Swinging "Disk Hoe" Better Than A Shovel

An old disk coulter can be used to make a low cost "disk hoe" digging tool, says Charles Taylor of Stockton, New Jersey.

He bolted a 17-in. dia. disk coulter onto the end of a large 45-in. hickory handle that he fashioned out of a small tree.

"My disk hoe looks somewhat like a pick but the handle is a lot longer and you swing it back and forth. I came up with the idea years ago to backfill soil after pouring a concrete basement," says Taylor. "To move the dirt I just pull backward on the hoe and also swing it back and forth. It works better than a shovel because I don't have to do any lifting or pushing."

The handle is flared out at one end to match the curvature of the disk. The bottom of the handle is 2 3/4 in. thick by 4 3/4 in. high. The disk is mounted with a 5/8 by 3-in. bolt and washers, with a square nut in a hole drilled into the side of the wood about 3 in. up from the bottom.

"I squared out the corners of the cross hole so I could slip the nut into it. Lets me tighten the disk if it ever comes loose," says Taylor. "I could have used a lag screw, but I was afraid it might strip or split the wood."

The top of the handle is also flared out. "Using the disk hoe requires a lot of pulling so having a flared end makes the handle easier to grip."

Taylor recently used his disk hoe to make a wide, shallow ditch that drains water away from a pond. "The handle sets at a 20-degree angle to the disk, and by rotating the tool I can adjust how deep it digs and how much dirt it moves. The disk is heavy and stays sharp," he notes.

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Swinging disk hoe was made by bolting a big coulter onto the end of a 45-in. hickory handle.

Ruen used 6-ft. tall panels to create two 15-ft. long walls. Four 20-ft. concrete reinforcing rods, bent into U-shapes, slip into panels' open uprights to support tarp.

Dog Kennel "Shed" Keeps Firewood Dry

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Our fireplace provides 70 percent of our home heat so we need our firewood to be dry and ready to burn. Tarping the pile when rain or snow threatened was getting old and we never seemed to get around to building a permanent wood shed.

"Why don't you make a temporary shed with the old dog kennel panels and throw a tarp over the top?" suggested my wife Wendy.

With no plans to replace our late farm dog, the 6-ft. tall panels were unused. The idea was sound and took only an hour or two to put into practice.

An octagonal concrete pad that once held a 16-ft. diameter, wire corn crib provided the base. The 6 panels created two, 15-ft. long walls that extend just past the base. Steel T-posts anchor the panels with about 12 ft. in between.

Pallets laid on the pad provided air space under the firewood. Four, 20-ft. concrete reinforcing rods were bent into wide U-shapes. They slipped easily into the open uprights of the panels to provide roof/tarp support. I laid a 16 by 20-ft. tarp over the reinforcing rods and strapped it in place with bungee cords. In addition to supporting the tarp, the rods provide added stability to the walls.

The overlapping tarp leaves most of the sides open for airflow through the pile. It provides ample protection from rain and snow and has been able to withstand 30 to 40 mph winds.

The new woodshed ends at the deer fence we have around our yard. I placed the kennel panel with a hinged door at that end. It allows me to access the 3 1/2 cords of dry wood stacked there for the coming winter. Plenty of space remains at the other end to add at least another 4 cords from logs waiting to be cut up and split.

If Wendy's woodshed works as expected, the permanent shed may slip back down the priority list. The price of this one will be hard to beat. The tarp and some bungee cords were all I purchased, bringing the total cost to about $40.

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Pickup-mounted, winch-operated lifting device lets one man easily lift a roll of net wrap into balers.

Pickup-Mounted Winch Lifts Rolls Of Net Wrap

Lifting heavy rolls of net wrap into a round baler isn't an easy job. This new pickup-mounted winch makes it easier, and can be used to perform other jobs, too.

The patent pending Net Wrap Loader Plus is designed to mount in a standard receiver hitch on your pickup. It can be used with both front and rear-loading balers, and comes as a kit that is easily assembled in less than 15 min.

The unit is powered by a 12-volt motor that operates off a battery (not included) and is operated using a remote thumb control. A pair of ratchet straps hook onto either side of the pickup to keep the lift stable.

"You can use the winch to pick up the roll from the back of your pickup or off a pallet. The bale can be lifted into either the baler's storage compartment or wrapping chamber," says Laura Petersen, Ranchers Livestock Equipment, Gregory, S. Dak.

The lift consists of an electric winch mounted on a vertical pipe, which bolts onto an L-shaped bracket that fits into the pickup's receiver hitch. Cable runs up through a pair of pulleys to a pair of horizontal steel arms that lift the roll.

To raise the roll, the operator wraps a pair of quick release buckle straps around the roll and fastens them to a cradle bar, then lifts the roll and manually swings it over into the baler's storage compartment.

The lift was invented by Wayne Kingsbury, a local rancher who has found several different uses for the unit. "He uses the winch to lift any object that's too heavy or awkward to handle - everything from heavy boxes to logs that he loads onto his log splitter. He even uses it to load log chunks into his outdoor wood burning stove," notes Petersen.

The Net Wrap Loader Plus sells for $875 plus S&H unpainted or $975 painted plus S&H. You can watch videos of it in action by going to YouTube and typing in "net wrap loader plus".

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Photos show the "slide-on" trailer ball hitches Reay made for his Ford (left) and Deere tractors.

"Slide-On" Trailer Ball Hitches

Russell Reay, Cuttingsville, Vt., recently sent FARM SHOW photos of 2 different "slide-on" ball hitches he made for his tractors that make hooking up to trailers an easier job.

"I use 2 compact tractors on my Christmas tree farm, a Ford 1210 and a Deere 1050, along with 3-pt. implements and 4 different trailers," says Reay. "My slide-on hitches let me quickly attach a trailer ball on the tractor drawbar without the need for any wrenches. I store the hitches on front of the trailer where they're easy to access."

He used scrap steel to make both hitches. "I always hang onto any scrap steel that's bigger than one square inch, because I never know when it might come in handy to make something. My closest store to buy new steel is located 12 miles away."

The hitch for the Ford tractor consists of a 1 1/2-ft. long steel bar with a ball bolted onto one end. At the other end, Reay welded 2 pieces of angle iron to a 6-in. long steel plate that he bolted to the bar. He also drilled a hole through the bar for a draw pin.

To install, Reay just slides the hitch over the drawbar and drops the draw pin in place.

The hitch for the Deere tractor consists of a 2-ft. length of 1 by 2-in. square tubing with a ball bolted onto one end. A hole in the middle of the tubing is used to drop in the draw pin.

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