



Glenn Bower has collected almost twenty 1/5th-scale implements to go with his pedal tractor collection. Most implements are from custom builders he finds at toy shows.

Mini Implements Complement Pedal Tractor Collection

The 1/5th scale implements in Glenn “Junior” Bower’s pedal tractor collection look real enough to hook up to and take to the field.

“They make my tractor displays look much better,” Bower says of the nearly 20 implements he’s purchased to go with the more than 100 pedal tractors he has collected over the past 30 years.

“One of my favorites is a tractor and plow that is a custom-built 4-bottom John Deere plow on a John Deere 4020. The tractor was factory made by Ertl, but the plow has details down to brass screws and metal moldboards,” Bower says.

His Oliver 440 pipe plow is one of only two made and is likely his most valuable implement. Most of his implements are from custom builders that he finds at toy shows. His only factory-built implement is a Hydra Fold Auger Inc. gravity box wagon.

“I look for more detail than anything,” Bower says. His ground-driven Oliver manure spreader has two levers, and the beaters move. The reel turns on a New

Holland hay rake.

With his welding experience, Bower has made running gears for wooden hay wagons that an FFA teacher built for him. But usually he buys toys that don’t need to be restored.

“I grew up working on a dairy farm and the hay rake, ground-driven spreader, grain drill and 2-row corn chopper are all equipment that was on the dairy farm,” he says.

Bower displays his tractors and implements on 32-ft. long shelves in his garage, which recently expanded into another 12 ft. of shelving. If necessary, there’s room to add more to the garage, he says. He’s always looking for more tractors and implements to add to his collection.

A sign he has sums it up best. “Some of us boys never grow up. Some of us grew up playing with tractors. The lucky ones still do.”

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Windmill Museum Celebrates 25 Years

Windmills were an important part of U.S. agriculture in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. If you want to see what some of those old water-pumpers looked like you should stop by the 20-acre Mid-America Windmill Museum near Kendallville, Ind.

Jerry Stienbarger is on the museum board of directors and he says their site is “the heart of windmill production” because at one time there were 80 windmill manufacturers in the tri-state area within a 100-mile radius of Kendallville. In 1992 a local group thought it was important to preserve this part of Americana and they created a tourist attraction in the process.

Today the museum has 52 restored windmills from manufacturers such as Elgin, Aermotor, Eclipse, Dempster and Southern Cross, which is from South Africa. The centerpiece of the museum is a replica of the Robertson Post windmill, a single stone grist mill with a 52-ft. dia. wind wheel. The original was shipped from England and erected on the James River in Virginia in the 1620’s.

Mid-America is the only museum to have all 11 Flint and Walling models starting with the Original Star, patented in the 1870’s and produced for 40 years. The collection also includes the Star Zephyr, the last model produced by the company, from 1937 until 1954.

Stienbarger says summer travel season is always busy for the museum. However, in winter several of the windmills are decorated in colorful lights and there’s a building on the site where Santa Claus has a bag loaded with



The Mid-America Windmill Museum near Kendallville, Ind., features 52 restored windmills.

treats for children and several holiday craft vendors are set up.

The main building on the museum site is a historic bank barn, one that opens on two levels. Inside there are windmill displays, including a construction timeline showing where, when and how long windmills were built in the U.S. Volunteers at the museum talk to visitors and explain the importance of windmills in settling America and why they’re even important these days. Stienbarger says that since it began the museum has hosted visitors from 49 states, 24 countries and all the Canadian provinces.

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Goose Tree flying decoy system creates the illusion of a landing flock of geese.

“Goose Tree” Flying Decoy System

This flying decoy system draws geese from great distances and brings them to land, says Prairie Grass Outfitters, Northfield, Minn. The company is an online retailer of sporting dog supplies, waterfowl decoys, hunting apparel, and other outdoor accessories.

The Goose Tree Flying system creates the illusion of a landing bunch of geese and plays on their natural instinct to follow birds flying up ahead. It comes with geese that are made from durable nylon material and have life-size, 48-in. wing spans, 3D hinged heads, white tail crescents, and unique shapeable wings. The geese mount on fiberglass connecting rods about 8 ft. off the ground.

“It’s a really effective system and has a deceptive, realistic quality that other decoys don’t have,” says Win Mitchell. “The geese swivel on connector rods like a weather vane, and they turn into the wind to simulate a landing bunch of geese. The wings are

shapeable so you can bend them into multiple realistic poses, and they have feathers that move in the wind.

“We think our flying decoy system will outperform 24 full body goose decoys. Also, it’s much easier to haul around and set up and requires less storage space.”

The system comes with a smart stick base, a swivel connector, 3 fiberglass connecting rods, and 3 cross arms to mount the geese.

The flying decoy system sells for \$309 plus S&H.

The company also offers a ‘pro pack’ decoy system that comes with 7 geese. It sells for \$599 with free shipping.

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Barb Knoff glues pheasant feathers on tanned deer hide to create wall hangings, and makes wreaths and other items.

She Makes Colorful Art From Pheasant Feathers

Barb Knoff knows how to accentuate the beauty of pheasant feathers. Hunters and other homeowners love the ornaments, wreaths, wall hangings, and other items she creates.

At 76, the Nashotah, Wis., self-taught artist started creating with feathers about a decade ago. She was making jewelry at the time when she saw a poorly made feather ornament at a local business.

“I thought, ‘I can do better than that,’” Knoff recalls.

She starts with skinned pheasant pelts and dries them for a couple of weeks in 20 Mule Team Borax. That preserves them so she can remove the feathers later.

Prepping the feathers is the most tedious because every feather has down that must be clipped off. Knoff uses some of the down for fluffy centers on her ornaments, but she focuses on the feathers and the rainbow of colors they offer.

“I have boxes of feathers that are all the same color,” she says.

She uses tweezers to place feathers one at a time onto her designs, securing them with a dab of tacky glue applied with a skewer or toothpick.

“The feathers I use on a horse’s leg are smaller than a little fingernail,” Knoff says.

Ornaments (\$15) are her best sellers, but she glues feathers on tanned deer hide to create wall hangings and dreamcatchers as well as horses, bears, butterflies and other creatures.

Some of the items are sold to hunters who are members of the hunting club where she gets her pheasant pelts. Hunters often leave behind some of the pheasants they’ve shot and Knoff picks them up for free. She removes the breasts and gives them away for food, often to a local food shelf.

She also has a booth at the Brown Street Emporium in Oconomowoc, Wis., a 7,000 sq. ft. artisan mall.

“This is a hobby, not a money-making process,” Knoff says, when she considers the hours she puts into each piece. Wall hangings range from \$25 to \$125.

She loves to create and try new things, such as the greeting cards she recently started making.

She also does commission pieces, often using feathers from the pheasants that hunters bring to her to have a special piece made.

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