



At first Tim Brown tried using a three-wheel pedal cart to pick strawberries, but found it difficult to steer. So he made an electric-powered four-wheel cart that he can steer by simply flipping a toggle switch to go forward or back.



To steer the rig, Brown took the steering mechanism off an old garden tractor and adapted it to fit the front of the frame.

## Sit-Down Cart Makes Strawberry Pick'n Easy

Picking strawberries is a lot easier for Tim Brown since he built his electric-powered, sit-down picking cart.

"It's better than bending," says Brown, who knows a lot about bending. With his wife Marcia, he produced 10,000 quarts of strawberries on their berry farm in 2004. They also sold 2,500 pints of black raspberries, 500 pints of red raspberries and 3,000 pints of blueberries.

Brown had once tried a three-wheel pedal cart, but found it difficult to steer. With his new cart, all he has to do is flip a toggle switch to go forward or back or leave it in the middle to stop.

The cart consists of a 4 by 6-ft. frame, a 12-volt gear reduction motor, and the battery

it runs off. The frame is made from 3 by 3-in. steel tubing. At the front and rear, two uprights about 3 ft. high are connected at the top by a cross beam with wheels mounted on the other ends. Two 6-ft. side rails connect the front and rear ends. One side rail mounts at about the 2-ft. height, while the other is only 12 in. above the ground and hosts the operator seat. An expanded metal rack for setting filled containers is mounted just ahead of the operator. It is attached to the front posts and rests on a leg attached to the left side rail.

The motor and battery are attached to the rear cross rail. A roller chain connects the motor to a sprocket on the drive shaft. The

drive shaft extends through bearings on the two rear uprights and is capped with sprockets at each end. Initially, roller chains from these sprockets drove sprockets on the rear wheel spindles mounted between the wheels and the uprights.

"Without a differential, a chain would jump off the outside sprocket every time I turned," says Brown. "I found that powering just the wheel behind my seat was enough."

To steer the rig, Brown recycled an old garden tractor's tie rod and steering gear mechanism, including the front wheels, and adapted it to fit the front end of the frame. The tie rods extend the width of the cart.

Vertical rods attach to the front wheel

spindles through braces welded to the base of the front uprights and again through a plate at their top. A short arm connects the vertical rods to the tie rods. To steer the tractor, Brown simply moves a steering lever, connected to the arm on the operator's side of the frame, to the right or left.

For protection from rain and sun, Brown mounted 1 by 2-in. wood extensions on the four upright wheel posts. Two 6-ft. 2 by 4s mounted to the wood uprights provide a base to stretch a plastic sheet for a canopy.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tim Brown, Brownvalley Farms, 295 Hickory Rd., Littlestown, Penn. 17340 (ph 717 359-5084; brownvalley@supernet.com).

## Strawberry Huller

If you hate using knives to hull strawberries, you might want to look at the huller invented by E. J. Meyer, St. Louis, Mo.

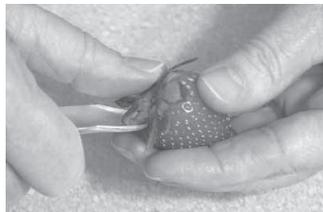
He fashioned his tool after the one that his late mother, Mary, used to clean berries years ago.

The Easy Berry Cleaner is a strip of aluminum that's about 1 in. wide and curved at end to easily scoop out strawberry tops. Meyer hand-makes each one in his basement workshop.

He says it works better than other hullers because it cuts out less fruit. "I had one woman who used it say that strawberry cleaning went so fast and easy she didn't want to quit," he says.

The huller also slices berries and can be used to clean seeds out of peppers and remove eyes from potatoes. "One person even used it to remove clams from their shells," Meyer says.

A 6-in. strawberry huller sells for \$3.90. Meyer also sells an 8-in. berry huller and



Easy Berry Cleaner is a strip of aluminum that's about 1 in. wide and curved at the end to scoop out strawberry tops.

cherry pitter combo for \$5.90 and a strawberry recipe book and cleaner combo sells for \$5.95.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, E.J. Meyer, LLC, P.O. Box 515056, St. Louis, Mo. 63151 (ph 636 296-7252; fax 636 287-2203; easyberrycleaner@aaahawk.com; www.theeasyberrycleaner.com).

## Hitch "Helper" Makes Hookups Easy

"It's the one-person, easy as A-B-C hitch-locating device," says Jack Julicher, about the Easy Hitch, a device he invented that lets one person easily hitch up trailers.

All you do is attach one rod to the trailer hitch and the other to the ball hitch. Then, back up your vehicle, watching the tops of both rods in your rearview mirror. When the ball and hitch meet each other, the rod on the ball falls over and you can secure your trailer. Both rods have flashing lights on top (batteries included) so they can be used at night.

Sells for \$19.99 (Can.) or \$16.95 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jacko Enterprises, 43 Clayton Cr., Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada L1C 4P3 (ph 905 644-2636; julicher@simpatico.ca; www.easyhitch.net) or in the US: Davidson Products, 23325 Van Born Rd., Building B106, Taylor, Mich. 48180 (ph 888 735-4295 or 313 383-5945; fax 313 388-8447; www.DavidsonProducts.com).



Simple magnetic hitch guides stick to ball hitch and trailer tongue.

## "Mini" Manure Spreader For ATVs, Garden Tractors

If you've got a small farm and need a manure spreader, you'll be interested in the Loyal Compact Spreader.

The galvanized steel spreader weighs 385 lbs. and is 95 in. long and 46 1/2 in. wide so it fits through horse barn doors.

Any 10 hp garden tractor or ATV can pull this ground-driven unit.

"Unlike other small manure spreaders on the market, you don't have to get off the machine to engage this spreader because the lever is right behind the seat," says Tom Roth, owner of Roth Manufacturing.

The apron chain is ratchet-driven by one wheel and the beater is chain-driven by the other wheel.

Bear-claw beaters shred and spread everything including straw, hay, shavings, grass clippings or compost.

Comes fully assembled.

Sells for \$1,725.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roth Mfg. Co., Inc., P.O. Box 40, Loyal, Wis. 54446 (ph 800 472-2341; fax 800 677-2341; info@loyal-roth.com; www.loyal-roth.com).



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