Old tires are formed into 350-lb. "bricks". The tremendous weight of a wall made of tire bricks makes cement foundation unnecessary.

40 TO 60% CHEAPER

They Build Homes Out Of Tire "Bricks"

"We use old tires formed into 350-lb. 'bricks' to put up homes and other buildings," says Mark Bossert, president of Recycled Tire Homes, Ltd., a Canadian company that is currently putting finishing touches on a 3,100 sq. ft. tire house. It has also helped build or plan five other tire houses ranging from 1,600 to 2,300 sq. ft.

"Custom built tire houses cost 40 to 60 percent less per square foot than conventionally-built houses and tire brick houses are super energy efficient," says Bossert. "Tire homes cost $25 to $60 per sq. ft. for custom-built, super energy-efficient homes."

The tire brick technique was first tried in the Southwestern U.S. about 20 years ago. Bossert took the basic idea and added "extras" like an in-ground heat storage system that captures the sun's warmth in spring and summer to provide heat in winter. The system eliminates the need for a furnace, even in Canada, although Bossert installs electric baseboard heat as a back-up.

The building technique is simple.

Tires (15 in.) are stacked flat and rammed full of dirt for a total weight per tire of 350 lbs. Packing the tires is the most time-consuming and labor-intensive part of construction. Tires are overlapped and interlocked with the row below just like bricks.

The tremendous weight of a wall made of tire bricks makes a cement block or concrete foundation unnecessary.

Typically, earth is bermed up to the unvented, sloped roof around the east, west and north walls to make the house energy efficient. Interior walls are finished with adobe. Outside walls could also be adobed if desired.

Tires are stacked flat and rammed full of dirt.

Interior walls of tire house are finished with adobe.

Entrance to the house is through the front (south side). Bathroom and kitchen are located in the front where there are big windows.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Recycled Tire Homes Ltd., Unit 228, 230-1210 Summit Drive, Kamloops, B.C., Canada V2C 6MI (ph 604 573-2828).

Tanks are staggered in three rows and set back into side of hill.

Underground Fuel Tank House

We've seen a lot of unusual uses for old fuel storage tanks in recent years, but never anything like this underground house built by a Mississippi farmer out of salvaged fuel tanks.

"It's got all the comforts of home," says M.Y. Haney, of Aberdeen, Miss., about the 1,300 sq. ft., seven-room house it took him and friends two years to build. "We use it as a hunting lodge and for get-togethers. The grandkids use it for class parties. Whenever anyone sees it for the first time, the reaction is always the same - 'amazing,' 'unbelievable,' 'how'd you do it?'"

The fuel tank house is set into a hill overlooking Haney's 300 acres of soybeans, wheat and corn. It started out as a simple hunting cabin but grew more elaborate as Haney had the opportunity to get more fuel tanks from a friend who dug them up for a living.

"It was just sort of a challenge," he says. "At first I was going to bury one tank for an underground hunting shack, but decided if I was going to bury one I might as well bury the others along with it."

To bury the 10 big tanks used to construct the house, Haney first removed 17 ft. of earth from the hill with a tractor and earth scraper. Then he graded the surface with a slight back slope for drainage.

After the tanks had been thoroughly cleaned out, Haney placed three of them side by side lengthwise, with ends facing south, on the front of the hill. The center tank (20,000-gal.) is 30 ft. long. The tanks on either side (10,000-gal.) are 16-ft. long. He cut a 7-ft. high by 14-ft. long section out of both sides of the big tank and cut the same size holes in the adjacent sides of the smaller tanks. He then welded the tanks together, top and bottom, so they form one big, 16 by 33-ft. "great room" in front. That's the room used for entertaining.

Two more tanks (18,000-gal. and 10,000-gal.) were placed on either side of the big center tank and positioned behind the two smaller tanks. The tanks were used to make three bedrooms. A 14 by 10-ft. kitchen, located at the rear of the big middle tank, is located between the bedrooms and connects to the bedroom tanks through holes cut in the sides.

Fuel tank house is set into a hill overlooking 300 acres of crops.

The back of the 18,000-gal. tank contains a 14 1/2-ft. by 10-ft. bathroom. A 4,000-gal., 64-in. dia. tank located rear center serves as a giant air vent.

The 2-in. thick pine flooring covered by wafer board is supported by pieces of angle iron mounted 2 ft. up on both sides of each tank. Electricity and plumbing are installed underneath the floor. Floors are covered with linoleum or carpet.

Floor to ceiling height is 6 1/2 ft. Walls and ceiling were steam cleaned and painted with enamel paint. Each room is connected by an 8-in. dia. pipe ventilation system. A small electric fan is used to keep air circulating. Completing the house is a front porch made out of a 10,000 gal. tank. It was laid across the ends of the other tanks, which are buried under 5 to 7 ft. of dirt.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, M.Y. Haney, 30241 Old Wren Rd., Aberdeen, Miss. 39730-8715 (ph 601-256-8948).

3-Engine ATV Mower Deck

"It cost only a fraction of what a big riding mower would have cost and works faster on less fuel," says Wayne R. Watson, Stockport, Iowa, about his "built from scratch" mower deck that he pushes out in front of his ATV.

"I spent a total of $360 on the mower using all new parts. It takes just a minute to attach to the ATV - you just hook up a couple 2 5/8-in. pins, start the motors, and go. I can mow about 1/2 hour on a tank of gas. It's a lot less expensive to operate than a regular riding mower."

The 58-in. wide deck is fitted with three 3 1/2-hp. Briggs & Stratton motors. To form the deck, Watson bought a single 4 by 8-ft. sheet of 13 gauge steel for $98. He got the motors by buying three inexpensive 20-in. push-type mowers for $99 each. "I was able to sell the three brand-new mower decks for $20 apiece so each motor and blade assembly cost just $79."

The 4 wheels on the deck cost $18 and he had to use miscellaneous pieces of steel to make wheel brackets. The front two are caster wheels and the back two fixed. He reinforced the edges of the deck once it was bent to the correct shape with extra pieces of flat steel. The deck mounts to the front of the ATV frame with a couple of parallel pieces of 2-in. steel tubing that pivot up and down to accommodate uneven terrain.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wayne R. Watson, Rt. 1, Box 58, Stockport, Iowa 52651 (ph 319 796-2161).