

Tractor Fountains Entertain Visitors To Texas Orchard

A pair of tractor fountains may not have anything to do with the peaches, strawberries and other produce at Efurud Orchards, but they sure grab your attention.

Which is exactly why Greg Efurud parked them in a shallow pond along busy U.S. 271 in Pittsburg, Texas.

He had the Farmall B tractor installed in the 5-ft. deep pond about 10 years ago. Efurud drove four pipes deep in the mud and welded two "saddles" to hold the frame of the tractor just above the water. A 10 hp pump sprays water through 2-in. pvc pipe that comes up through the hood.

"The biggest challenge was when a friend used his trackhoe to pick up the tractor and

set it in place," Efurud recalls.

With the help of a crane, lifting the John Deere G tractor in place was less stressful 5 years ago.

Both tractors were "junked" but Efurud keeps them looking good with new paint every couple years.

One pump powers both fountains from the first of April through Halloween when Greg and Amy Efurud close up their farm's produce stand for the year.

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A pair of tractor fountains, parked in a shallow pond along a busy Texas highway, entertains visitors to Efurud Orchards.



Easy-to-set-up Garden Circles are made out of 1 by 2-in. welded mesh wire and heavy landscape fabric. They measure 2 ft. tall and are 3, 4 or 5-ft. in dia.

Low-Cost Raised Garden Circles

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

When Ryan Hunt and his family decided to get into gardening a few years ago, raised beds were a top priority. They wanted to work at a comfortable height, but Hunt didn't like the cost of most raised bed designs. So he made his own out of inexpensive materials. They worked so well he started selling "Garden Circles" through a website from his Pine River, Minn., home.

"We started with the idea that round is nature's most efficient shape," Hunt says. To also be economical he built his first circles out of chicken wire lined with inexpensive landscape fabric. His original Garden Circles are still functional after seven years. Commercial units are made from higher quality materials that should last at least 10 years. He started selling them in 2016.

"We use a 1 by 2-in. welded mesh wire and the heaviest landscape fabric available," Hunt explains. Garden Circles sell for \$53 to \$69 for 3, 4 and 5-ft. dia. units that are 2 ft. tall.

Garden Circles come in rolls that open and set up easily. Form the roll into a circle, clasp the folded ends together and secure with zip-ties. The largest circle (5-ft.) holds about 2 cu. yards of soil.

As a way to reduce the amount of soil needed and to hold moisture, Hunt suggests placing wood chunks and brush in the bottom half.

"It slowly breaks down and acts like a sponge," he says.

Once set up, Garden Circles can be set up with drip or other types of irrigation systems. Because they are raised beds, frequent watering is necessary – especially around the perimeter.

The Hunts' garden expanded from 10 circles to 40 circles to 80 circles over the years, including Garden Circle Extensions that fit up against the circles and are less expensive. Hunt also has a 1-ft. tall version ideal for perennials such as asparagus, and rectangular setups that hold straw bales for that popular type of gardening. The versatile fabric walls make it easy to set up the garden in many configurations, such as the Foldout-U Shape garden that Hunt offers for \$225.



Units come in rolls that open and set up easily.

In addition to raising the garden to a comfortable height, Garden Circles help prevent problems with gophers, sloped ground, poor soil, poor drainage and rabbits and chickens getting in the garden. Because the beds are raised, the soil warms sooner for a jumpstart on the season.

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"Winch Lift" Hand Cart Moves Heavy Loads

Matt McNaughton likes to make wine in his home, but he needed an easier way to move 50-lb. glass jugs of wine between rooms and also lift them onto his wine siphoning table. So he bought a 1,000-lb. capacity, 2-wheeled hand cart and added a hand-cranked winch on top and a round loading platform at the bottom.

"It's designed to lift the 50-lb. jugs 3 ft. high, which is the height of the table. I came up with the idea because as I get older it's getting harder to lift heavy loads," says McNaughton. "I think my winch lift hand cart could have many other applications besides moving wine. As far as I know there's nothing like it on the market."

A pair of cables do all the lifting. They're wrapped around a horizontal shaft with handle that extends through a pair of angle irons bolted onto both sides of the cart. The cables are attached to a 1/4-in. thick, 1-ft. high metal "back plate" with a round metal platform welded onto it at the bottom. The back plate and platform ride up or down on aluminum tracks that McNaughton bolted to both sides of the platform provide reinforcement.

"I like how it turned out, and how easy it is to use," says McNaughton. "I turn the handle one way to raise the platform and the other way to let it down. Another advantage is that I can move jugs across the carpet in our home without the risk of spilling wine on it."

"I welded a pair of angle iron extensions onto the base of the cart to make sure it doesn't tip forward while lifting the load."

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McNaughton added a hand-cranked winch and lift platform to a 2-wheeled hand cart.



Two pieces of angle iron on base keep 2-wheeler from tipping forward when lifting a load.

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