High Capacity Grass Catcher

"Whenever I picked up leaves or grass with the grass catcher on my riding lawn mower, I was able to make only a couple of passes around our yard before the hopper was full. So I decided to make my own large capacity leaf/grass hopper. All parts are easily accessible, and it holds much more material than commercial models," says Terry Benoit, Orange, Texas.

He used treated lumber for the frame and covered it with see-through window screen. The box rides on a pair of caster wheels and is hinged on back. It has a slide-in plywood tailgate. The front of the catcher bolts rigidly to the lawn mower and follows directly behind it.

A large PVC pipe leads from the mower deck up into the box. "If the pipe plugs up with wet grass, I can easily unplug it by opening up the middle section of the pipe. I cut an opening in the pipe and installed a piano hinge and a handle for access," says Benoit.

"After the hopper is full, I back up to my mulch pile, raise the tailgate, and tilt the box back to dump the load on the ground."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terry Benoit, 1077 Bobcat Rd., Orange, Texas 77632

"It was cheap to build and holds much more material than commercial models," says Terry Benoit about his leaf/grass hopper.

Home-built composter is made out of a 55-gal. drum and has an 18-in. door on one side.

Build-It-Yourself Barrel Composter

Garden catalogs and websites sell rolling barrel composters for $100 or more. David Golden built his own for just a few dollars using a 55-gal. drum, some metal and wood scraps, and four $5 lawn mower wheels. The composter works great to turn lawn and garden clippings into compost that plants love.

"I can turn a barrel of waste clipping into compost in one to two months," says Golden. "I try to turn it once a week or so."

Golden's composter is easy to fill. He cut an 18-in. hole in the side for a door, which he then fashioned out of sheet metal. A piano hinge on one edge and a snapspring catch on the other secures the door when the barrel is turning.

Inside the barrel, three baffles made from 1 by 3-in. wood scraps are screwed to the sides. As the barrel turns, the baffles mix the materials inside.

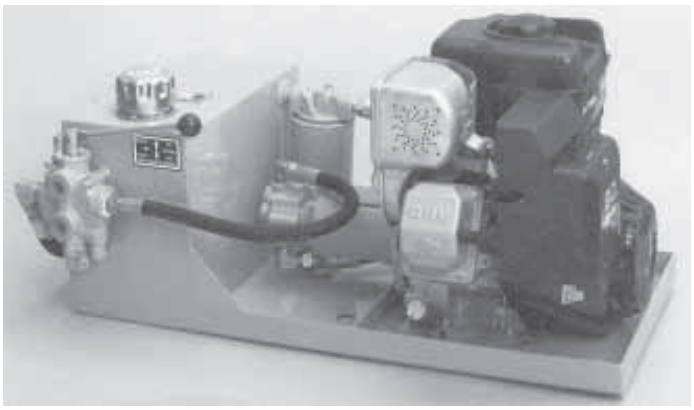
Once the barrel was complete, Golden wanted a way to easily turn it. An H-shaped workbench end support made from 1 by 2-in. steel tubing provided a frame for his barrel cart. All Golden had to do was attach lawn mower wheels and a hitch.

"I cut down an old Volkswagen towbar to fit and hooked the cart to my garden tractor," he says.

The wheels do double duty, holding and turning the barrel. As the cart moves forward, the wheels turn and the barrel spins in the opposite direction.

Golden kept the cart simple and didn't worry about a turning axle. It simply slides around turns.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, David Golden, 37 Gopher Lane, Ponderosa, New Mexico 87044 (ph 505 834-0009).



Hydraulic kit includes a gear-type pump, 3-position control valve, and 6-gal. reservoir.

Self-Contained Hydraulic Power Kit

If you need hydraulics to operate an auger, wood splitter or other stationary equipment but don't want to tie up a tractor, you'll be interested in this new self-contained hydraulic power kit.

The kit includes a gear-type pump, a 3-position, 4-way control valve, and a 6-gal. reservoir. It can be purchased with or without an 8 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine and is available in three different pump sizes that produce three different flow rates - 6, 7 1/2, and 8.4 gpm.

According to the company, the power units work great for powering hydraulic-driven water pumps, mixing equipment, shop tools, and so on.

The 4-way control valve is spring-centered but can also be locked into a "held" position.

The kit is shipped unassembled - you put it together before use.

Sells for $990 plus S&H with the engine; $640 without. All prices F.O.B. Grand Rapids, Ohio.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Buckeye Hydraulics, Inc., Box 500, 24247 W. Third St., Grand Rapids, Ohio 43522 (ph 419 832-2822 or 419 832-7391; fax 419 832-0255).

"Claw" Handles Thorny Trees

"My dad and I had to remove a quarter mile of hedge trees from a fence line. The trees have big, sharp thorns so dragging them around by hand isn't much fun,," says Carl Walter, Spring Valley, Ill., who made a loader-mounted device to move the trees around.

The "Claw", as they call it, extends about 7 ft. in front of the loader bucket. They started by welding two lengths of 6-in. channel iron together to form a rectangular tube that bolts to the bottom of the bucket. The claw, which is about 1 1/2 ft. long, bolts onto the end of this tube. They used 4-in. channel iron to make two stationary fingers and a single, movable finger that's connected to a hydraulic cylinder. The movable finger rotates on a 1 1/4-in. dia. bolt and is controlled by a lever in the tractor cab.

A length of channel iron bolts on between the tube and one side of the bucket to to provide side support. A chain between the claw and the top edge of the bucket provides vertical support.

"It saves a lot of work - we don't even have to touch the trees anymore," says Carl. "We use it with our Case-IH 5240 tractor. My dad drives the tractor and clamps the claw around the tree, then I use a chain saw to cut the tree off. He then lifts the tree up and hauls it to a wood pile. He doesn't have a good view of the claw so I guide him in and tell him when to stop and when to put pressure on the tree. The claw can grab trees up to 14 in. in diameter, but most of our trees are only 4 to 6 in. in diameter."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Carl Walter, 16458 3100 E. St., Spring Valley, Ill. 61362 (ph 815 894-2813).

Tractor driver clamps the "claw" around tree while another person uses a chain saw to cut tree off.

"Claw" consists of two stationary fingers and a single, movable finger connected to a hydraulic cylinder.

Unit is bolted to the end of a steel tube and extends about 7 ft. in front of loader bucket.