

He Built His Own Fire-Fighting Equipment

After reading about FARM SHOW readers who built their own fire-fighting equipment, Art Skoog of Eagle River, Alaska decided to build a fire-fighting system that lays down a sheet of foam ahead of a grass or brush fire. The foam is produced when chemicals mixed with water are released under pressure at the end of a fire hose.

"Foam is more effective for fighting fires than just water," he says. "A new type of class A fire fighting foam-gel sticks to vertical surfaces, including windows. It lets you blanket buildings that are threatened by fire, or smother a fire in progress.

"I started with 4 by 6-in. steel tubing for the frame with the main cross pieces spaced so it can be picked up by a forklift without damage," says Skoog, who mounted a 225-gal. water tank on the spray skid.

Skoog built the 3-pt. hitch out of heavy-duty angle iron and channel iron. The platform was made from steel grating panels with 1-in. squares. An angle iron framework runs from the top of the hitch frame, over the water tank to the back end of the skid. It serves

as an anchor point to support the outer ends of the 3 by 10-ft. platform.

The frame over the tank also holds a reel of 100 ft. of fire hose. Water from the tank is pumped to the hose by a 150 psi pto-powered Hypro pump.

At one end of the water tank is a 5 1/2-hp Honda Multiquip, centrifugal pump with a 100 psi output. It's used to fill the tank from a pond or stream. The intake or suction hose on the Honda pump is a 2-in. dia., 25-ft. hose with a Polypro 1 1/2-in., 40-mesh strainer. He used kamlok fittings on the strainer and for connecting the hose to the pump. The kamlok is known as a reliable connection, but easy and fast to disconnect if needed.

At the other end of the tank there's a storage compartment for extra fittings and tools. "I used Schedule 80 pvc pipe to plumb it all together, but used brass valves for dependability," says Skoog. "I have had poor luck with plastic valves."

He recommends keeping brass and aluminum fittings apart, as they will corrode when in contact. He also recommends carefully



Self-contained fire fighting rig includes a 225-gal. water tank with Hypro pump, 100 ft. of fire hose and storage compartment for tools.

matching flow rates for pumps, piping and nozzles. He sized piping for 10 gpm, which is sufficient flow when spraying foam.

Here's a list of websites Skoog recommends for parts, gel-foam, and other equipment and advice: barricadegel.com;

nwfirewagon.com; scottyfire.com; wildfire-equipment.com.

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Dressed-Up Corn Crib Now An Eye-Catching Gazebo

Corn on the cob is now served in a crib that used to store ear corn. Jim Williams and his wife turned the old wire corncrib into a head-turning gazebo for their back yard.

"I call it my redneck gazebo," says Williams. "It's heated in the summer and air conditioned in the winter!"

Williams had driven by the old crib several times before convincing the owner to sell it to him. At 84, Truman Hudson didn't think he would be using it anymore.

"My dad and some friends helped me take it down piece by piece, and my dad helped me reassemble it," says Williams. "We cut it down to 8 ft. tall from its original 15 ft. and used angle iron and cable clamps to tie it down on a wood deck in my back yard."

After cutting doorways on either side of

the crib, Williams used naval jelly to take the rust off the wire. Hudson had kept the galvanized roof panels painted so they were in good shape. Williams cleaned them and repainted them IH red with silver trim on the ribs.

"I added a 12-in. tall collar to the center roof hole and reattached the lid to it with tabs to let air out," he says. "The collar gives it a cupola effect complete with fake vents on it."

Williams and his wife Sara decorate their crib/gazebo, putting a Snoopy cutout on the roof in the summer and a star on it for Christmas. Rope lights hang under the roof edge and the couple plans to install a ceiling fan.

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"I call it my redneck gazebo," says Jim Williams. "It's heated in the summer and air conditioned in the winter!"

Picture Perfect Water Tower

When Cheryl Mishler and Ed Eiseman needed water for tree seedlings on their remote 10 acres, they did it the old fashioned way. They put up a windmill and built an old fashioned water tower for storage. They were inspired by an old TV show.

"We are both of an age where we remember Petticoat Junction and the old water tower on the show," says Mishler. "Ed came up with the plans, and we built it."

By the time they came up with the water tank concept, they had already decided to drill a well and put up a wind-powered water pump because the property didn't have electric service.

No water tank designs could be found in books or on the internet, so they studied old carpentry and building books to determine the correct footings, legs and spans to support the maximum weight. The tank had to be 16 ft. high to provide enough discharge pressure.

Hidden inside the wood framework is a poly tank that holds 1,500 gallons (6 tons) of water. Mishler and Eiseman, with help from Eiseman's sons, installed five metal-reinforced 2 by 2 by 1-ft. concrete footings. The tower's legs were made from 6 by 6-in. treated timbers with 2 by 10-in. planks for

cross ties. They put one leg in the center with four around it. The planks connect each upright to its neighboring upright and to the upright across from it (running from the bottom of one to the top of the other). Support planks also bolt to the center leg.

Whenever two planks cross each other, wood spacers were placed between them so spacer and planks could be bolted together, adding even more stability to the structure.

The toughest part of construction, says Mishler, was installing the board cladding around the poly tank. Although purely decorative, the boards provided the authentic look of a wooden water tower. They toe-nailed the boards to the tank platform and wrapped four aluminum bands around them like the bands on a barrel.

"It looks great. We have people stop by all the time to see it," says Mishler, noting that they plan to dig a pond downhill from the water tower to hold the overflow from the tank.

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Tower's legs were made from 6 by 6-in. treated lumber with 2 by 10-in. planks for cross-ties.

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