

Handy Shop Modifications

Dale McLaen has three ideas that make shop work easier.

"The open-top, 30-gal. drums we use for garbage cans get pretty heavy when full," says McLaen. "It was always difficult to keep them on the hand truck and maneuver around obstacles or over rough ground."

McLaen resolved the problem by adding a simple double-finger swinging hook to his hand truck. Attached at a height to grab the lip of the drum, it hangs out of the way when not in use.



"The hook is made from a 9-in. piece of 5/16-in. rod and a 1-in. piece of pipe with a matching center hole," explains McLaen. "It took about 30 min. to build and paint. It makes moving the heavy garbage containers a breeze."

The height support device is another neat shop helper. It lets McLaen fine-tune the height of material he is working on with a sliding pipe leg and a top-mounted automotive scissors jack. The overall height can be adjusted a total of 28 in.

The 2-part vertical leg is a 2 3/8-in. O.D. pipe butt welded to a steel plate that is in turn welded to a 15-in. car rim base. A slightly smaller upper leg pipe slides inside the larger pipe. The scissors jack base is welded to the top of the inner pipe.

"I welded a 14-in. long, 1 1/2-in. pipe to the top of the jack to support the material," says McLaen. "A bolt through the pipe secures tabs at either end of the pipe to help hold material in place."



McLaen drilled 2 holes in the lower pipe and welded nuts to the whole surface. D-handle set screws fabricated from scrap bolts lock the inner pipe in place after it's adjusted.

"The inside pipe gives me about 14-in. additional height," says McLaen. "The scissors jack provides another 14 in. of adjustable height. I get close to the desired height with the pipe and then fine-tune the setting with the jack."

Marking the insides of tight spaces with a carpenter's pencil can be frustrating. McLaen's angled pencils make it easier.



"I took 2 ordinary carpenter's pencils and cut the ends off with my miter saw," says McLaen. "Then I glued them back together at various 90 and 60-degree angles to the original pencils. They cost me less than a buck each and make marking a lot easier."

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Money-Saving Repairs & Maintenance Shortcuts

Have you come up with any unusual money-saving repair methods for fixing farm equipment? What maintenance shortcuts have you found? Have you had any equipment recalled by the factory? Name a particularly tough mechanical problem you've had with a piece of equipment and how you solved it.

These are a few of the questions we asked randomly selected FARM SHOW readers. If you have a repair tip, maintenance shortcut, or other mechanical experience you'd like to share, send details to: FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or email us at: editor@farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Managing Editor



Roof Snake: Replacing a 3-tab shingle without damaging the surrounding shingles isn't easy. The Roof Snake has a claw on one end for pulling nails and an offset nail slot at the other end that lets you pound in a nail under the roofing tab without having to bend it back all the way. Sells for \$30-40 at retailers and online (www.pactool.us).



Dale Fisher, Jackson, Mich.: "I store chains in my shop by hanging the hooks from the edge of a 55-gal. drum. Works much better than just putting them in a pile. When I need a chain, I just grab one and go."

Bill Ridgway, Salem, Ind.: "If you use old shirts and other clothing for rags,

"However, be advised to treat the tool with kid gloves and return it after you're done, or you can expect burnt toast, cold coffee and a cold shoulder for an extended period of time."

Tony Voigt, Fox Lake, Wis.: Tony's happy with his King Kutter 33-in. pull-behind offset disk for his ATV. "Despite its small size, this disk does an excellent job chopping up crop residue and makes an excellent seedbed. The disk is the perfect size for small gardens or wildlife food plots, and it tows great behind an ATV for getting into more remote areas of woods and marshes."

David Simpler, Elkton, Md.: "Lots of shops have old refrigerators in them to hold welding rods. But if you're short on space and don't have a lot of welding rods, use an old microwave with a light on inside to keep them dry. Works good."



Jim Rankin, Paris, Ky.: "I weld a 1/2-in. box-end wrench on one handle of a set of pliers and a 9/16-in. wrench on the other handle. It makes my pliers about the handiest tool I own. I've used this idea for many years and whenever the pliers wear out, I just go to the shop and cut off the ends of a couple of wrenches and weld them to the pliers. They're quite a conversation piece."

John Rochester, Deerfield Beach, Fla.: "I recently had to reassemble an old wood swing set for a customer. There was a 4 by 4 timber that was a very tight fit between three other pieces. The solution? Slathering all surfaces with Dawn liquid dish soap and a little tapping with a hammer. There was no staining, and the excess will wash off."

"I needed a lid with a cleanout hatch for my septic tank. I cast a rectangle of concrete around a water-filled plastic bucket and then cut out the pail after the concrete set. It was much easier than trying to hack out wood forms. The pail worked great because of no sharp corners prone to cracking."



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Scooter Ladder Moves Itself

By Chad Smith

Wayne and Charlene Eash got the idea for a self-propelled ladder when a friend showed them one he had made.

"Wayne asked the fellow to make one for him," Charlene says. "Instead, he said to go ahead and make your own and, if you want to, go ahead and make them for other people, too."

Wayne is a foreman at Shed Time, a mini-barn builder in Ligonier, Ind., and they're always looking for ways to save steps.

"He began by purchasing a 6-ft. ladder," Charlene says. "The first step was to try and find a base with wheels on which he could attach the ladder."

"He found a guy that buys old Jazzy Scooters from senior centers, hospitals and home medical supply stores, fixes them up, and then resells them," she recalled. "Wayne bought one, removed the seat, and was left with the base and wheels."

After that, Wayne and a fellow church member welded the ladder to the base and had their first working prototype.

"The scooter's motor is controlled by a joystick that's attached to one of the steps on the ladder," says Eash. "The scooter makes it easy to move the ladder from place to place while walking alongside."

The ladders come in two sizes. The 6-ft. ladder retails for \$1,400 and the 8-ft. sells



Rolling ladder is a 6-ft. step ladder welded to a motorized scooter with the seat removed and is operated by a joystick on the ladder.

for \$1,480.

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