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Portable Gazebo Made From Old Bin

Back in 2017, when farmers were just beginning to find new uses for old grain bins, FARM SHOW wrote about Iowa inventor Jeb Clark (Vol. 41, No. 2) transforming an unused bin into a permanent poolside gazebo. "That was a fun project to build, and we're still using it," Clark says. Five years later, he decided to build a portable gazebo from another old bin.

Clark came up with the idea because friends who saw his original "binzebo" told him it would be great if they could have something like it for parties or just lounging around. "That got me thinking I should build a portable model and have it for rent," Clark says.

He looked at several old bins for the project, but most of them were 18-ft. in diameter, which was too large to move safely on roads. Eventually, he located one from a neighboring Century farm that was 13 ft. 6 in. in diameter. Clark hauled the bin to his farm, then removed the roof using booms mounted on two skid loaders. The bin's side panels were vertical rather than circular like on larger bins, so he used an angle grinder to cut each one off, then tack welded the shorter pieces together to provide a circular side panel beneath the roof.

Clark built a 13-ft. 8-in. octagon-shaped

base frame using 2-in. by 4-in. rectangular steel tubing. The frame rides on a 3,500-lb. axle and two 15-in. wheels. He used additional frame material to build a tongue, hitch and vertical posts to support the roof. The wood floor rests on 1 1/2-in. angle iron that provides lateral support for the frame. On one side of the binzebo, Clark added a small platform and used extra bin panels to make a flat awning. He bolted the original bin roof and short side panels to the metal uprights, providing a finished gazebo that's 13 1/2-ft. tall.

"Even though the portable bin was my idea, I wouldn't have gotten it done without the help of my brother-in-law, nephew and hired help," Clark says. "We put in about 80 hrs. to build, paint and assemble it. It even has a special 'Made in Iowa' license plate."

Clark says folks have used the portable binzebo for Halloween and as a stage for small music events. He tows it slowly with his 3/4-ton pickup and says it trails very well. "I maybe could've changed a couple of things on the design, but I'm really happy with the way it turned out and it's finding plenty of use at our place and in town," Clark says.

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Edward Kruse makes burial caskets from repurposed church pews, incorporating decorative hardware and handles along with an area inside the cover for special artwork.



He Builds Caskets From Church Pews

When Saint Joseph Church in Cresco, Iowa, decided to remodel and replace its pews in 2013, parishioner Edward Kruse offered to take 24 of them that hadn't been spoken for. Kruse says he couldn't bear the thought of the pews being banished to a woodpile and used for firewood, as some had suggested. He stored them in his barn and advertised them for sale but didn't have any takers.

"I was thinking about them day and night and finally had a vision about repurposing them into Saint Joseph Church Caskets," Kruse says. "The inspiration may have been a pair of canvas paintings that still hang on a wall over the side door exits at the church.

One painting shows Saint Joseph working with Jesus in his carpenter's shop and Mary is weaving. The other shows Saint Joseph on his death bed, with Jesus and Mary holding his hands. In the Catholic church, Saint Joseph is venerated as "the patron saint of a happy death" because Joseph died in the presence of Jesus and Mary."

His 24 pews contained enough wood for 16 caskets. First, he removed the pads and dismantled the pews, mindful to get rid of staples, tacks and screws, then sawed the pieces into lengths for "casket kits". After removing varnish from the wood, he sanded each piece down to its original red oak grain.

New Trees Created From "Witches' Brooms"

Genetic mutations called "witches' broom" can appear in almost any woody plant. The dense, extra heavily congested growths of shoots that look like a bundle or ball of twigs are a major source of new tree cultivars.

Michigan nurseryman Gary Gee is a "broomer". He has more than 25 trees in his collection, including Gee Wiz bald cypress, Gee Broom Fraser fir, and Gee Broom dwarf Korean pine. Each is a new cultivar created from witches' brooms.

Gee Farms is home to 600 acres of shrubs and trees and an arboretum with thousands of conifers and deciduous trees, perennials, and hard-to-find plants.

"Just because you find a witches' broom and graft it to an understock doesn't mean it's a winner," says Gee. "Not more than 1 out of 10 turn out to be a good, new cultivar."

Gee has started hundreds of prospects over the years, with most ending up on a burn pile. That doesn't stop him from looking for more. Each winter he and fellow broomers head into northern Michigan and its Upper Peninsula to look for more.

Gee concentrates mostly on conifers. "But they can be found on pretty much every type of tree," he says. "It could be a mutant branch tip or the result of a viral disease. If there are more than one in a tree, it is likely a disease. Black spruce is notorious for them."

The ideal witches' broom is younger and smaller, perhaps 10 to 12 in. in diameter, suggests Gee. "You can find some that are 3, 4, even 5 ft. in diameter, but we pass on them," he says. "We've tried them and know they won't turn out. Usually, you can tell by the size, shape and thickness of the witches' broom how the end product will turn out."

"We have clippers on extensions that can reach 80 ft. high," says Gee. "We've even shot them off the branch with a gun."

Once the broom has been collected, Gee seeks out a compatible understock for grafting. Only a 1 or 2-in. piece of the broom is needed.



"Gee Wiz" witches broom found on an upright growing Dawn redwood.

Gee's expertise goes well with being a broomer. He is an internationally recognized grafter, grafting almost 20,000 conifers and deciduous plants each year. Norway spruce work with witches' brooms collected from most types of spruce trees. Two and three-needle brooms go well with two-needle pines and five-needle brooms normally go on white pine.

"Sugar maple is often used as a universal understock for maple brooms," says Gee. "Europeans often use different understocks than we do in the U.S."

Hunting witches' brooms is an international hobby. Gee suggests interested FARM SHOW readers search for witches' broom groups on Facebook. "There are several groups, including ones for conifers, seraligo and a grafting group," says Gee.

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Hoof 'n Heel Treats Foot Rot

You may recognize the name Dr. Naylor from their best-selling Udder Balm cream. Dr. Naylor's Hoof 'n Heel wound ointment is a non-toxic formula that won't cause discoloration, hardening, shrinkage, or brittling of the hoof. It won't stain wool or hair and leaves no residue behind.

Listed as an aid in the treatment of foot rot caused by organisms susceptible to zinc sulfate, Hoof 'n Heel penetrates deep into the hoof so your sheep, goats, cattle, and dairy cows can stay on their feet. It attacks hoof rot, foot rot, frouls, foot scald and can rapidly cure lameness, according to the company. It also treats thrush in horses and is useful in white line disease.

Reviews and testimonials report that Hoof 'n Heel often cures foot scald in sheep and goats in 24 hrs.

Hoof 'n Heel can be purchased online at www.drnaylor.com or at Tractor Supply Stores. A 16 oz. squeeze bottle sells for \$9.99



at Tractor Supply Stores. Made in the U.S.A., Hoof 'n Heel lists active ingredients of Zinc Sulfate and Sodium Lauryl Sulfate.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, H. W. Naylor Co., 14W Main, Morris, N.Y. 13808 (ph 607-263-5145; www.drnaylor.com).

"The 16th and final casket will be my own," Kruse says, "so I have 14 remaining to share with others." His caskets are priced at \$1,600 and he'll deliver at no charge up to 50 miles from Cresco in Northeast Iowa.

Kruse has been promoting his Saint Joseph Caskets with an ad on the back cover of his parish's weekly bulletin and welcomes inquiries by mail.

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