



Rusty Ashby's log splitter can also be used to make compressed logs from leaves, grass, aluminum cans or just about anything that can be compressed.

## Log Splitter Also Makes Logs Out Of Leaves

Rusty Ashby sells a unique log splitter that splits logs but then can also be used to make compressed logs from leaves, grass, aluminum cans or just about anything that can be compressed. Almost any kind of biomass, including pine straw, pine needles, shredded pinecones and leaves, can be turned into logs that will burn hot for up to 3 hrs. The double-duty splitter transforms from one use to the other in about 5 min.

"It's a 22-ton splitter, and I've split sections of logs with a 24-in. diameter," says Ashby. "I can turn around and make 6-in. diameter, 22-in. long logs out of leaves, pine needles or aluminum cans."

Ashby's splitter converts to a compressor with the addition of a hopper and compression chamber. The two-part steel chamber has a 6 1/4-in. outside diameter. The hydraulic ram

has a 6-in. outside diameter, 12-in. long head that gathers leaves, cans or other material from the bottom of the hopper. Ashby uses a steel tamper to move materials through the 6 by 12-in. hopper mouth and into the chamber. He then activates the ram for the next compression.

"Yard waste and other biomass can be compacted into a log in about 8 min.," says Ashby. "I can compress 200 aluminum cans into a 6-in. diameter, 12-in. long log in about 25 min."

When used in compression mode, the top half of the chamber is locked down with quick release grips. Repeated compressions fill the chamber with materials that are then removed by loosening the chamber top and flipping it out of the way.

"The drier the leaves, the more that can be



Splitter converts to a compressor with the addition of a hopper and compression chamber.



Photo at left shows wrapped leaf logs. Splitter can also be used to compress aluminum cans.



compressed into a single log," he says. "A log can weigh from 8 to 11 lbs. I wrap them in craft paper that comes in 24-in. wide by 9,000-ft. rolls. Each log costs about 3¢ in fuel and 3¢ in paper to make."

Oak leaves mixed with pine needles work great due to the natural oils," says Ashby. "I made one of sawdust, and it burned well, too. I'd like to try corncobs and peanut shells."

To convert the log maker into a log splitter, the hopper and the top half of the compression chamber are simply removed. The compression stop is replaced with the splitter head.

Currently Ashby sells the modified splitters for \$3,255, shipping not included. He is hoping a manufacturer will pick up his invention and make them more readily available.

"I drive through my neighborhood and see bags and bags of leaves waiting to go to the landfill," says Ashby. "What a waste. I burn my leaf logs with wood, and it cuts my wood use by about two thirds."

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## Deere MFWD Tractor Gets "Rewheeled"

Chad Travis, Drasco, Ark., came up with a couple of modifications to the wheels on his Deere 5300 MFWD loader tractor that add traction and reduce the likelihood of a flat tire.

"I use this tractor to do a lot of bush hog work, and also loader chores. The modifications that I made let me keep working without a lot of downtime," says Travis.

### Wheel weights

He used the flywheels off a pair of Deere 24T small square balers to make wheel weights that fit the 30-in. rear wheels on the tractor. Each flywheel is 27 in. in dia. so they fit just inside the wheel. The round weight mounted inside the flywheel is made from 1-in. thick plate steel, which Travis cut out in a circle. It weighs 105 lbs.

An X-shaped mount bolts to the wheel rim and is made from 1/2 by 2-in. flat bar. The threaded shaft at the center of the mount is the axle off an old Case disk. "I used the outer end of the axle since it already had threaded ends on it and a nut," says Travis.

The hardest part of the job was cutting a notch out of each flywheel to make room for the wheel's valve stem. "Years ago I welded short lengths of pipe on all the wheels to prevent damage to the valve stems while working in brush. So I had to cut a notch out of each flywheel to make room for the pipe."

Each wheel weight weighs about 410 lbs. so the tractor gained 820 lbs. of additional weight. "It was enough to make a big difference on the tractor, and I'm satisfied with the results," says Travis. "The weight is

flush with the outside of the wheel and isn't a problem."

### Truck wheels

He replaced the front assist wheels on the tractor with truck wheels and tubeless tires, using 10-22.5 retread tires mounted on open center wheels. The truck tires are 14 or 16-ply with steel sidewalls and tread, and are made to be recapped.

"I've had many issues with tube failure and flats on this tractor, which was one reason I decided to go with the tubeless tires. The retread truck tires are also less expensive than buying new tractor tires," says Travis.

He made an adapter plate from 5/16-in. thick plates, with four ear mounts for the truck wheel on it. The ears are made from 1/2 by 2-in. flat metal. He welded short lengths of angle to the inside of the wheel rim which the ears bolt onto. "I can bolt the wheels on the tractor's original wheel hubs using the original bolts. If I want I can take the truck wheels off and put the tractor wheels back on," says Travis.

After he got everything mounted, he pumped 5 gal. of tire sealer into the tires to prevent flat tires.

"The truck wheels have worked out quite well. Their traction isn't quite as good in heavy mud, but it hasn't been a problem. If I want, I can mount snow chains over the truck tires for more gripping power."

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