

He Collects Antique Lawn Sprinklers

Antique lawn sprinklers may be more interesting and have more character, but they don't work as well as modern sprinklers, says David McCormick. The Springfield, Mass., writer and collector knows that because he's tested all the sprinklers in his collection.

"They only do small areas and don't have the same velocity as newer sprinklers. And they have erratic movement," McCormick explains.

Still, it's pretty fun to watch his vintage monkey sprinkler hold its "tail" and spin as it sprays water. The stamped painted metal sprinkler is worth \$250+.

Sprinklers in the U.S. date back to the late 1800's when homeowners started thinking about making beautiful lawns. Manufacturers came out with artistic and clever designs as well as very simple designs. McCormick says one of his sprinklers is just a metal bar upturned at the end to shoot water all over.

His oldest sprinkler is a cast iron alligator that has a spinner at the top to spray water. It has a trace of original green paint and is valued from \$200 to \$400. Made around 1900, alligator sprinklers are highly sought

after by collectors.

An aluminum duck from the late 40's/early 50's also spins and is worth \$150+. A smaller flower shaped sprinkler is worth \$50 to \$60.

Car fans appreciate the 1951 Stampco model with a huge chrome sprinkler head that resembles the chrome bumpers on 50's era cars. It's worth \$60 to \$80.

McCormick's L.R. Nelson Co. sprinkler from the 1950's has a 12-in. propeller blade on a 9-in. sprinkler head. In good condition it's worth \$40 to \$80.

There are various ways sprinklers disperse water, from shooting up like a fountain to oscillating. They come in a variety of shapes from animals to tractors and autos. Like all antiques, rarity, age and condition determine value. While \$600 to \$800 buys the most valued sprinklers, they can go higher. For example, a mid 20th Century ceramic frog sprinkler is valued at \$1,350.

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McCormick's oldest sprinkler is a cast iron alligator with a spinner on top. Aluminum duck from the late 1940's also spins.



L.R. Nelson Co. sprinkler from the 1950's has a 12-in. propeller blade on a 9-in. sprinkler head. Monkey sprinkler holds its "tail" and spins as it sprays water.



"Firewood" Truck Models Have Impressive Detail

Give Kerry Fuhs a few pieces of good firewood and about 400 hrs. and he will build a model truck with amazing detail. Open the toothpick-hinged cab doors and hood of his Kenworth to reveal a leather-covered steering wheel, and a 600 Cummins engine. Check out the precise engravings of the truck's model and number - all while preserving the beauty of the grains and knots of the wood.

"I use pinion and cedar and alligator juniper (wood) that has different skin on the outside and beautiful colors," says the Gallup, N.M. artist, who also runs a construction company. "I use firewood and split it. If it doesn't turn out I can always burn it."

Fuhs has been around trucks for half a century and still owns the International Transtar 4300 truck he bought new in 1974.

He replicated it with the first model he built.

Another favorite model is a LoneStar truck. "It has door handles, pouches in the door, even buttons for the electric windows. The steering wheel is three different pieces of wood to show the leather," he describes. "For the two-piece grill I made 32 of them before I got it the way I wanted. The wood is paper thin and you have to wet it to make it fit."

Fuhs wears reading glasses and uses tweezers, an Exacto knife, and a laser engraver to achieve the detail in his pieces. Each of the 10 models he has made are based on equipment he's owned through the years.

Everything is made of wood, and he relies on his artistic instinct to get the proportions right. Fuhs also carves wooden sculptures.

"I haven't sold them. If I paid myself \$10/



Kerry Fuhs used firewood to build this Kenworth truck model. "I use pinion, cedar, and alligator juniper wood that has beautiful colors," he says.

hour they would cost \$4,000," Fuhs says with a laugh. "I have made some for family, though."

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Mechanic Has 50 Years Experience With Ford Tractors

Arnold Gunnink has spent the better part of 50 years buying, selling, collecting, and restoring the always popular Ford 2N, 8N and 9N tractors. "When I started working on them in the early 1960's, I could buy them for a couple hundred bucks at a farm auction or from a newspaper ad," Gunnink says. "I'd repair a few things, get them running good, add a nice paint job, and make a few hundred."

Gunnink says restoring a tractor these days and re-selling it to make money is difficult. "The decent ones are harder to find and cost more, so when you've done the work, bought new tires and paint, and have them in mint condition, what you'll get doesn't pay for your time. Those with straight 6 or V-8 conversions may bring \$10,000 or more, but you've got a lot in them."

In his 80's now and retired, Gunnink worked in a Ford garage and later ran his own repair business, so he knows the ins and outs of Fords. "Most things are easy to fix, like cleaning up the motor, repairing the starter and ignition, tightening the linkages so the front wheels don't shimmy, fixing leaks here and there, and getting the choke and throttle to operate properly," says Gunnink. "I'd overhaul a few motors or gain some extra horsepower by adjusting the governor to increase the rpm, adjusting the main

carburetor jet and advancing the spark by rotating the distributor."

Gunnink retrofitted one of his 9Ns with an in-line 6 motor that he salvaged from a 1957 Ford sedan. "I could've bought a kit but since I'd worked on so many tractors before, I decided to do the work myself," Gunnink says. "I had a machine shop build a new bell housing, changed the linkages, raised the hood 5 in., and lengthened the frame about 10 in. by myself. I used the original radiator from the tractor, but replaced the fan because it wasn't moving enough air," Gunnink says. "That little tractor ran real well and sounded great with its vertical pipes. With a new paint job it looked factory-built, so I actually sold it and made a few dollars on the deal."

He planned to restore an 8N with a V-8 car motor, but that changed when he saw one fitted with a 1950 Ford V-8 for sale. "The price was right," he says, "so now that one's part of my collection. It has 6 chrome exhaust pipes and was done with an Awesome Henry conversion kit. I've added new lights and tweaked a few things, but otherwise it was parade-ready and that's what I use it for."

Gunnink says if someone really wants to go all out on a conversion they could add polished heads, show-quality automotive paint, spoked custom front wheels, and automobile-type hubcaps. "There's really no



Arnold Gunnink spent a lifetime working on Ford vehicles and equipment and now has a nice collection of "parade ready" vehicles. His 8N (second from right) has a V-8 engine.

limit to what you can spend and how you can customize as long as money isn't a concern," Gunnink says. "But most people just want a tractor that starts and runs well, can pull a trailer here or there, and doesn't leak fluids

on the floor."

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