

# Great Hobby: Spark Plug Collecting

With an estimated 6,000 different spark plugs in existence, spark plug collectors have a lot to choose from. And the options are growing.

"It's amazing how many new spark plug names come up each year," says James Lawrence, president, Spark Plug Collectors of America (SPCOA). "People are still finding them in barns and showing up at shows with new ones."

Lawrence explains that one reason for the large number is that early spark plugs were easy to make. "Any machine shop could do it," he says. "The insulator was a stack of little Isinglass disks that were drilled, stacked and machined to form the insulator."

The earliest spark plugs originated in France around 1882 to 1883, explains Lawrence. "They replaced a gate valve that opened to blow flame from a torch into the cylinder to ignite fuel."

By 1915 a new porcelain process improved plugs, reducing maintenance and extending working life. Improvements continued, and by the 1950's the hundreds of spark plug makers dwindled to a handful.

Unique designs that were introduced over the years included a quick detach for easy cleaning. Double-ended plugs could be turned over when one end was fouled, and intensified plugs had a second firing gap. They were promoted as allowing the plug to fire hotter and longer.

The SPCOA has 190 members, mostly from the U.S. with some from around the globe. Lawrence has collected spark plugs for about 10 years and has been a member for about the same length of time. He has 350 spark plugs in his collection and notes that many of the recent additions to his collection have come from England, Germany and France.

"The largest collection that I know of personally has about 4,000 items with several



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collections having 3,000 or more," says Lawrence. "The costs for spark plugs vary, but one recently sold on eBay for \$2,400."

SPCOA membership is \$25 per year for U.S. and Canadian readers and is good for free admission to the Tri State Gas Engine & Tractor show in Portland, Ind. It's billed as the world's largest gas engine and tractor show.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Spark Plug Collectors of America, 9 Heritage Lane, Simsbury, Conn. 06070 ([www.spcoa.net](http://www.spcoa.net)).



This antique belly dump wagon was recently restored by volunteers at the Central Washington Ag Museum.

## Restored Antique Belly Dump Wagon

Volunteers at the Central Washington Ag Museum recently completed restoration of an antique belly dump wagon, believed to have originally been built around 1910. This type of wooden wagon is generally found in very poor condition due to the heavy and difficult work it was created for - hauling dirt, gravel and other building materials. They were called a "Belly Dump" for the metal-lined doors of the bed, which were opened and closed by a chain mechanism to drop the contents. The restored wagon is now fully functioning after hundreds of man hours.

To begin the project, all the lumber on the wagon had to be replaced, but the extra heavy 1 1/2-in. thick boards required can't be bought in the necessary dimensions. Fortunately, the crew was able to use a working 1930's vintage sawmill on site at the museum so they could cut and plane their own boards.

The part of this project that held up progress the longest was the wood wheels, because repairing them takes special skills and tools that are difficult to find. Fortunately, another ag museum, located in Pomeroy, Wash., had someone with this skill set.

What makes repairing wood wheels



Special tools were required to repair the wooden wheels.

difficult is that the spokes on these wheels aren't straight - they're angled at 2 degrees, as is the hub. A special tool is required to rebuild the structure, and these types of outdated tools are not readily available in a standard toolbox. The crew started with checking the tool collection inside the Museum's Magness Room, which displays over 3,000 vintage and antique tools of all kinds. They were pleasantly surprised to find that several of the exact tools they'd learned to use for this project were in the collection.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Central Washington Ag Museum, 4508 Main St., Union Gap, Wash. 98903 (<http://centralwaagmuseum.org/>).

# FARM SHOW



Brenda Negri has earned a reputation as an expert for breeding and training Livestock Guardian Dogs. Her new book is like an encyclopedia on the topic.

## "Best Guard Dog Book Ever"

If you own Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGDs), a brand new book recently came out that is like an encyclopedia on the topic, covering everything from raising puppies to training them to be more than just guard dogs. "The Way of the Pack: Understanding and Living with Livestock Guardian Dogs" took a lifetime of experience and 6 years for Brenda Negri, of Cinco Deseos Ranch in Winnemucca, Nevada, to write. FARM SHOW readers may recall her name as we've sought out her expertise in the past about LGD breeds (Vol. 36; Issue 1) and her preference to raise them in packs as a family to be efficient herd protectors (Vol. 36, Issue 4). She has earned a reputation as an expert for breeding and training and has written and been featured in many articles and YouTube videos.

The 63-year-old started out to be a "cowboy on a ranch" and her work resumé includes working as a buckaroo on the legendary Nevada Marvel Ranches in Elko, Nevada, where she met many famous ranchers and cowboys. But she learned about LGDs from Basque sheep herders in Spain and found her niche and passion for working with LGDs when she purchased property in Winnemucca, Nevada, and raised goats and sheep. She started with three Great Pyrenees puppies to protect the flock and developed her own style of working with them, similar to how European shepherds lived and worked with their dogs. She's also raised Spanish Mastiffs, Turkish Boz, Pyrenean Mastiffs, Anatolian/Maremman, Turkish Kangals and Great Pyrenees/Polish Tatra.

"I'm big on having at least two puppies; using a pack is always best," she says. She has never had issues with predators such as mountain lions or coyotes killing her livestock.

She emphasizes taking time to understand and pay attention to dogs.

"Too many people are lazy and leave a dog



Book covers everything from proper nutrition to good fencing techniques and major breed differences.

on its own," she says.

Instead of just leaving a dog to bond with livestock, she advocates personal, hands-on bonding with LGDs. Starting when they are pups she takes them on walks with her sheep and goats "so they understand the whole picture."

Her core values working with dogs are: patience, compassion, respect, trust and consistency. Her book details all aspects of LGDs, from proper nutrition to good fencing to breed differences. She talks about how LGDs resist different predators and how they work with all types of livestock from chickens to cattle. The 40+ chapters cover controlling dog fights, acclimating the dogs to guests and weather, and much more. Breeding is about the only topic she doesn't cover in the book. She includes resources for further reading.

The Way of the Pack is available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$35.

Negri is semi-retired with nine adult dogs. More information is available on her blog.

"I hope that people read and study this book. It will help them learn more about their dogs and how they can live with them well," Negri says.

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