

Fake Pond Tricks Ducks Into Landing

When their favorite duck hunting pond dried up last fall, Steve Weisman and his son Curt decided to fool the ducks by creating a pond out of plastic.

Where there had once been 3-ft. deep water there was now only a dry bed. So they put heavy black plastic down to create the illusion of water.

"A lot of people couldn't believe how real it looked," says Weisman. "Apparently it looked real to ducks, too, because we had pretty good hunting success."

First, they had to clear out a 3-year growth of slough grass, clearing a 100-ft. sq. area. They didn't have a mower that could handle the tough, clumpy grass so they used gas-powered weed trimmers to clear a 100-ft. sq. area. Then they used an ATV-mounted blade to smooth out the ground and clear away most of the trimmed grass. Next, they laid down a 50 by 60-ft. section of heavy black plastic. "We made the plastic smaller than the trimmed area because we figured any passing ducks would feel safer landing if there was an open perimeter around the 'wa-

ter," says Steve.

A piece of plastic that big billows in even a moderate breeze and they knew that if the wind picked up, it would blow away the plastic. So, they buried the perimeter edge of the plastic in a small dirt trench. Then they stepped back a ways and looked at their handiwork. "Amazingly, the plastic had a watery look to it," says Steve.

Next, they placed some old flat-bottomed decoys on the plastic. While Steve set out the decoys, Curt dug up a couple of clumps of slough grass and placed them on the plastic to further enhance the look of a real pond.

The first morning of the hunt, they were pleasantly surprised to see that heavy dew had added even more realism to the illusion of water. It was a sunny day, but they still shot half a dozen teal and a couple wood ducks. The following day was even better. A short rain before daylight added little puddles on the low spots in the plastic, and an overcast sky helped add to the illusion. That morning they bagged four mallards and two teal. But one teal got away.



In order to create plastic pond, Steve and Curt Weisman cleared out a 100-ft. sq. area and laid down a 50 by 60-ft. section of heavy black plastic. Flat-bottomed decoys and chunks of slough grass added realism.

"At daybreak, we heard wings and the soft quack, quack of a greenwing teal as it set to land on our plastic pond. It slid a few inches on the slick plastic and then flopped over onto its belly. It righted itself, flapped its wings indignantly, looked around, and

then flew off. We were laughing so hard we never even fired a shot," says Steve.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve Weisman, 3812 153rd St., Estherville, Iowa 51334 (ph 712 362-7046).



Meadow View workers covered a 1984 Cadillac with close to 1,000 live plants.

Flower-Covered Cadillac Promotes Greenhouse Business

Ohio parade goers got a special treat this summer when the Robinson family of Meadow View Growers Inc., came driving by in their "Plantillac" - a 1984 Cadillac covered by growing plants.

They put the car together to publicize their greenhouse business in New Carlisle, Ohio.

Earl Robinson, his son Scott, his grandson Scottie, Scottie's friend Davey, daughter Anne, and granddaughter Haley all worked on the project.

Starting in January, the group started covering the Cadillac with chicken wire, sphagnum moss and potting soil. This stage of the project was completed in February.

On the hood, they used polycarbonate panels for a base so they could slide them off if they needed to get into the engine compartment.

In late March, they planted close to 1,000 plants on the car, including more than 40 varieties, mainly annuals.

Contrasting colored plants spell out the initials "MV" above the windshield.

"Osmocote," a slow-release fertilizer, was used during planting, and frequent fertilizing with a water soluble fertilizer kept it growing well. So well, in fact, that selective hand pruning with scissors was required on a regular basis.

The group even went so far as to devise a sprinkler system that is used to spray the parade crowds. They placed a battery, a 30-gal. water tank, and a small pump on the back seat and ran a hose up through the roof with

a stand that holds a sprinkler head, disguised under a moss-covered, wire-framed dragonfly.

The car has been in a number of parades and has also appeared at flower industry events around Ohio.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Meadow View Growers Inc., 755 N. Dayton-Lakeview Rd., New Carlisle, Ohio 45344 (ph 937 845-0093; fax 937 845-4082; email: aroberts@meadowview.com; website: www.meadowview.com).

Charles Freitag takes many reference photos to assist with tractor details. Large, complex pieces may take up to 250 hrs. to complete.



Artist Specializes In Tractor Portraits

For confirmed tractor nuts, professional artist Charles Freitag of Marion, Iowa, specializes in original oil paintings of favorite tractors.

Tractor enthusiasts are quick to tell you that every tractor has its own "personality", making them all unique. They often bring joy to their owners and a flood of special memories. Zealots just enjoy looking at them, so it's no surprise that Freitag's work is in high demand.

Known across the nation for his prints of nostalgic farms scenes featuring tractors, Freitag specializes mainly in JD and Farmall models, but has done many other makes, as well as other portrait types.

"I grew up on the farm and really enjoy this subject matter," he says.

It's a first-come, first-served arrangement when hiring him, and whenever possible, Freitag likes to spend several hours with his

client to get a feel for the subject to be captured on canvas. He takes many reference photos of the tractor to assist him in detail work back at his studio.

Since an on-site meeting isn't always possible, he will also accept high-quality photos of the subject through the mail.

Freitag's commissioned art prices range from \$350 for a simple, single-tractor painting (16 by 20-in.) to \$10,000 for some of the large, complex pieces he has done which take up to 250 hrs. to complete.

Prints are available through Apple Creek Publishing. To discuss commission work, contact Freitag directly.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Charles Freitag, 3405 Monarch Ave., Marion, Iowa 52302 (ph 319 269-1766; email: chuckpam@staroute.com or Apple Creek Publishing (ph 800 662-1707; website: www.applecreekpub.com).

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