



Alvin Wittmer's 3-pt. mounted sprayer comes with a 12 or 18-ft. boom that can be extended in 18 or 36-in. increments, and with an 80 or 35-gal. tank.



A pto-operated pressure washer kit including a high pressure pump and spray wand is available, allowing you to use the sprayer to wash farm equipment.



The operator uses a hand wand to spray fruit trees. Close-up photo shows sprayer controls, including pressure gauge and on-off pump switch.

The sprayer comes with a magnet-mounted remote on-off section control box that operates off the tractor's battery. "The control box can be mounted on the tank or on one of the tractor fenders, allowing the operator to turn the boom on or off without leaving the tractor seat," says Witmer.

A standard sprayer equipped with an 80-gal. tank and an 18-ft. boom sells for about \$1,700.

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"Customizable" Small Acreage Sprayer

Alvin Wittmer couldn't find a small acreage sprayer that had all the options he wanted, so he built a high tech model himself.

"I wanted something more versatile than the models that I found on the market. I also wanted something with a folding boom so I could spray in small areas," says the Dayton, Va., fruit tree grower. "It works great for spraying everything from row crops to pastures, lawns, and fence lines."

The 3-pt. mounted sprayer is available with a 12 or 18-ft. boom that can be extended in 18 or 36-in. increments, and with an 80 or 35-gal. tank. A funnel-shaped poly tank leads down to the drain and line strainer.

"We call it a 'total drain tank' because it lets you keep spraying until the tank is completely empty, even on sidehills," says Wittmer. "With a flat bottomed tank, the chemical ends up in a corner of the tank where it can't get sucked up. Draining the tank completely is especially important for orchard growers, who have to use expensive chemicals that cost up to \$50 per ounce. They don't want to leave one or two gal. in

the tank when they're done spraying. Using up all the chemical also makes cleanup and maintenance a simple job."

The boom quick-taches to the sprayer frame and can be equipped with many attachments, such as row shields for spraying produce rows and boomless nozzle shields. The U-shaped nozzle shields mount at both ends of the boom and keep the nozzles from accidentally catching on fences. "The shields just swing back out of the way," says Wittmer.

A pto-operated pressure washer kit can be mounted on the sprayer's frame, allowing you to use the sprayer to wash farm equipment. It sells for \$1,300.

The sprayer can be easily converted to a boomless model by unscrewing a wing nut and lifting the boom off. The hoses can be quickly disconnected by turning a knob.

The sprayer comes with an adjustable nozzle hand gun with a 10-ft. hose that you can use from the tractor seat. "Some hobby farmers just buy the sprayer frame and use the hand wand as they drive along fence rows to control weeds," says Wittmer.

Plant Geneticist Makes Carrot Earrings

Compliment Shelby Ellison on her colorful earrings and you may get a free lesson on plant genetics.

"I'm a big a fan of vegetable jewelry. People are normally shocked to find out my earrings are carrots," laughs the University of Wisconsin-Madison postdoctoral researcher in plant genetics. "My research is understanding the genetics behind the pigment in carrots so it's directly related."

As she sliced colorful carrots from around the world, she saw the beauty of the bulls-eye patterns in reds, yellows, oranges and purples. Her original idea was to make cross-sectional slices, dry them and make Christmas ornaments.

"I slice them between 1/8 and 1/4 in. thick in diameters from 1/2 to 3 in. I like big,

flashy earrings," she says. "I have an industrial dryer to dry them. Then I paint them with an acrylic lacquer to keep the moisture out and help the pigment last longer. They are virtually weightless."

"It's a good way to talk about my research in a more fun environment," Ellison says. "Once we identify the genes controlling important pigments, we can make improvements such as increasing the nutritional benefits. That's the goal of the research."

Carrots were previously yellow, she notes, but then a naturally occurring mutation caused them to accumulate beta-carotene and turn orange, which some growers preferred. Orange carrots are also nutritionally better as they are high in carotenoids that the body converts into Vitamin A. Purple carrots



Ellison makes big, flashy earrings out of cross-sectional slices of purple carrots.



Photos courtesy Stephanie Stegeman Photography Carrots are sliced, dried, and then painted with an acrylic lacquer to keep moisture out and help the pigment last longer.

are high in anthocyanins, which are a good source of antioxidants.

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