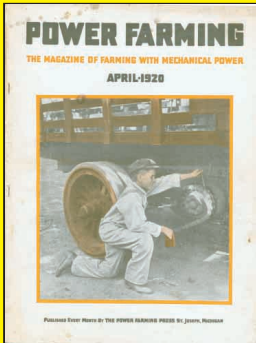


Reader Letters



My late father-in-law, Frank Stolting, used to put straw bales on each side of tomato plants. It kept the weeds down, held moisture, and the tomatoes laid on top of the straw with no rot. It worked great. (Emma Fine, 114 Juniper, Excelsior Springs, Mo. 64024)



I'm sending along a couple copies of an old magazine called Power Farming that I recently came across. The magazine was founded in 1892 in St. Joseph, Mich., and I have issues from 1919 and 1920. I'd like to find as many copies of this magazine as possible. I don't want them for financial gain. I just find them very interesting, especially the advertisements. I think they provide a unique history of farm equipment in the U.S. If anyone has any issues of this magazine, please let me know. (Michael R. Devens, 264 Benmont Ave., Bennington, VT 05201 ph 802-442-2208; mikesplc@adelphia.net)

Here's a tip for people burning shelled corn. If you mix in some wood pellets in with your corn, you'll get a heck of a lot more heat out of it. (Irvin Dierking, Box 188, Fairview, Kan. 66425 ph 785-467-3885)

If you'd like to have light outside your house when going into the garage at night, here's an idea. Replace the bulb in your garage door opener with a plug adapter and run a cord to a light under the eaves outside the garage. When you open the door with your remote, the light will come on. It'll go off when the light on the opener goes off so no more worrying about turning off the yard light. (Harry Nash Sr., 4370 Townroad 285, International Falls, Minn. 56649)

You cannot overload this home-built wheelbarrow. A friend of mine bent the sheet metal. The wheels come off an



old Honda 90 motorcycle. They were reamed out for brass bushings that ride on a 1-in. trailer spindle, cut down to fit. Electric conduit was bent to fit for the legs and handles.

It's far superior to anything I've seen on the market. (Delbert L. Fleming, 200 S. Evergreen, Wichita, Kan. 67209)

When we moved back to the country after 21 years in a big city, one of the first things we did was to invite our city friends and family for a hayride around the area. Most enjoyed the tour but one niece didn't

really enjoy it out of concern for her two young daughters, fearing they might fall off the hayrack.

The following year, we organized another farm outing and we were able to put my niece's fears to rest. Instead of using a traditional hayrack wagon, we used a hydraulic hog cart.

We lined the sides with straw bales so everyone faces inward and can enjoy conversations with each other, yet still have a good view of the countryside. The sides of the hog cart restrain young children and also act as a backrest for the adults. If the day turns out to be especially hot, you can stretch a tarp over the top.

Best of all, you can lower the cart to ground level for getting on and off. That's great for the elderly and handicapped. And on gravel roads, we can raise it all the way up to get out of the dust and get a better view. (Don Sharow, Camp Point, Ill.)

I read with interest the letter from Arco Rosenow of Chillicothe, Ill., about his method of using electric shock to keep squirrels out of his bird feeder.

I have a simpler method that works great. I simply cut a hole in the bottom of a 5-gal. plastic pail to fit upside down over the support pipe, and put a hose clamp on the pipe to hold it up. Squirrels can't get over the top of the bucket. (George Fisher, Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada)



I'm a housing inspector in Minneapolis and recently spotted this 3-wheeled low-rider bike powered by a 30cc weedeater with a cultivator attachment. The driveshaft on the weedeater was shortened up. It drives a cultivator attachment,



which has a right angle drive. It powers a sprocket that chain-drives the 5-speed sprocket. The rider sits in a comfortable plastic seat and there's a cooler on back to carry refreshments. It kind of looks like a chopper. (Dennis Lash, Lash Inspections, Minneapolis, Minn.)

I made this round bale hauler to mount on my pickup's 8-ft. flatbed. It lets me haul



two bales at a time and use ropes to unload the bales. The bale hauler consists

of a pair of channel irons set on edge for the length of the bed to stand on top of a couple of wooden 4 by 4's. One rail is free to pivot down onto its side. A ratchet strap across the back keeps the pivoting rail in an upright position.



Before loading the bale, I tie one end of the rope to the right side of the flatbed and the other end to the left side. Once the bale is loaded on the rails, I throw the rope back over the bale and tie it down on the right side again for transport.

To unload the bales, I release the ratchet strap and push the pivoting rail down. Then I untie the rope and pull on the end that's over the bale to roll the bale off the right side of the flatbed. The entire structure is kept in place by a metal pin inserted through a hole drilled into the flatbed. (Perry Hathaway, 4238 W 625 South, Claypool, Ind. 46510 ph 574 491-3448)

Old car or pickup tires can be used to make cheap livestock feeders and waterers. I use a sawzall to cut the tire into



three pieces and grind the edges down smooth. Then I wire the tire to a fence. The tire's black color helps keep water from freezing. But if the water ever does freeze up, the tire is flexible enough that I can just hit it with a hammer to break up the ice.

I use old 10-gal. liquid propane tanks, salvaged from my barbecue grill, to make automatic waterers for pigs. I lay the tank on its side and cut a shape out of it, then weld some metal onto the cut-out piece. A float equipped with a shut-off can be added. (Frederick Leese, 11475 W. 2200 Rd., Fontana, Kansas 66026 ph 913 757-4760)

My 2-wheeled "all terrain" firewood shuttle lets me move firewood with ease. I just lift the handle and push it around by hand, then set it down on a metal leg



built into one end. The shuttle rides on 25-in. high, 9-in. wide plastic tires designed to support a boat dock at a lake. The plastic tires can't go flat and are maintenance-free. The tires weigh only 8 lbs. apiece but can still support 600 lbs. per tire. They'll easily roll the shuttle over snow, mud, ice ridges, etc., without getting stuck. I also use the shuttle to move large, unsplit logs directly to my log splitter.

To install the tires I slipped a 1 1/4-in. dia. pipe into the hub, attaching retainers to hold the tires on. The shuttle can haul 250 to 300 lbs. of firewood at a time. It can also be used vertically like a 2-

wheeled hand cart to haul logs.

This super duty 7-ft. log lifter provides enough leverage to be used on trees 10 to 12 in. in diameter and up to 18 ft. long.



It's made with 1 1/4-in. dia. pipe and has a 12-in. wide base for added stability, especially in soft ground. To use it, first I slide the base under the log. Then, a hinged steel hook on top will fall down and bite into the top of the log. As I pull back on the handle, the log lifts up off the ground which makes it easier to cut with a chainsaw. (Dan Jacobson, 8913 Weaver Lake Dr., Pequot Lakes, Minn. 56472 ph 218 543-6623)

My post hole auger storage unit provides a simple way to keep a 3-pt. mounted E-Z post hole digger in place for easy hook-up. The unit's base is made from two 6 1/2-in. lengths of sq. tubing spaced 32 in.



apart, with two 32-in. lengths of sq. tubing welded between them. A 7-ft. 2-in. high length of tubing is welded upright at the center of the 32-in. piece. A 42-in. length of tubing is welded at a right angle to the top of the upright and supports a hook with a turnbuckle attached to it.

To release the digger from the tractor, I just back up the post hole digger under and set the back end of it on an 18-in. long "shelf". Then I hook up the turnbuckle to the digger and tighten it to hold the unit in place. (Henry E. Berry, 22422 150th Ave., Box Elder, S. Dak. 57719 ph 605 923-5649)

GFCIs, or ground fault circuit interrupters, were invented to prevent people from getting electrocuted. For example, if you're taking a bath and a radio or some other electrical object falls into the tub, the GFCI is designed to trip off the power. Building codes even require electrical receptacles in a home's kitchen and bath be equipped with GFCIs.

There's just one problem - GFCI's are almost totally worthless.

Yes, they work just fine with a 3-wire cord and a 3-prong plug. But take a 2-wire cord with a 2-prong plug, cut off the cord, plug it into the GFCI and drop the cut end in water and watch what happens - it just fizzes. The GFCI will not trip.

Check out your house. In the bathroom you might have an electric shaver, hair dryer, curling iron, radio, etc., all equipped with 2-wire cords. In the kitchen you might have an electric coffee maker, toaster, mixer, food processor, etc., again all equipped with 2-wire cords.

In other words, GFCIs offer nothing more than a false sense of security. (Bob Moty, 3816 Crockett Ct., Crystal Lake, Ill. 60014)

My husband, Joe, is always creating something from nothing. This summer, he made a water wheel out of two hay rake wheels. The scoops are from a grain elevator. The water appears to be coming

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