**A 24-in. dia. round rug sells for $70 and takes up to 2 weeks to complete. A 4-in. high basket with a 7-in. round base sells for $40.**

# He Turns Twine Into Baskets And Mats

Plastic baler twine doesn't have to be a liability after it's cut off the hay or straw bales. A Colinton, Alberta. man enjoys giving it a second life as raw material for hand-stitched baskets and mats.

Robert Kuhmayer's creations are hardwearing and should last a lifetime. He says some of the twine creations in his home are more than 30 years old.

Farm people especially love the twine baskets but people from all walks of life have bought Kuhmayer's wares.

"My uncle used to do this with sisal twine. When he passed away, his tools were given to me," Kuhmayer says. "A few local farmers give me their used plastic twine instead of burning it."

Kuhmayer works with a variety of twine colors including blue, orange, green and variegated pink and white. He often mixes and matches them for variety.

The only tools required are a 2-in. long piece of 5/8-in. dia. plastic tubing - a shotgun shell works good - and a 6-in. long, stainless steel needle with a curved, flat end.

The first step is to pull a group of twine strings through the tube using enough to fill it - about 37 strands.

As he slides the tube forward along the group of strings, he binds the ropy coil together with the needle and another piece of twine. A basket looks almost like a pile of coiled rope when he's through.

The only expense Kuhmayer has is buying new twine for the stitching. He makes all sizes of both baskets and mats, and sells them at farmers' markets in the region.

A 24-in. dia. round rug sells for $70. A 4-in. high basket with a 7-in. round base and handles sells for $40.

Obviously, Kuhmayer's prices don't reflect the amount of time he invests in this hobby (a rug can take up to 2 weeks to complete), but he enjoys seeing people's reaction when they realize what the items are made from.

**All you need is a small plastic tube and a 6-in. needle to turn twine into "works of art".**

"Farmers and ranchers especially, really seem to appreciate this idea because they've worked with twine all their lives," he says. "I certainly don't get rich at this, but it's fun."

Kuhmayer has sold baskets to people in England, Pennsylvania and all across Canada. He has enough orders that he can barely keep up.

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**Shane Louwerens' Ag Club spent 6 months building this cotton picker grill that mounts on an old riding mower frame. There's a hidden cabinet between the cab and burner box that holds paper plates, utensils and a spice rack.**

# Student-Built Cotton Picker Grill

"My wife says it looks like we took a cotton picker, put it in the dryer and shrunk it," says Shane Louwerens, an ag teacher at Northwest Mississippi Community College in Senatobia, Miss.

The school's 20-member Ag Club spent about 6 months building the 9 by 5-ft. long "50 hamburger" propane grill that looks like a 9935 Deere cotton picker.

The grill comes with a full set of lights, hidden cabinet, fire extinguisher and even a DVD/CD player.

Louwerens came up with the idea for the grill while looking at cotton pickers. "I realized that if you turn a lawn mower around, it looks like a cotton picker frame," he says. That's when the idea of a grill hit him. Once he said it out loud, his students took over.

One student, John Casey, found an old riding lawn mower frame. "It was a piece of junk, but we only needed the frame," Louwerens says, adding that they bought new lawn mower wheels for the rear.

Then, the students started working out where the cab and grilling surface would go. "It was funny watching them because each person had his own idea of what would work," Louwerens says.

"Everything we did was done in cardboard first and duct taped together," he notes. "Mistakes were not an option, because our $500 budget would not go far."

A different group of students worked on each part of the project.

Some built the picking unit and little ducts that blow cotton back to the basket.

Others built the cab and put the door on top that holds the propane tank, voltage regulator, and DVD/CD player.

Other students worked on wiring the front spotlights, work lights and tail lights. The mobile grill even has a rear light that shines onto the grill. "It's really neat at night because when you turn on all the lights, it looks just like a cotton picker going through a field," Louwerens says.

**A student watches a movie on the cotton picker grill's built-in DVD player which pops out above the cab.**

They also built a hidden cabinet between the cab and burner box. It holds paper plates, utensils and a spice rack.

The cotton picker grill rides smoothly on its wheels. "I wanted it to be motorized but the one time we tried that, I had a student going about 30 mph. It was funny to see but it wasn't necessary," he says.

"Every aspect of this project put to use the knowledge gained from our program, such as wiring up the picker's lights, ordering parts, tracking a budget, welding, computers and working with others to produce only the best results."

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# Large Sunflower Becomes Small Town Landmark

If you ever get a chance to drive into Balcarres, Saskatchewan, you won't miss the 30-ft. high sunflower that four local men built out of two old fiberglass satellite dishes. It quickly became a local landmark.

"We didn't have a plan. We just started coming up with ideas about how to make it work," says Brent Bazin, who worked on the project with Charlie Lucyk, Ernie Vajdelek and Dr. George Wilson.

They first took a 10-ft. dia. satellite dish and cut it down to 5 ft. They cut the 36 by 11-in. wide pedals out of the cutaway parts and a second dish using a skill saw with a carbide blade. "The natural curve in the satellite was perfect for the pedals," Bazin says. The 36 pedals overlap.

A metal ring around the back of the flower attaches to brackets that fasten the flower to the pole.

The stem was made from steel pipe that tapers from 6 in. dia. to 4 1/2 in. at the top.

The group added three leaves on the stem made from pressed steel. "We intentionally put them close to the top of the flower so no one could climb the stem," Bazin says. He says it took about 9 evenings to construct and cost very little since most of the material was scrap.

Since putting it up, they've received a lot of compliments on their work. "But it looked so lonely, we made a Prairie Lilly next to it a few weeks later," he says. It stands 6 ft. higher than the sunflower.

They plan on adding lighting to both flowers so they can be seen at night.

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**Two satellite dishes were used to make this 30-ft. high sunflower. "The natural curve in the satellite was perfect for the pedals," says Brent Bazin.**