

## Wood-Packing Machine Adds Profit To Firewood

Have you seen those small packages of wood stacked up outside of local convenience stores? Well here's a machine that can make those small bundles, which are geared for homeowners and campers who don't need or want a full cord of wood.

The Wood-PAKer from B&B Manufacturing, Olean, New York, shrink-wraps split wood up to 18 in. long into packages as big as 2 cu. ft. It'll also wrap up kindling, sticks, or even slab wood, which might otherwise go to waste.

The machine uses thermostatically-controlled LP gas ovens to shrink plastic around bundles of wood moving through on an elec-

tric-powered conveyor chain.

B&B says packaging wood in small packs for sale at convenience stores, campgrounds, grocery stores, etc., can double or triple profits from a cord of wood. For example, if you package wood in bundles of about .75 cu. ft., a cord of wood (128 cu. ft.) will make about 170 bundles. If you sell each bundle for \$2, the gross price for a cord becomes \$340.

B&B makes seven different models of Wood-PAKer's from the Model G100, which requires two workers to turn out about 100 packages of wood an hour, up to the Model G700, which can package up to 700 bundles of wood an hour with eight workers. Prices



Wood-PAKer shrink-wraps split wood up to 18 in. long into packages as big as 2 cu. ft.

range from \$8,500 to \$23,000. An optional wheel kit, which sells for \$680, makes the machine mobile.

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Robert Ellis converted a 1985 IH 2-ton moving van into this dually pickup that's equipped with a fifth wheel hitch on back. "I saved a lot of money compared to buying a new 1-ton pickup," he says.

## "Super Pickup" Built From 2-Ton Van

Robert Ellis, High Hill, Mo., needed a 1-ton pickup to pull his 28 1/2-ft. fifth wheel camper and 23 1/2-ft. trailer. He couldn't justify the cost of a new truck so he bought a used 1985 International Harvester S1900 2-ton moving van and converted it into a dually pickup equipped with a fifth wheel hitch on back.

"I call it my 'Super Pickup'," says Ellis. "My total expense was about \$10,000. A new 1-ton pickup sells for \$35,000 to \$40,000. And because it's an older truck I don't pay as much in taxes and insurance as I would for a new pickup."

Ellis bought the truck used for \$4,000. It came with a 200 hp diesel engine, dual wheels, and a 23 1/2-ft. long moving van body. He removed the body and cut the frame down to pickup length. He used diamond plate steel to build a 10-ft. bed and mounted an RV fifth wheel hitch in it. The bed is equipped with wooden side racks and a big toolbox on front. He mounted a 12-volt air compressor on the engine firewall and installed air bags under the chassis. He kept the original wheel rims but replaced the original 11.00 by 25 tires with smaller 23.5 by 22.5 ones. The smaller tires cause the truck to ride as low as possible to the ground, which makes it easier for the driver to get in and out of the cab. Because of the smaller tires, he had to speed up the rear end. He replaced the original 4:56 to 1 rear end with one that has a 3:70 to 1 ratio.

A 125-gal. fuel tank and another smaller toolbox mount under the back part of the cab.

He used the van body off the truck to make a car-hauling trailer. He built a new frame for the body and installed a set of new tandem axles under it, then added a fifth wheel hitch on front.

"I get a lot of compliments on the truck," says Ellis, who made the conversion two years ago. "My wife and I use it to pull our fifth wheel camper to Texas during the winter. Anyone with some mechanical and welding ability could do it. These trucks are widely available and can be bought cheap.

"I got the idea because the 3/4-ton pickup I was using to pull the camper had to work too hard. My 'Super Pickup' pulls a lot easier and isn't overloaded at all. It isn't as fuel efficient as a 1-ton pickup and it doesn't ride quite as good, but it'll last a lot longer because it's built much heavier. It's the same length as a standard cab 1-ton pickup, but it has a longer wheelbase since the rear axle is right at the back end of the bed. As a result, if we're in Texas for the winter we can park the camper and run around in the truck just like we would with a pickup. The truck cruises on the highway at 70 or 75 mph. It gets about 10 mph whether it's empty or pulling a trailer."

Ellis carries the camper's generator inside the toolbox. The fuel tank and another toolbox mount under the bed.

He says that he would've preferred to use a Ford Louisville 2-ton truck because it has a more comfortable cab than the one on the IH truck. "I didn't go with the Ford because it has an underpowered V-8 gas engine. The IH DT466 is a great engine, and I wanted to install it in the Ford. However, IH doesn't sell this engine separately so if you want it you have to buy their truck. One advantage of the IH cab over the Ford one is that the driver sits higher and has a better view of the road."

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To build scraper, Schnack started with a bulldozer blade off a D-6 Caterpillar.

## Heavy Duty "Made-It-Myself" Box Scraper

"It's built much heavier than any scraper on the market and is virtually indestructible," says Kenny Schnack, Gretna, Neb., about his home-built box scraper.

Schnack started with a bulldozer blade off a D-6 Caterpillar, which he purchased as salvage for \$200. He constructed a heavy tongue assembly out of a 6-in. I-beam and 4-in. heavy wall sq. tubing. He then added 1/2-in. thick steel panels on both sides.

"We've used it for almost four years with no problems. It has surpassed all our expectations," says Schnack. "We use a Deere 4-WD tractor to pull it. Because of the bull-

dozer blade's weight and sharp cutting edge it really goes into the ground well, even in hard ground.

"Our total cost was less than \$500 plus one week of labor. We purchased the steel for the side panels at a used steel outlet for \$60. All the square tubing was purchased for a total of \$100. The wheels and hydraulic cylinder were salvaged from an old construction-style disk at no cost. Our only other cost was \$80 for new hydraulic hoses."

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"The blade really cuts well, even in hard ground," says Schnack.

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