

Shop-Built 4-Wheeler Does The Work Of A Pickup

Cross a 4-wheeler with a 4-wheel drive pickup, and you'd have something like Kent Hamiel's home-built ATV.

"It works great in the hills for fencing and checking cattle," says Hamiel, a Reliance, South Dakota rancher. "We built it low to the ground, so it goes where the pickup can't. It really goes great in the mud."

Hamiel and his son Bo built the 4-wheeler over the course of several years, after getting tired of constant repairs on their Kawasaki Mule. The project took time, parts from two cars, and a few new parts from town.

"It was one of those things we just kept in back of the shop until we thought up what else to do with it," recalls Hamiel.

The 5-ft. wide and 10-ft., 4-in. long 4-wheeler has a cab with a bench seat, power

steering, heater, windshield wipers and loads of visibility. Halogen lights mount on top of the cab for checking cattle or fences at night.

"Building the undercarriage was the toughest part of the job," he says. "Part of the frame came from a Chevy S-10, including the suspension for the front end. The rear end rides on leaf springs."

The cab itself is made out of square tubing, sheet metal and deck plate, as is the 4 by 5-ft. box over the rear axle. The front and rear axles were also taken from the Chevy S-10, while the engine and transmission were pulled out of a Dodge Horizon. Hamiel rebuilt the transmission and turned the engine lengthwise before mounting it behind the cab. The hydrostatic steering came from a Case combine, but the windows and skid steel



One-of-a-kind, home-built 4-wheeler is built low to the ground.

wheels and tires all were bought new.

"I suppose we have about \$5,000 in it with steel, cables, wheels, heater and all," says Hamiel. "It just kept adding up."

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European-Style Scythes Cut Fast, Stay Sharp

Most Americans have abandoned scythes in favor of power mowing equipment, even when it comes to cutting weeds around buildings and fences.

But if you've grown weary of the whine of string trimmers, maybe you're ready to try a scythe, says Elliot Fishbein.

Fishbein started Scythe Supply about a year ago to sell quality European-style scythes.

He says if you've used a scythe in the past and disliked the experience, you were probably using the wrong kind of scythe. Fishbein says his scythes work so well he's parked his power mower and now uses one to cut his lawn.

Fishbein says most scythes sold in America are heavy and poorly balanced. Not only that, but the angle at which the blade mounts on the handle (called a snath) tends to require that the worker bend over to cut with it.

On the other hand, his European-style scythes are lightweight and well balanced. The blade and handle are positioned to allow a comfortable upright stance.

"It's good exercise and since there's no noise except the swish of the blade through the grass, two people can work and talk together," he says. "It can be relaxing and enjoyable work."

There are many differences between European and American-style blades. American-style blades are thick, flat and sharpened with a grindstone. The European style blades are shaped like an aircraft wing. The edge is hammer sharpened by hand (called peening) and finished with a whetstone.

"This makes the European-style blades very strong and the edge can be made sharper," Fishbein says. "The European style snath is made of solid wood and is light and comfortable. We can even custom fit a snath if we have your measurements."

In addition to blades and snaths, Fishbein also sells all the equipment necessary to maintain the scythe including whetstones, hammers, anvils and a jig for peening the blade edge. His Web site (www.scythesupply.com) even has tips and instructions on how best to use a scythe.

A typical scythe, with snath and 24-in.



European-style scythe is lightweight and well balanced, making it easier to use and more efficient than American-style scythes, says a Maine company that recently began importing them.

blade, sharpening stone and holder, peening jig for maintaining the blade edge, and a book about scythe use, sells for about the same price as a low to medium priced push power mower.

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Ray Obrecht positioned two hog feeders end-to-end to make this low-cost shed.

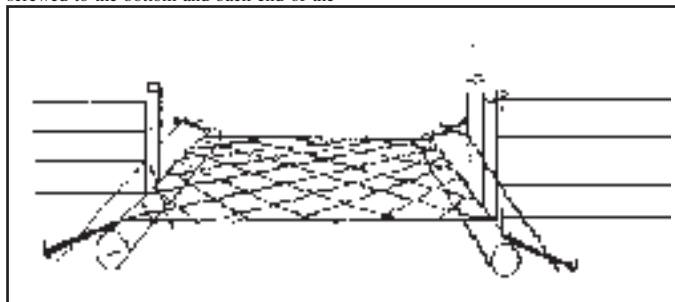
Nifty Garden Tractor Shed

Ray Obrecht, Zearing, Iowa, used two hog feeders to make a nifty shed for his garden tractor.

He cut a 2-ft. chunk out of the side of each feeder so they could be spread out like a quonset and positioned end-to-end. Boards screwed to the bottom and back end of the

shed provide stability. He also bolted the ends of the two feeders together where they meet in the middle.

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Electrified grid made of chicken wire keeps livestock in and unwanted animals out, yet allows you to drive through without stopping to open and close a gate.

Simple Drive-Through Electric Gate

Here's a simple design for an inexpensive drive-through gate that eliminates the need to get in and out of the vehicle. Lee Stavenhaugen, Bryan, Texas came up with the idea for use on his own farm to keep cattle in and dogs out.

He simply stretches a piece of chicken wire across an opening, using two 4-ft. wide pieces for a total width of 8 ft. He stretches the wire over two pieces of 3-in. dia. PVC pipe, fastening the wire in place with metal screws. A short wire runs from the chicken wire to the electric fence or fence charger. Screen door springs hooked to pegs on the ground

apply tension to the fence to keep it taut.

For spans over about 8 ft., you can put another 3 in. dia. pipe under the grid in the middle. All you need to do is to keep weeds and grass down under the gate, notes Stavenhaugen.

"The chicken wire holds up surprisingly well, even under daily traffic. And it's very cheap and easy to replace if it ever wears out," he notes.

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