone can go to the top and enjoy the silo gazebo's 360-degree view.

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Stacking Wood In An Artful Way

We've seen a lot of creative woodpiles that naturally deflect moisture and aid drying. But recently stacking creativity has gone to a whole new level.

In rural British Columbia, Alistair Heseltine has a 40-ft. long woodpile that cleverly depicts a bare-branched tree laying horizontally, supported by carefully placed split firewood. Heseltine is a teacher, sculptor, and designer.

Monarch, Montana resident Gary Tallman has built 5 artistic woodpiles that depict various mountain scenes, including woody owls peering out from a huge stack of split firewood. One is resting quietly, another is about to fly, and a third is an owl in flight. Tallman says he started the artistic stacking

because he enjoyed it and wanted something clever to show his grandkids. Each stack takes about 20 hrs. to complete, which doesn't include the time he needs to first sketch a design on graph paper and then sort various wood into piles. Now in his 80's, Tallman cuts and stacks about 12 cords of wood a year. He also picks nearly 20 gal. of raspberries, builds handmade wooden flutes, and maintains fences on the rugged terrain around his home.

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Alistair Heseltine's 40-ft. long wood pile cleverly displays a bare-branched tree laying horizontally (above). Gary Tallman created a woody owl peering out from a stack of split firewood.