



Hand-painted crocks like these have been selling for \$200 to \$1,200 at recent auctions.

## Old Stoneware Worth Big Bucks

If you discover an old piece of stoneware around your farm or at an auction, it might be worthwhile to check out its value. Especially if it looks a little fancier than the ones you usually see.

For example, at a Kovels Auction, a Harvest jug with applied leaves and two spouts with a rope twist handle sold for \$2,280. But that's a pittance compared to a 7-gal. Stoneware Broadway Water Cooler that sold for \$480,000 at a Crocker Farm auction. Considered one of the finest examples of salt-glazed stoneware in decades, the 1846 cooler shows a New York City street scene and depicts a celebration for the Great National Jubilee of the Order of the Sons of Temperance, which promoted abstinence from alcohol.

Details, age, size, manufacturer and good condition make certain pieces stand out at auctions. America made the salt-glazed stoneware pottery for all kinds of uses in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century through about 1910. Crocks were filled with staples from butter to flour to meats and cheeses. Jugs and bottles held

whiskey, vinegar, beer and kept water cool.

The pottery has a shiny surface with some bumps from the salt particles. Artists often added hand-painted decorations using cobalt blue ink. Many had hand-drawn or stenciled numbers or letters.

The Stoneware jugs made in the 1800's that earn top dollar were often more than just functional. Many were expressions of art with added decorations on the jug. Others have odd shapes or detailed paintings.

But even versions with simple paintings like a chicken are highly collectible. In 2012, a 5-gal. crock with handles and a blue chicken sold for \$780 at Morphy Auctions. Similar size, hand-painted crocks continue to be worth anywhere from \$200 to \$1,250, depending on condition.

Though paintings and applied details add value, don't overlook the little brown jugs you may own. They often sell on eBay for around \$200.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup ([www.kovels.com](http://www.kovels.com); [www.morphyauctions.com](http://www.morphyauctions.com)).

## He Herds Cattle With Leaf Blower

After years of raising chickens and cattle, John McAnear, 95 of Freer, Texas, has figured out a few handy herding tricks using a water bottle and leaf blower.

The leaf blower was first discovered when a possum took up residence in a storeroom behind his garage.

"It growled and hissed pretty bad. My dog wouldn't go in there, and my son couldn't see in there so he didn't want to go in," McAnear recalls. "I saw a leaf blower and stuck it in the cracks of the wall and turned it on. That possum shot out of there pretty quick."

The blower has also worked well for chasing rodents out of walls and flower beds.

But the most useful trick is to use it for herding cattle, he notes, but not on full power.

"Use a blower and turn it off and on quickly

(directed on both sides) to control animals in a stockyard. Use it gently," he suggests.

For herding chickens and goats, he recommends a regular water bottle with a little hole poked in the lid.

"Don't squirt water on them, but squirt water on one side, then the other," he says. They will move to avoid water. If you run out of water, just crinkling the bottle from side to side may be enough to control the chickens, goats or other livestock, he adds.

"The main thing is when working cattle, chickens, dogs or whatever, you can't rush. Go slow at an even pace so you don't excite the animals," he emphasizes.

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Jude and Addie Schuenemeyer are preserving Colorado's apple-growing heritage by grafting scions from trees planted in the 1800's onto rootstock.

## Preserving Colorado's Apple History One Graft At A Time

More than 150 years after the Pike's Peak Gold Rush lured thousands of prospectors to Colorado, one couple is working to save a less known treasure that came on the heels of gold - apples. Jude and Addie Schuenemeyer founded the Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project (MORP), a 501C3 organization in 2008, to preserve the state's apple-growing heritage.

Part of that includes grafting scions from trees planted in the late 1800's onto rootstock and selling or planting the young trees in orchards to reestablish some of the 400 or more varieties that were grown in Colorado before 1930.

The Schuenemeyers became aware of the state's apple history when they operated a nursery and older customers would ask about old apple varieties they remembered as children, such as Yellow Transparent apples.

"We decided to see if we could find those old trees. We have the largest number of 70 to 150 year-old trees anywhere in the country," Jude Schuenemeyer says. Big orchards were planted to help feed the gold miners and residents, and the orchard industry thrived throughout the state until the 1890's when the codling moth came in and destroyed crops. Despite the removal of many orchards, apples remained the dominant fruit crop throughout the state. Peaches and cherries were introduced later and did well in some areas.

At altitudes of 6,500 to 7,000-ft. the codling moth didn't bother apple trees quite as much as in lower altitude counties in the southwest. With a USDA Specialty Crop block grant, MORP collected nearly 500 spring leaf samples for DNA testing. About 60 came back with named varieties - some common, some rare, such as the American

Summer Pearmain, part of the apple family that is often shaped like a pear (though this variety is small and round). Another 40 were unknown but matched samples from trees, and another 100 came back unique unknown, likely varieties considered extinct.

MORP is purchasing 35 acres near Dolores, Colo., in partnership with the Nature Conservancy to preserve Colorado's rare and endangered apple varieties and demonstrate water conservation in orchards.

"It will be a living orchard that serves as a genetic bank and living classroom," Schuenemeyer says. "We can keep it into perpetuity."

There will also be a packing shed so that apples can be shipped and marketed in the region. Times have changed from when high production limited the number of varieties by choosing commodity over diversity.

"Consumers want something different. More people want local foods so there's more potential consumer demand," Schuenemeyer says.

They are rediscovering old varieties such as the Thunderbolt apple, which is a winter variety. It's hard when harvested but gets sweeter and juicier after it's in storage and the sugars come out.

For further insurance to preserve genetics, MORP has worked with schools and other groups to plant the trees in many orchards around the state.

People interested in the apple project can support it through MORP, or purchase trees.

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