Deer Stands Made From Old "Garage Doors"

A low cost, sturdy deer stand can be built with very little lumber, using old insulated garage door panels, says Mark Julin, Shevlin, Minn. He recently sent FARM SHOW photos of different deer stands he built out of garage door panels and other recycled materials.

"I don't like to see things go to waste," says Julin. "The only money I spent was the hardware to put everything together."

He gets the garage door panels from local garage door installers and at local dumps. "The doors are usually 16 ft. long and built in sections, which makes them easy to work with," says Julin. "I use a sawzall to cut the doors to size and then interlock them together with lag bolts. I use only solid core, foam-filled insulated doors that are 2 to 3 in. thick because they keep the heat in and the cold out."

One of his deer stands sets on a wood frame about 8 ft. off the ground, and is supported by posts salvaged from a child's playground. A big 14-ft. walk-out platform is off to one side, with access provided by a stairway built from stringers from an old house deck. The panels are white, which might have scared deer away, so Julin spray painted the walls to make them blend in with the woods. To camouflage the walls even more, he drilled holes in the panels and inserted fake Christmas tree branches.

The stand's floor and ceiling are made from portions of 8-in. thick insulated walls that he found at a dump. "Their insulation factor is huge," says Julin, who used the toneau cover off an old pickup topper as the roof.

Another deer stand has an insulated floor made from 6-in. thick foam paneling that came out of a huge cooler he found at a salvage yard. A garage door was used for the roof.

The windows on both stands came either from the town dump or from an old trailer that Julin already had. "I prefer using double pane home windows because they hold in the heat and don't frost up. I cut openings in the panels and frame the windows in with salvaged wood. All the windows slide open or are hinged so they can be quickly opened."

Mark Julin builds deer stands out of old insulated garage door panels and other recycled materials. "I cut the doors to size and bolt them together," he says.

Both stands have floor carpeting as well as recliner chairs and heaters. Julin can even watch movies on a tablet.

Julin also built a smaller stand that's only 4 ft. square and 8 ft. high. The walls are made from garage door panels that he cut down to size, and the sloping roof is made from barn tin. The windows have no glass. "This stand is small and simple, but I've had some of my best luck with it," he says.

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Many of the new tools from Johnny's Selected Seeds were inspired or developed by their customers. This babyleaf harvester is one of the company's latest.

Innovative Tools Inspired By Growers

When Johnny's Selected Seeds introduces a new tool, chances are it was inspired or developed by a customer. Johnny's offers hundreds of tools and supplies for gardens, large and small. The list includes 48 for bed preparation, 42 for transplanting, and 53 items just introduced in the past year.

"Many of our new product ideas come from talking with growers," explains Brad Waugh, tool designer. "We like to visit with growers and ask what they hate to do the most on their farm or in the garden and how can we help with a task they dislike."

Developing a tool can be challenging. "It's often hard to see the value in offering a particular tool, so it is hard to make the leap to investing in it," he says.

If a FARM SHOW reader has an idea for a tool, Waugh suggests developing a prototype to demonstrate its use. He emphasizes that it doesn't have to be pretty, it just has to demonstrate that it works. If a prototype exists, record a video of the tool in operation.

What he doesn't suggest is investing in a patent for an idea. The initial cost can run into thousands of dollars, and then it has to be defended if someone violates the patent.

"We will sign a standard non-disclosure agreement if the developer of the tool wants to protect it," says Waugh. "These days I feel patents are becoming less and less valuable."

What is valuable is the use of 3D printers. He has one in his office for making parts to assess tolerances and to see if things actually fit. He says they have helped bring products to market more quickly than in the past.

"3D printing has bridged the gap between multi-million dollar product development and the amateur or hobbyist working in their shed," says Waugh.

Much of the work that he does is to improve existing products, such as an upgrade to Johnny's existing 6-row seeder.

"We are rolling out a bunch of new features to improve how it works, such as incorporating a seed collection funnel and redesigning wheels for better drive and to prevent a buildup of mud balls inside the seeder," says Waugh. "Some changes make it easier to build using new manufacturing technologies."

While improving existing products is important, so is finding and developing new ones. In the past year, these have included weeding tools, 18-quart harvest buckets and bags, and container/display systems for fresh-cut flowers.

More new tools and supplies are coming for 2021, suggests Waugh.

"One new tool we will be introducing this coming year is a babyleaf harvester from Terrateck," says Waugh. "It runs off a power drill and can harvest a 100-ft. bed in 15 min. It is a huge game changer for growers."

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Their 18-quart Harvest bucket comes with a comfortable kidney-shaped design and an adjustable harness with a padded back.

He Built A Better Mower Deck

Though his DR brush mower is going on 15 years old, Aaron Miller gets plenty of use out of the 17-hp. machine. That's mostly because of the heavy-duty 48-in. mower deck Miller fabricated for it. While the 26-in. deck that came with the DR still works well for cutting brush and brambles, Miller likes the bigger deck for mowing up to 8 acres of lawn, pasture and hilly terrain near a creek on his property.

"About 5 years ago I found this John Deere mower deck that someone was going to scrap," Miller says. "I like the older models because the spindles are repairable and the bearings are replaceable."

He used the pulleys and components from the JD mower, including the blades. He built the outrigger and heavy-duty deck out of 1/8-in. steel, that cost him about $120.

"I use it as a finish mower, and if the grass isn't too thick I can cut knee-high grass easily and even head-high weeds," Miller says. With the wider deck it cuts labor time nearly in half.

Miller emphasizes that older models of equipment are often the most dependable and durable, especially if they are greased and maintained. He figures the finish mower deck he built is more heavy-duty than most new ones on the market today.

Aaron Miller built a bigger 48-in. mower deck for his DR brush mower, using the pulleys and components from an old Deere mower.

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Tire "Cattle Rub" Helps Fight Flies

Don Boggs, Pickens, S.C., used old tires and T-posts with insecticide-saturated carpet strips to make a low-cost cattle "rub".

"I'm 83 years old and have severe asthma, so I recently rented out my 100-acre livestock farm to a doctor," says Boggs. "One day I noticed that cattle had torn the oiler down. I watched as the cattle rubbed themselves on trees, which gave me the idea to stack up several tires so the cattle could rub on them instead of the trees. Then I decided to cover the tires with carpet strips and pour insecticide onto them, to help keep flies off the cattle."

The cattle rub is made from 7 stacked tires and 2 old split wheel rims, with one rim at the bottom of the stack and the other at the top. The tires are held in place by 4 T-posts that set inside holes in the rims. The entire stack of tires is covered by four 12-in. wide carpet strips that Boggs screwed to the bottom and top tires.

"I made the cattle tire rub last summer and it's working great," says Boggs. "I already had everything I needed to make it. My son-in-law operates a tire shop so I always have access to plenty of old tires."

Boggs stacks 7 tires over these 4 T-posts and then covers them with strips of carpet.

He says he used split wheel rims because that's what he already had, but ordinary wheel rims would work by just placing a single T-post through the center hole. "The carpet strips could be cut to any width," notes Boggs.

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