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Boat Smoker Can Cook A Whole Hog

James Ballard of Tuttle, Okla., enjoys making things out of other things. One of his favorite projects was turning an aluminum boat into an upright smoker that'll cook a whole hog.

Ballard cut 2 ft. off the back end of the boat to make a bench that faces the smoker. He mounted the rest of the boat upright in a 2-ft. block of concrete. He installed a fireplace insert at the bottom, and welded four separate cooking racks and a large water pan into place above that, closing the boat-smoker in with aluminum tread plate.

The two doors came off an old beer cooler. The latches are made from propellers off a trolling motor and the smokestack is from a diesel truck.

"Around the base, we added a layer of stone to help hold in the heat," Ballard says. "We mounted the boat's motor on the bench facing the smoker and installed a working running light."

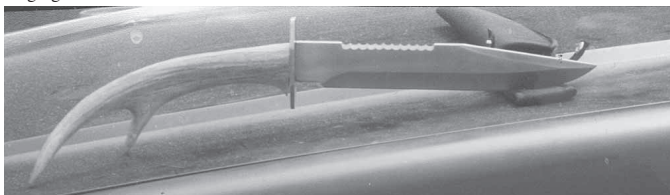


Ballard uses an old canoe to keep his firewood dry.

In addition to hogs, Ballard has smoked salmon and turkey in the boat-smoker. It's great for roasting corn, too, he says.

"I can keep it anywhere from 225° F for smoking, to 350° F for cooking."

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Deer knives sell for \$30 to \$100 and include a leather sheath.

Deer Foot And Antler-Handled Knives

"They make unique gifts. No two are alike," says David Wooten, Greenville, Ga., about the deer foot and antler-handle knives he makes entirely by hand.

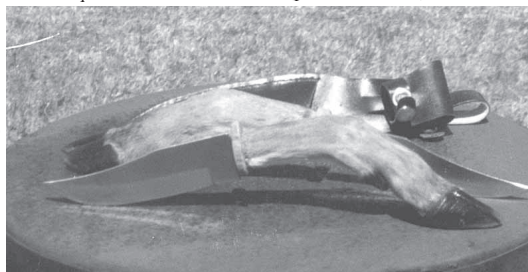
Wooten finds a knife blade that he likes, removes the handle, and installs a deer foot or antler in its place. To use a deer foot, he first cures it in salt until it's rock hard, then drills a 2 1/2-in. deep hole through the bone to remove the marrow. Then he grinds part of the blade down and cuts a couple of notches into it. Epoxy is used to glue the foot to the blade.

The process for antlers is similar, except that he first applies a clear lacquer to the antler.

"I've been making these knives for about five years and often sell them at car races. They're quite popular," says Wooten. "The blades can be up to 1 ft. long. On some blades I attach an antler with a crown on it. I do everything by hand and don't even use a vise. People often ask me if the hair on the deer feet will fall out. I tell them it won't because the feet have been cured in salt."

The knives, complete with a leather sheath, sell for anywhere from \$30 to \$100 plus \$10 S&H, depending on blade quality and size.

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David Wooten cures deer feet in salt until they're hard, then drills a hole into the bone to remove the marrow.



Roger Helminen attached a mop to the back of his brother's tricycle. A rope runs back to raise and lower it. A milk can carries water.

10-Year-Old Built His Own Zamboni

"It's boring using a hose to flood our ice rink and I usually get wet from a leaky hose. So I built a zamboni that tows behind my little brother's tricycle," says Roger Helminen, who built the ice-smoother "for fun" and as a science fair project.

Helminen attached a mop head to the back of the trailer. "It's just two pieces of boards put together in a 'T' shape. They're hinged to the back of the trailer. I attached cloth strips to the bottom crossbar that drag over the water as it comes out," he says.

A rope runs back over a wood bracket to raise and lower the mop, as needed.

He uses a milk can on the trailer to carry

water to the pond. "A piece of hose with a shut-off valve on the milk can siphons water out of the milk can and the mop spreads it. You can stop the water by turning the valve."

He entered the zamboni in the invention portion of the science fair and earned all the possible points for the project.

Mom Margaret Helminen says Roger is always asking questions, experimenting and inventing new things.

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Electrified Bird Feeder Sends Squirrels Flying

"If I'm inside the house or in my shop, and a squirrel attacks my bird feeder, a buzzer goes off and the TV automatically comes on. I take a quick look to see what's happening and then hit the button on a special remote and watch a gray squirrel turn into a flying gray squirrel," says Jerry Zelm of Menomonie, Wis.

"My system consists of an electric fence charger, a plastic bird feeder wired for electricity, a portable motion detector, and a homemade control box that runs the whole thing," he says. "The control box contains a 12-volt sealed battery, a 2-watt 2.4 ghz transmitter, a video camera with pan and tilt, and a 4-channel RF wireless remote controller."

Zelm found all the components for this system on his farm. He notes that the video components could also be used to monitor barns and other outbuildings.

Plans and item list are available.

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Jerry Zelm found the components for his electrified bird feeder on his farm.