

## Deer Antlers Hard On Tractor, Combine Tires

An overpopulation of deer around many areas of the country is creating challenges for crop farmers. Not only do the deer eat the crops, they also shed their antlers which often puncture expensive tractor and combine tires.

"We've had a rash of punctures," says Michael Mielke, who farms near Easton, Md. "The neighbor had 4 in a week. This year we had 3 punctures – 2 tractor tires and a combine tire. The spray man had 2 tires punctured."

Mielke's brother, Tom, noticed an antler in the tire of their John Deere 9570 combine when he came to relieve Mike who was combining wheat in June.

They patched the hole with 3 plugs and were grateful the antler didn't tear up the

sidewall. It costs about \$3,000 to replace a combine tire. Just having a tire serviced in the field costs a couple hundred dollars, Mielke adds.

He attributes the problem to two things.

"Years ago we ran over antlers but the ground wasn't hard. Now we don't till the soil, and that makes the difference. When it's dry the ground is firm," he says.

The other factor is the large population of deer. Every year Mielke finds about 40 antlers and skulls on the 1,300 acres he owns and rents. That's a big turnaround from when he was growing up.

"When I was a kid in the early 60's, they would stop the schoolbus so we could look at a deer," Mielke recalls.

He explains that deer were pretty much eradicated in the area during Colonial times and were reintroduced after WWII. Seasons were restricted for many years, but now hunters can take two bucks and up to 10 does, including archery and muzzleloaders.

"Development pressure has fragmented the larger farms around the Chesapeake Bay and created great habitat for deer," Mielke says.

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**Photo shows a deer antler that punctured one of the tires on Michael Mielke's Deere 9570 combine. It took 3 tire plugs to patch the hole.**



## Hen Pouch Makes It Easy To Collect Eggs

Farmyard chicken producers looking for an easier way to collect eggs will be interested in this new Hen Pouch. Made of water-resistant nylon fabric, it allows you to collect up to 18 eggs and safely carry them around hands-free while you focus on other coop activities.

The pouch is positioned to larger with your hip and body as you walk, keeping the eggs from bouncing against your body as happens with apron pockets. It can be easily slid from one hip to the other across an adjustable belt (included).

The Hen Pouch is available in 2 models - one with a single pouch that holds up to 6 eggs, and the other with a triple pouch that holds up to 18 eggs and can also be used to hold other supplies such as a water bottle or cell phone.

Available in black or brick red.

The single pouch model sells for \$10.99 plus S&H; the triple pouch for \$19.99 plus S&H.



**Hen Pouch allows you to collect up to 18 eggs with your hands free.**

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**Twin rake leaf grabber eliminates the need to bend over to pick up leaves or pine needles.**

## Two-Rake Leaf Grabber

Wayne Carlton doesn't have to bend over to pick up leaves or pine needles. His twin rake grabber does it for him.

"I put 2 leaf rakes together facing each other with a long screw through both handles," says Carlton. "It works well with leaves, grass clippings or pine straw."

Once they are attached, the facing rakes work like giant salad tongs, pivoting on the screw. Carlton placed the screw through the handles about 6 to 8 in. above the plastic rake heads. Placing the screw higher would force him to open the rake handles wider to grab material.

The back-saving rakes have proven popular. "I've given several away to neighbors," says Carlton. "One of them told me he wore his out because he used it so much."

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**Wayne Carlton put 2 leaf rakes together facing each other and ran a long screw through both handles. The facing rakes work like giant salad tongs.**



**Bicycle's front wheel was removed and a bracket made that fastens reel mower to bike's wheel stem.**

## Ride-On Reel Mower

Photos of "riding" reel mowers have appeared on social media over the past few years as a joke. But combining a bike with a manual mower can work, says Leroy Martin, who had one built to prove it can be done.

Keeping the blades sharp is what makes it work, he says about the "Bower" that he had Martindale Welding of Martindale, Penn., make for him.

Martin had the front wheel from a bicycle removed and the welder made a bracket for the mower to attach to the bike's wheel stem.

Martin says it works well and provides a good workout, but there are limits. "You have to mow wide because you can't turn sharply," he notes.

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