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battery lasts a long time and charges quickly. No problems. I'm 69 years old and would advise anyone my age to consider an electric chainsaw instead of a gas model."

**Douglas L. Pearson, Glenburn, N. Dak.:** "My 2016 Kia Sorento surges 1 to 3 mph in cruise control mode. It has been at the dealer 8 different times, and even factory representatives couldn't solve the problem. Finally the company 'politely' told me to just get used to the surge."

**Harvey Robertson, Kingman, Ariz.:** "I ride my 2000 Arctic Cat 700 EFI 4-wheeler almost every day. I love it."

"My 2018 Textron Off-Road Havoc X ATV is a real lemon. Within the first 9 mos. it was in the shop more than 100 days. I paid about \$19,000 for this machine, so it should have been in perfect condition when new. Now I can't even sell it because I won't screw someone on purpose."

**Dan Buckner, Cuba, Mo.:** "Three years ago I went to a junkyard and paid \$300 for a used 1987 Dodge Dakota pickup, with about 320,000 miles on it. I wanted to use it around the house and to haul firewood. However, it

**"Within the first 9 months it was in the shop more than 100 days."**

turned out to be so reliable that now I drive it everywhere and have put almost 30,000 miles on it. The engine uses a little oil but it's still running strong.

"I bought a new Poulan Pro chainsaw but right away it wouldn't start, so the next day I returned it and got a refund. I then bought a Stihl saw for just a little more money and have used it to cut 7 or 8 cords with no problems."

**Don Braswell, Laurens, S.C.:** "No problems with my 2002 Kubota L3010 HST loader tractor. I also own a 2012 Deere 1026R backhoe loader equipped with a belly-mounted deck. It has been back to the dealer twice for out-of-warranty repairs. It not a best buy but isn't a bad machine."

**Ken Tatham, Nowata, Okla.:** Ken nominates his 2016 Chevrolet 3/4-ton 4-WD pickup as his "worst buy". "The front end makes a rattling sound so I've taken the pickup back to the shop several times, but no one can find the problem. I tried to sell it back to the dealer, but he just says the noise isn't unusual for these models."

"I called the GM rep repeatedly for 3 weeks before I was finally able to talk to a real person. I was treated terribly and they wouldn't even consider a buyback even though the pickup has only about 3,000 miles on it. Now the problem is getting worse, and the warranty has expired. No more GM's for me. Anyone else have this problem?"

**David Morris, Orleans, Mich.:** David's impressed with the Farmland Tractor Supply power steering kit he bought for his Deere 4020 tractor (www.farmlandtractor.com; ph 877 928-1646). The kit is designed to replace the factory steering boxes on Deere 10, 20 and 30 series tractors. Kits are also available for Ford New Holland tractors. All kits come with a modern hydrostatic steering valve.

"We had been having problems with the power steering system on this tractor, even after we had it rebuilt," says Morris. "So we bought this kit, which comes with everything needed to install. You just unbolt the old steering column and bolt in the new one. All the lines and holes match. Works great and is reasonably priced."

**Jonah Dickman, Vanderbilt, Penn.:** Jonah likes his 2017 Graco ultra cordless paint sprayer (www.graco.com). "It operates on DeWalt 20-volt batteries and was the best \$550 I ever spent. It turned a 16-hr. shed staining project into a less than 4-hr. job, including clean-up time. I've used it on many other staining projects with great results."

**Victor Kimberling, Mechanicsville, Iowa:** Victor's satisfied with his Milwaukee cordless chainsaw equipped with a 16-in. bar. "Last fall my son was helping me remove some trees from fencelines but had trouble starting my Stihl gas saw. I had my reservations about a cordless chainsaw, but the benefits of an instant start, reduced noise and vibration, and no fuel worries have convinced me of its worth."

**Gordon L. Rambow, Winterset, Iowa:** "The Masterforce 20-volt cordless drill/driver I bought at Menards has plenty of torque and runs all day on a single charge. Also, the batteries recharge in only about 30 min. It's a real time and labor saver."

**Frido W. Buschmann, Riegelsville, Penn.:** "I got totally frustrated trying to get my Sears Craftsman gas-powered leaf blower to start, so I bought a 2017 EGO 56-volt cordless model (www.egopowerplus.com; ph 855 346-5656). It has as much power as a gas model and is a real pleasure to operate. I just press the trigger to start it and go. The battery takes about 45 min. to recharge. It lasts a long time but in my opinion is too expensive to justify buying a spare."

**Michael Coulthurst, Stevens Point, Wis.:** A Deere 3025E 4-WD loader tractor equipped with a hydrostatic transmission rates as Michael's "best buy". "It has a lot of power and traction, and the hydrostatic transmission is easy to operate. The loader has plenty of lifting power and the controls for it are easy to operate. The 3-pt. controls are also easy to operate."

"My Deere 3-pt. mounted, 55-in. rototiller leaves a smooth, level seedbed."

**Ralph L. Burrige, Union, Maine:** "My joints give me trouble during winter so shoveling snow was always a pain, until I discovered the Back EZ ergonomic shovel handle attachment (www.backez.net; ph 888 501-9238). You use a hex key to attach it to the shovel handle about halfway down. It provides much better purchase on the tool, and is much easier on my back."

**Thomas M. Parrish, Kansas City, Kan.:** "There's no stopping my 2014 Dodge Ram 1500 pickup. It'll run through anything."

"My 2016 Massey Ferguson 1736 cab tractor does everything I want it to and then some."

**Josh Smith, Troy, Kan.:** "I've had good luck with my 2018 Milwaukee 1/2-in. impact wrench, a high torque model that's rated at 1,000 ft. lbs. It can easily handle lug nuts on pickups and tractors, and even on semi trucks. It comes with 2 batteries that last a long time. It also has an excellent warranty."

**Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.:** "When my wife ran across Grandpa's Goody Getter for cracking walnuts, I was suspicious. But after watching a video by inventor Basil Bacon I was convinced to give it a try."

"I'm glad I did. The 12 lbs. of steel shafts, cams and plate are as solid and well-engineered as Bacon promised. The press is spring-loaded and self-adjusting to the size of the nut. All I had to do to



## Slide-Hammer Wood Splitter

**Wendy Wellnitz, La Crescent, Minn.:** "My husband and I really like the Logosol Smart Splitter. Its 8-lb. hammer lets us split even tough knot-filled wood that gives trouble with a splitting axe."

"Our fireplace is our primary heat source. The firewood we buy has been split, but the chunks are often too big to handle easily."

"The splitter head slides up and down on a 3/4-in. guide rod. The hammer slides up and down a 1/2-in. diameter steel rod that screws into the top of the splitter head. When the hammer drops down it strikes a high density, poly bushing mounted on the rod. It transmits force through to the axe head."

"We installed the splitter on a small stump so it's easy to move around. The guide rod slips into a 4 1/2-in. deep hole in the stump. "It also works great to make kindling, thanks to the narrow blade between the axe head and the rod it slides on."

"The precise placement of the axe that is possible with the Smart Splitter also makes it easy to strip away bark."

"We've used the Smart Splitter on everything from pine boards to gnarly old



Sliding hammer (orange) slams down onto splitting head to chop logs. A smaller blade between axe head and rod cuts up kindling.

oak, and it seems to handle it all. Fresh cut black walnut splits as easily as pine boards. We have yet to find anything it won't split."

assemble was screw in the handle, attach it to a board, and clamp it to my workbench. They even included screws for the board."

"To use it, I set the nut in place, put my hand around it and pull down the handle. I can do a nut every 3 to 4 sec. and then pick over the cracked nuts later."

"It takes a little experience to get the nuts cracked enough without smashing them. However, the double action lets me crack down a little farther if the first pull didn't do enough. That's especially true with small nuts."

"Other methods from hammers to bricks to cranking down with a vice often shattered the nut and the nutmeats. Bacon's Goody Getter has produced more whole nutmeats than I ever could have dreamed of."

"Bacon's video gives some great tips on cured nuts also. He suggests soaking them for a day or two before cracking. He's right. The nuts crack as before, but with less shatter, ending up with quarter and half nutmeats instead of bits."

"The Goody Getter is very well-built. At \$79.99 plus shipping, it's a steal. The ram that comes with it is great for larger nuts like walnuts and Brazil nuts. They even throw in a second ram for smaller nuts like hickory nuts or pecans."

"If you've got nuts to crack, get Grandpa's Goody Getter online at www.grandpasgoodygetter.com or call 573 552-9090."

**Reid Allaway, Quebec, Canada:** "I can't believe I spent years drilling holes, especially in sheet metal, without knowing about step drill bits. Maybe I wasn't paying attention to



new products when I was shopping for drill bits, but now that I've discovered them, I'll never go back to the old way." Step drill bits can be used to drill a range of different-sized holes with a single bit. Allaway says there are several brands available, and he's used a few. "The more expensive ones do seem worth the money," he says, "but even the

cheap Chinese-made ones do an adequate job, and they're available in sets of two or three covering a broad size range. They don't cost much, and they're a great time-saver in the shop."

**Harry T. Kuyper, Kewadin, Mich.:** "I use my 2014 Cyclone Rake leaf and lawn vacuum, powered by a 6 1/2 hp. gas engine, to collect leaves every fall. It works great. (www.cyclonerake.com; ph 888 531-7253). I pull it behind my Deere X570 riding mower



equipped with a 54-in. deck.

"I have more than 30 maple trees on my property so getting rid of the leaves is a big job, but these machines make it easy. The whirling action of the leaves cleans the underside of the mower deck so well that it looks like it was sandblasted. Very little scraping is needed. When I'm done for the fall I sharpen the blades and then brush a coat of used motor oil on the underside of the deck to keep it from rusting during storage."

"The Cyclone Rake rides on a pair of caster wheels so when I go around a corner it follows right behind me. Also, the caster wheels let me back up without jackknifing. This machine wasn't cheap at \$1,500, but it works great. It works great to pick up grass clippings, too."

"I use a 1-ton Harbor Freight manual chain hoist, which I bought for \$40, to service the mower deck. I raise the riding mower up at a 45 degree angle to the ground so I can sit on a stool and do service work. The hoist hangs from a brace made from 2 by 8's that I attached to the trusses in my shed."

**Gary Pennock, Great Bend, N.Y.:** "I've had Amica car insurance for almost 30 years (www.amica.com; ph 800 242-6422). The company provides excellent customer service, and their premiums are very reasonable because they don't advertise. They get referrals only through word of mouth. Amica was founded in 1907 so they've been around for a long time. They