

Giant Roaster Cooks 6 Hogs At A Time

Bob Prom started roasting hogs back in 1981. Over the years the St. Joseph, Minn., man has built 14 hog roasters and has catered as many as 3 parties in one day, with the help of friends and family.

He recently outdid himself by building a barbecue tandem axle trailer fitted with six 5-ft. long cookers on it. Two 100-lb. propane cylinders mount on back of the trailer. He uses his Chevy 3500 1-ton pickup to pull the trailer.

"I've served up to 5,000 people at a single event," says Prom. "I've catered company picnics, weddings and college toga parties. I even provided food for a divorce party, five years after I catered the couple's wedding.

"I usually start cooking the pigs at home and keep them cooking on the road. Most of the food preparation takes place right at the party site. I've used as many as 10 roasters at one location. I roast whole hogs and grill steaks and chops as well as burgers, brats,

hot dogs, beans, and potatoes. I can turn out about 2,000 brats an hour on my 6-place roaster. I built enough corn boilers that I can boil 200 dozen cobs of sweet corn an hour.

"I studied metal working in vocational school and build all my own equipment, including an 8-ft. long char broiler, portable deep fryers, kettle corn poppers and coolers on wheels."

At first he used old fuel oil barrels to build the roasters, but in recent years he has been using new barrels. All pigs are roasted on stainless steel removable trays. The roasters are designed so that air moves inside like a convection oven, which results in more even cooking. A drip tray covers the burners to prevent flare ups.

"The roaster lids are heavy, but I don't use counterweights to help raise the lids and hold them in place because I don't want people looking in and possibly getting hurt," says Prom. A temperature gauge and a smoke stack are located just above each lid's handle. "I can



Bob Prom can cook 6 hogs at a time using this home-built barbecue tandem axle trailer, which is fitted with six 5-ft. long roasters.

adjust the temperature on the roaster and also adjust the damper to control the temperature of the roasting chamber," notes Prom.

His tip for backyard chefs: "Don't be in a hurry and enjoy the moment. Cook slow and

serve no swine before its time."

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Machine Cleans "Silk" Off Sweet Corn

The Cornsilker is a machine anyone who processes a large amount of sweet corn can appreciate. Feed a husked ear in the front, and a completely silk-free ear of corn comes out the back. It'll clean as many as 18 ears per minute.

Ernest Schwarz, a manager at Dutch Country Hardware in Myerstown, Penn., markets the Cornsilker for the Mennonite family that invented and manufactures it.

"The magic is in the long brushes," Schwarz says. "They are stiff enough to grab the silk, yet soft enough not to damage the kernels – no matter the diameter of the ear. The selection of the correct brushes took much trial and testing."

To operate, plug in the Cornsilker and connect a hose on the top with cold running water. Husk the corn, snap the tail off and feed the ears point first into the Cornsilker.

The four brushes spin and pull the ear through the machine. To clean the Cornsilker, let the water run 5 to 10 min. after the last ear has gone through with the brushes running.

There is nothing quite like it, Schwarz says, and it's a very popular rental machine at the hardware store where he works. Over the 5 years the Cornsilker has been rented, the only maintenance the machines have needed is tightening the belt from the 1/3-hp motor to the first drive – just a couple of times.

Cornsilkers have been shipped all over the U.S. and Canada to farmers with produce stands, privately owned grocery stores, rental businesses and families that share the machine to process corn from their gardens.

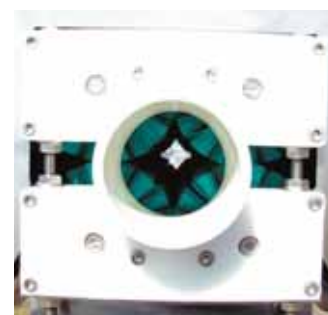
In 2012, the 74-lb., stainless steel Cornsilker cost \$671.99 (plus \$80 shipping in the lower 48 states). The Mennonite manufacturers only make a limited number of Cornsilkers



Cornsilker uses long, spinning brushes to clean "silk" off sweet corn. It can clean as many as 18 ears per minute.

during December and January, based on orders. So anyone interested in one, should contact Schwarz through the Cornsilker website soon. He adds that people who don't use electricity can special order an air motor to power the Cornsilker.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ernest Schwarz, Cornsilker, Dutch Country Hardware, 711 E. Lincoln Ave., Myerstown, Penn. 17067 (ph 717 866-8882; www.cornsilker.com).



Onyx black sorghum has high levels of antioxidants known for their health benefits.

New "Health Food" Black Sorghum

Texas AgriLife researchers have developed a new black sorghum called Onyx designed for the health food market. The unique sorghum's color is due to high levels of anthocyanin in the outer layer, antioxidants known for their health benefits.

"We expect it will be a controlled market," says Dr. Bill Rooney, the Texas AgriLife researcher who developed the new sorghum. "The only reason to produce it is for food or health food use. It yields only 60 to 70 percent of commercial grain sorghums. A buyer has to pay a premium for it."

Rooney says Onyx can be grown wherever grain sorghum can be grown. It

has done fine as far north as Kansas.

Onyx will be grown under contract and licensed to those who want to grow it for its end use. Rooney says some seed will be grown by Texas A&M with the remainder grown under contract by seed growers.

"Farmers or end users who want to produce it need to contact the Texas A&M University Office of Technology Commercialization," says Rooney.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Texas A&M University, Office of Technology Commercialization, 800 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy., Suite 2020, College Station, Texas 77845 (ph 979 847-8682; info@otc.tamu.edu; http://otc.tamu.edu/).

A Small Favor Turns Into A Successful Business

"Ten years ago one of my Amish neighbors asked me to help him sell some of his hand-crafted cedar chests," says Rick Hansen. "We started a website and over the years the business has steadily grown. We're now selling to customers throughout the U.S. and Canada." Hansen's business, called Harmony Cedar, offers a wide range of furniture that's custom-made by Amish craftsmen near his farm near Harmony, Minn.

"What started out as a small favor has turned into a great business producing good income for several of my neighbors," Hansen says. One of his original chestmakers now has two sons who are building furniture for Harmony Cedar.

Initially the neighbor was making cedar chests in a style that wasn't very popular. To respond to customer requests Hansen suggested adding a shaker design, a Lloyd Wright-inspired design and a true mission version. Those proved popular and the local craftsmen have since produced hundreds of them.

Harmony Cedar now offers many designs and sizes of custom-made chests, dining room tables and chairs, hutches, sideboards, bedroom furniture, game tables and television stands. Buyers can have their furniture made from oak, cherry, maple, hickory or walnut. "The craftsmanship of our products

is really the key to our success," says Hansen. "Everything is custom made from solid hardwood. We don't use cheap particleboard with veneer, and the people producing it are skilled woodworkers who take extreme care in what they make."

Harmony Cedar's furniture is made from hardwoods that are selectively harvested from forests and farmlands in southeast Minnesota. Hansen has planted more than 5,000 hardwood and pine trees on his own farm that will eventually produce wood for Harmony Cedar products.

The company is also creating jobs for families in a rural area that has sometimes struggled with widely fluctuating farm prices. "Amish farmers are making money by building furniture but we're also providing income for people who cut the trees, who operate the sawmills and for small delivery companies," Hansen says.

"The business has primarily grown through word of mouth," Hansen says. "We have excellent testimonials, and using our website puts us in front of people who want handcrafted, American-made furniture they can pass down through generations."

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