

installed in 2018 and has worked well with only one solenoid needing to be replaced."



**Bob Moty, Crystal Lake, Ill.:** Bob's impressed with the windshield cleaner tool he purchased on Amazon. "Just type 'windshield cleaner tool' into the search box. They sell for \$10 and up and are all basically the same. Most come with three microfiber pads that are machine washable. There's a video on how to use them. You can use them on windows, too. It's the best invention since sliced bread."

**Jim Greene, Bens Run, W.Va.:** "We have five **Kubota** tractors here on the farm, from the small BX model up to a 73 hp. They're all best buys."

"My original best buy is my first car, a **Ford Model T**. I purchased it for \$70 in June 1952, and it's still on the road. Henry Ford made a fine car with his Model T—over 100 years and still ready to 'take us there and bring us back.'"

"Most tools from China fall under the worst buy category for me."

**Roger Berkoski, Cantril, Iowa:** "After mowing three lawns for 25 years and replacing two drive belts on a 52-in. **Snapper** zero-turn mower, I traded for a **Ferris** 800 52-in. cut mower, which gave me a smoother ride. I've been pleased with both."

"Anything made in China and exported to the U.S. is my worst buy. Knives and drill bits don't hold an edge. I could go on, but I won't."

**Grant Geyer, Brookings, S.D.:** Grant is unhappy with his **Swiss Tech** power bank. "I bought the 10,000mAh version and it's a worst buy. The charge time to a full battery is twice that of other brands, which are even larger. The USB-C port doesn't hold the cable, and it keeps sliding out. I only paid about \$15 for it, but it turned out not to be a good deal. If you keep it still, it'll charge another device, but I always use another charger over this one."

**Paul Volk, Battle Creek, Neb.:** "Some time ago, I purchased a pair of **Wilde Tool** 7-in. pliers because I was impressed with the workmanship and the ease of changing from the small to the large jaw setting ([www.wildetool.com](http://www.wildetool.com); ph 785-742-7171). The pliers utilize a flush fastener, which works very well."

"I recently purchased two more pairs of those same pliers, and while one worked perfectly, the other pair failed to cut baling wire. I sent it back to Wilde, and shortly after, I received an email stating that the pliers would be warranted and a new pair would be sent. The new pair arrived just days later, and they work perfectly."

"I realize that there can always be a bad tool, but the speed with which Wilde exchanged the pliers will make me a repeat customer. The quality of the pliers will have me looking at the other tools they sell. Finding someone who stands behind their product like Wilde does is too rare nowadays."

**Joseph E. Bruggeman, Taberg, N.Y.:** "Back in 1969, I had a 1948 **Dodge** 1-ton stake rack truck. I could fetch home all I could load. Back then, Dodge knew how to build a

truck, unlike the junk they're selling today. "In 1972, I got a 1/2-ton **Chevy** 2-WD. Not a bad ride. I drove it until 1977, then swapped it for a new **Ford F-250** 4x4 highboy series. In 1999, I sold it to a young high school boy for \$500. It had 280,000 miles when the box rusted so badly that he had to build a flat rack on it."

"To replace the Ford, I got a 1997 **Mercury Mountaineer** with 172,000 miles for \$2,600 cash. When I took it to the junk yard and they pulled the plates, it had 446,000 miles and still ran like a bear. I got \$575 for it, making it my best buy."

"This past winter, the overall snowfall for the season was 342 in. I had the roof shoveled four times. Many didn't, and now they're rebuilding. When we get a 5-ft. snowfall in one day and then it rains, down they go. This spring, I bought a 2021 **Case IH** 55C 4x4 loader with a full cab, heat, A/C, radio and, best of all, a 6-ft., 2-in. front-mounted snowblower. So, the weatherman can send all he wants."

**John E. Mills, Howell, Mich.:** "Through the years, I've owned several **Deere** planters including a 494, a 494A, a couple of 7000s, a 7200, and currently a 1780 set up for no till. I'm not going to declare the 1780 a best or worst buy."

"On the best side, it does an excellent job of placing seeds in the ground. I've successfully planted in muck and hard clay, and planted green into a cover crop."

"There are four areas, however, where I think the Deere engineers should be flogged: the marker fuse system, the planter meter drive, the transport link system, and the negative tongue load. I'll expand on only one, the negative tongue load."

"If the transport links are in place and the planter is separated from the tractor, the tongue will fly up, and unless care is taken, you'll be wearing your acorns for a beard. Due to the strong minus tongue load, it's almost imperative to use a tractor and hook up the hydraulic to move the planter around."

"Furthermore, the minus tongue load makes this a very unpleasant implement to transport. The jerking and jarring are almost continuous. Any road input that the planter encounters is transmitted to the tow tractor and operator. And, with no tongue load, the planter kind of has a mind of its own for where it wants to go. It doesn't track well behind the tow tractor."

"I've implemented my personal hillbilly fixes for the minus tongue load and the transport links, the marker system and meter drives are a work in process."



**Bern Smith, Madison, Fla.:** "A best buy was a **Craftsman** compact hammer drill and set of battery power tools purchased 30 years ago at Sears. They've been well used in demo and construction. If the old dry yellow pine lumber is too hard for the 12-volt, the 19-volt big brother has plenty of power to twist your wrist or a screw off."

**Jack Griffith, Venus, Texas:** Jack is disappointed with his **Lizard Strap**. "It's a good idea, but not very well implemented. It has two sections, held together with four screws. A better design would be a deep

## Blacksmith Forge Best Buy

**John Humeniuk, Baudette, Minn.:** "My **Mr. Volcano** forge was a really good deal. It only cost about \$100, but it works great for heating metal for bending, hammering or working in some way."

"It was easy to put together and came with all the components needed. It included a forge kit with a 1-in high-density superwool fiber blanket, refractory mortar with rigidizer concentrate, a fire brick, a 6-ft. propane hose with regulator, instructions, and an operating manual."

"It can heat up to 2,600 F. The 9 1/2 by 8 3/4 by 8 3/4-in. shell is stainless steel. It has an adjustable choke to control airflow and a single burner."

"If I need to work with a longer piece of metal, I just remove the back, and I can work through it. The great thing is that it's so portable. I can pick it up and set it down wherever. All I need is a propane source."

"I ordered it from Amazon, but unfortunately, it's no longer available. However, there are a lot of other similar options out there."



## Best Buy Becomes Worst Buy

**Wendy Wellnitz, La Crescent, Minn.:** "My best buy (Vol. 47, No. 4) of a Makita single-wheel, battery-powered wheelbarrow quickly turned into a worst buy when the tire slipped off the rim. One minute I was moving a heavy load of gravel, and the next I was looking at a collapsed tire."

"Luckily, I had picked it up used for \$200. New ones are listed online for \$899 up to nearly \$1,500 with two 5Ah batteries and a charger. More common is a \$1,400 or higher price tag."

"It was really handy for moving gravel and other heavy material. However, it was anything but handy when it came to getting the inner tube back in place and resetting the bead."

"I checked the Makita website, and unlike many companies, they provided no access to manuals or ways to get help."

"The motor is in the wheel rim, and there

is no way that we could see to disconnect the power cable to the motor. We completely disassembled the machine, and a connection was nowhere to be found."

"Frustrated, we just scrapped it. Later, when talking with a tire repairman at our local farm co-op station, we mentioned the problem. He agreed that they were difficult to work with. He said he had changed tires on them in the past, but it wasn't easy."

"We were told it can be equally difficult getting the drive wheel off of an electric bike."

"This was a learning experience for us. We now know to check on the potential maintenance needs of a battery-powered tool before buying. It's also a good idea to at least get a buyer's manual, if not a service manual, before buying. Finally, we learned to check with our co-op mechanics before trashing anything."

section, the same height as the web, instead of equal-height sections, half the width of the web or strap. Then, the lid could just be clipped or screwed on by hand. Actually, it might not even need a lid. There would be no need for a Phillips screwdriver. That would be a lot quicker and more convenient than keeping up with four screws."

**Harry Tavori, Sebring, Fla.:** "I highly recommend my **Mossberg** 590 12-gauge shotgun ([www.mossberg.com](http://www.mossberg.com)). It's great for hunting and protection. I've put hundreds of shells through it with no jams or problems of any kind."

"On the worst buy side is **And1** brand sneakers from Walmart. I bought several pairs for my family, and in six months, the soles came apart from the sneakers. They must either be making shoddy products or using cheap glue."

**F.W. Lehman, Pembroke, Ontario:** "After over 50 years of being in farming and business with all kinds of equipment and dealing with many companies, we've never had anything even close to the terrible attitude and world's worst service that we've had dealing with a Deutz M600 tractor."

"There's a problem with an electrical code. This issue has been ongoing for over a year. The dealer states they can't fix this tractor, and the national distributor backs the dealer. After all of this, the dealer has the guts to send a bill for more than the tractor would sell for."

"I might add that the tractor is still under warranty according to hours used, but isn't covered as the warranty period has expired."

**Mike Jacobson, Jacobson Farms, Spring Valley, Wis.:** "As I've gotten older, and hopefully wiser, my mantra is now 'buy once, cry once.' My arsenal of **Milwaukee** M18 and M12 battery-operated power tools, my **Stihl** gas-powered equipment (chainsaws, blowers and trimmers) and **Gearwrench** hand tools have all proven their worth and investment ([www.gearwrench.com](http://www.gearwrench.com))."

**Joe Elrod, Manhattan, Mont.:** "As a parent of several teens with a whole fleet of cars and ATVs, I've saved a tremendous amount of money by purchasing a **Harbor Freight** tire changer (SKU 58731). I use it to demount and mount new tires for all these various vehicles as they need replacing. Granted, it's built of low-grade steel, and some points and parts have required repairs and modifications over time. I also use glass balance beads internally in the automotive tires, which are economical and work well instead of having to balance with external weights."

**Lawrence Hogg, Huxley, Alberta:** "FARM SHOW Magazine is a great product. In each edition, there's something of interest for me to read and follow up on. The paper is also a great Christmas gift that I give to my sons and brother, who also get

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