



Ken Dobson used scrap metal and axles from an old motorhome to make a dolly system for moving metal shipping containers.

Dolly Hitch Made To Move Empty Shipping Containers

"I sell and deliver empty shipping containers and needed a way to move them," says Arizona retailer and handyman Ken Dobson. "My dolly and wheel system works real well for moving them short distances."

He took a pair of wheels from a mobile home and mounted them on frames made from odds and ends of steel plate, angle iron and tubing. The frames slide into one of the fork openings when the container is jacked up on one side. Two locking pins hold it in place, and the same is done on the opposite side.

Dobson says the wheels are easy to install using a high-lift jack. "A 20-ft. container weighs about 5,000 lbs., so I jack and block up one side with a 3-ton barn jack, then slide the wheel in place. I do the same on the opposite side and the weight of the container is distributed over the 5,000 to 6,000-lb. capacity dolly inserts."

To move a container once the wheels are on Dobson devised a 4-piece hitch that slides, pins and locks into the container's lower front corner casting holes. That metal frame includes a tongue with a loop that slips over the ball hitch of his 3/4-ton pickup.

"The container rides about 10 in. off the ground on the dolly wheels," Dobson says. "It's easy to move on level ground as long as I'm just idling along. Most of the moves



He says the wheels are easy to install using a high-lift jack.

are just short distances on people's property. The longest move I've done is about a half mile," says Dobson.

His dolly hitch system breaks down into 6 pieces that he can put into the back of his pickup and transport anywhere a container needs to be moved.

Dobson says containers vary in price depending on availability. In early 2014 the 20-ft. units were selling for about \$2,650 and larger 40-ft. units were about \$3,500. "Prices change often because they're like commodities, fluctuating with supply and demand."

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Low-Tech Way To Start Trees Fast

The tree T-PEE waterer keeps water from seeping outside the root zone of young trees, so you can grow trees almost anywhere with minimal labor, says the manufacturer, GSI Supply, Inc., of Arcadia, Fla.

The cone measures 24 in. in dia. at the base and 14 in. high, with an 8-in. opening at the top for the tree's trunk. A water hose runs through holes at the base of the unit to a microjet nozzle inside each T-PEE.

The cone is split on one side, with buttons that fit into pre-drilled holes, so that after 3 or 4 years of use you can pull the cone off the tree and put it on another tree.

"It creates a mini greenhouse atmosphere that holds in the moisture and directs it to where it's needed – the roots of the tree," says David Hoppel. "It also reduces water, fuel and fertilizer use by up to 90 percent. The cone prevents wind diffusion and ensures very little loss of water. It results in deeper root growth and up to a 30 percent increase in the growth of young trees."

"It also offers frost protection to young trees in colder seasons. The mist from the nozzle rising out of the top engulfs the tree's canopy."

The tree T-PEE retails for \$5.95 plus S&H.



Water hose runs through holes at base of cone to a microjet nozzle mounted inside the tree T-PEE.

It was recently featured on TV's Shark Tank and earned a \$150,000 investment from one of the show's billionaires.

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State-Of-The-Art Planter Disc Scrapers

"Our new scrapers bolt right onto the axle of the opening discs on any planter and offer a lot of advantages over standard frame-mounted scrapers," says Eric Hesla, Pro Mags LLC, Wakonda, S. Dak.

The universal scrapers are designed to replace the original frame-mounted scrapers on any planter. Using a wrench, you can adjust the mounting arm tension and set the blade to make contact anywhere along the opening disc.

"The scraper's design forces mud and stubble away from the opening disc and the internal side of the planter's gauge wheels, preventing the soil buildup that you get with standard frame-mounted scrapers," says Hesla. "The design prevents soil and trash from plugging up between the opening discs."

"The scrapers can be used on any planter with or without our Pro Mag gauge wheels. They're compatible with the new 15 and 16-in. double roller bearing disc opener designs found on newer planters."

The scrapers sell for \$39.99 apiece plus S&H. "The mounting body is a one-time purchase, and there is only the scraper blade



Universal scraper bolts onto the axle of any planter's opening disc.

to replace over time as it wears," says Hesla. "We currently offer models for both single bearing and double bearing openers. We'll add additional scraper blades as time goes on, so farmers will be able to select the wear factor they choose."

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Treated Corn Stover Can Be A Valuable Feed Source

Cattlemen who are looking for a way to make corn stover and other residue into a nutritious and palatable roughage source for livestock have a new option. It's called Second Crop™, a patent-pending treatment process from ADM that transforms corn stover into a valuable feed source.

The Second Crop process is simple. ADM field personnel mix lime slurry (calcium hydroxide) with corn stover as it's being ground in a commercial tub grinder. All the farmer needs to do is supply enough water to bring the moisture content of his stover up to about 50 percent during grinding.

ADM's John Klein supervised the trial program in 2013 and says cattlemen who used the system liked the feed product that it turned out.

"Treated ground stover from the tub grinder is packed into a bunker, silo or in a silage bag and is stored for a minimum of 7 to 10 days to cure, similar to corn silage," Klein says. When it's ready for feeding the stover can be mixed with distillers grain, gluten or other feedstocks to create a suitable ration for backgrounding cattle or brood cows or for finishing cattle.

Klein says that removing some of the residue from a harvested corn field is actually beneficial for planting the following year. "Too much residue can harbor diseases and insects and affect planting, especially with corn-on-corn rotations." Research by Monsanto has shown that 30 to 40 percent of the residue can be removed without affecting soil nutrients.

Other Monsanto research has been done to improve the feed value of residue for beef cattle. The company has increased digestibility by adding 7 percent dry calcium hydroxide by dry weight, 50 percent moisture by weight and then storing the feed in ag bags or bunkers for 5 to 7 days before feeding. Steve Peterson of Monsanto says this formula can be up to 50 percent more digestible than

untreated corn stover.

One of the keys to producing quality feed with either approach is to start with clean residue. Chopped stalks that are then raked into windrows tend to pick up dirt, which isn't palatable to cattle. New Holland is using a new cornhead attachment called the Cornrower that windrows chopped stalks behind the corn head and in between the combine drive wheels. Small doors on the cornrower can be opened or closed to regulate how much residue is left in a windrow (Vol. 36, No. 2).

New Holland's Jim Moellenberndt says the cornrower reduces the chances of dirt getting into the residue while creating a fluffy windrow that's easy to bale or collect with a chopper.

ADM research shows that cattle will readily eat properly stored and treated residue. Their rate of gain on stover and corn co-products such as distillers grains is essentially the same as cattle that are fed corn or hay. Treated corn stover can replace up to 20 percent of the corn in a finishing ration, and some studies have shown that as much as 80 percent can be replaced depending on other ingredients used in the ration. The company continues to research the process, looking for improvements.

ADM's Klein says the reason the treated residue works is that the lime slurry breaks the fiber-lignin bonds in the residue and makes the carbohydrates available for digestion. The treated residue can be stored for several months before feeding as long as it's kept in an oxygen-free environment.

ADM's pilot program is operating in parts of 10 Midwestern states for 2014. Other mobile units are planned for the future.

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