



**John Sarter, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.:** "Squeezeable dish soap bottle tops will fit many one-quart oil bottles and work great for filling small engines and oiling chains."

with a Dremel tool for a snug fit. It also prevents hitting your shin on the greasy ball when you walk by."

**Charles H. Kaneas, Owen Wisc.:** "Shoe Goo rubber cement works better than mother's milk, sliced bread or bottled beer."

**Dennis Zotter, Cabot, Penn.:** "I use one part beeswax and two parts 80/90 gear oil as a homemade gasket sealer."



**John Humeniuk, Baudette, Minn.:** "Keep spare tires in shape with pumped up inner tubes. If new tires have flattened out in storage, the inner tube gets them back in shape, making them easier to mount on rims."

"I also put tubes in tires when I take them off to store. A pumped-up inner tube keeps the mice nests out and doesn't let them fill up with water."

"Keeping tubes pumped up assures me the tube is still good, too. If I buy a new spare tire, I put a new tube in it."

**Tim Reisenauer, Kennewick, Wash.:** "I've found that if I throw the rusty tools in my shop stove for a day and then pull them out before lighting the fire again, my glass bead blaster will do a better job cleaning them up."



**John Rochester, Deerfield Beach, Fla.:** "When using a four-way wheel wrench, it saves a lot of aggravation to mark the size used most often."



"This is a loop of 1/2-in. rope. It's fitted with three different sizes of S hooks. It works much better than pliers for pulling cotter pins and clips."



**Chris Perkins, Southern Ind.:** "When you build equipment and have to look at little blurry schematics online, a mounted big screen TV works great in the shop."

**Tim Brewer, Franklin, Ohio:** "To get rid of groundhogs, pour a heaping pan of well-used cat litter in their tunnel. It's free, and it works." (From *Fur, Fish & Game*)

**Ken Todd, Red Deer County, Alberta:** "On page 89 of your *Great Shop Ideas - Vol IV* book, Tom Cogger talks about having trouble with crimped wire connectors not holding and advises using heat shrink to hold them in place."

"I have been a journeyman electrician for over 50 years and if the terminals (connectors) are not staying in place this tells me that they haven't been properly crimped, usually caused by either not using the proper size crimping tool or terminal. You should be able to hold the wire in one hand and terminal in the other and not be able to pull them apart. Using heat shrink provides a mechanical connection but not a good electrical connection."

**Gaylord Wagner, Tionesta, Penn.:** "If you are unable to grease through a plugged zerk, simply heat the zerk with a propane torch then apply normally with a grease gun."



**Jeff Binion, Newnan, GA:** "I put a 2-in. pvc pipe cap on my truck's trailer ball. The rear camera picks up the cap much better when backing up. Just ream it out a little

## Lift Makes Mower Repair Easy

Gale Wells raises his riding lawn mower instead of lowering himself when repairs are needed. With a little fabrication, he turned his shop winch into a lift with the help of two chains and a ratchet strap.

"At 85 and with both knees replaced, getting down on the floor and up again is a big problem," says Wells.

He solved the problem with a simple solution using his 5,000-lb. fabric winch hanging in his shop rafters. He normally uses the winch to drag equipment into the shop for repair.

"I made a spreader bar from 1 1/4-in. square tubing about the width of the mower and put an eyebolt in the center," explains Wells. "I welded a 1/4-in., 1 1/4 by 3-in. flat bar with a 5/16-in. slot, 1 1/4 in. deep, to each end of the spreader bar."

Wells slipped links of 3-ft. lengths of 1/4-in. chain into the slots and attached hooks on their ends. He also glued rare earth magnets to the hooks, so once attached to the mower, they would stay in place until the chains pulled tight.

With the riding mower in place beneath the winch, Wells attaches the spreader bar, lowers the winch cable and hooks it to the spreader bar. After raising the cable just enough to tension the chains, he loops the ratchet strap under the rear fenders of the riding mower. Slipping the strap hooks around the winch cable, he puts it under tension also.

"When I push the button on the winch control, the mower goes to the rafters," says Wells. "To remove the deck, I roll a small table under the mower. I lower the mower until the deck touches the table, pull the pins on the deck, raise the mower and wheel the



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deck away."

For safety, Wells fabricated two 3-legged jack stands with angle iron top bars. The pipe-in-pipe stands adjust in height from 24 to 36 in., in 1/2-in. increments.

"When I'm working on the mower, I place them under the axles to stabilize it when it's hanging from the cables," says Wells.

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## Tillage Tool Used To Build Storage Loft

A 40-ft. Calkins rod weeder was just what Scott Ravenkamp needed to make a storage loft for his new 40 by 56-ft. shop. The tillage tool was no longer being used.

"It's built with decent iron, and the length was within 12 in. of what I needed," says Ravenkamp.

The biggest challenge Ravenkamp faced was stripping off the excess steel. Many parts were bolted in place. Others, like the wing hinges and the hitch, had to be cut away. Cutting the hinges distorted the steel ends on the wings but made the sections easier to handle. It also leveled the frame.

"I swapped the left and right wings to give me square tubing on the wing ends to butt-weld to the center section," says Ravenkamp. "I unbolted most of the arms that held the weeder bar but left a few for hanging equipment."

Some of the salvaged parts were used to fill in an open space in the center frame. He plans to use more salvaged parts to make a railing for the loft.

Ravenkamp lifted the loft into place and set it on pallet racking legs he got from a neighbor. He attached the loft to the wall for increased stability, but not support, and laid down plywood sheets for flooring.

"I'm in the process of building a mechanical room under the loft," says Ravenkamp. "It'll house pumps and the boiler for the radiant heat system I installed in the shop and house



**Scott Ravenkamp built a shop loft using an old weeder frame with pallet racking used for legs.**



an air compressor. I'm also planning to add a bathroom under the loft. The rooms' wooden walls will help support it."

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