

# Pumpkin House Helps Brings Customers To Farm

After one year of selling pumpkins out of the field, Tony Wohlgemuth, owner of Kersey Valley, Inc., an "agritainment" business in High Point, North Carolina, decided to sell out of a structure. The weedy field didn't look very attractive, and parents wondered if they might meet snakes and other creatures while seeking out the perfect pumpkin.

Wohlgemuth, who is well known for his outdoor haunted attraction, Spookywoods, understands the importance of presentation. He designed an 8 by 12-ft. house made of green treated 2 by 6-in. planks that form shelves all the way up the wall and even on the "roof," which peaks at about 16-ft. The house holds about 1,500 pumpkins.

"It makes it a unique experience when staff use a tractor with a forklift to get pumpkins that are up high," Wohlgemuth says. The house also looks interesting at night, when lit by an exploding fireball that is part of his haunted adventure.

The house has been a good marketing tool,

Wohlgemuth says. He sells all pumpkins for \$5. He scatters small pumpkins on the ground, and young children often choose those. Parents can't convince them to choose a bigger one, so they end up buying additional pumpkins.

"A lot of people take photos of their kids in the doorway," Wohlgemuth says, and people like standing inside the building, surrounded by pumpkins.

He adds that he starts his season early in September and targets school groups for educational events.

Be creative, Wohlgemuth suggests, but also be safe. Children will try to climb the walls and knock down pumpkins so it's important to always have someone on site.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kersey Valley, Inc., 1615 Kersey Valley Road, High Point, North Carolina 27263 (ph 336 431-1700; info@kerseyvalley.com; www.maizeadventure.com).



As a way to promote his pumpkin farm and to display his crop, Tony Wohlgemuth designed this 8 by 12-ft. house to hold about 1,500 pumpkins.



For less than the cost of a new Harley Davidson, you can set up your own railroad train in your yard and take friends, kids and grandkids along for the ride.

## Start Your Own Backyard Railroad

The Great American Train Company is taking hobby railroading to a new level. For much less than the cost of a new Harley Davidson, you can climb aboard your own railroad train and take friends, kids and grandkids along for the ride. The little railroad was recently introduced at the Minnesota State Fair.

"This company is an outgrowth of our CEO's hobby," says Mark Strobel, national sales manager, Great American Train Company. "He started with live steam and put up a track in his backyard. His family and friends enjoyed it so much that he decided to start building them."

Ironically, the train company is an outgrowth of high tech Primera Technology. The company has been building computers and computer peripheral office equipment for 35 years. That expertise has been put to good use in the new train company.

"We designed and are building the train equipment with the same standards as our computer equipment, even getting UL certification," says Strobel. "We have a subwoofer sound system inside the engine, so you get that 'big train' sound of steam, whistles and bells. Even the puffs of steam and smoke, which are produced from a liquid mixture, are timed to correspond to how fast the engine is traveling so it adds to the appearance of a real steam engine."

For \$15,995, you get 220 ft. of track, a locomotive, tender, riding car and caboose. Additional track comes in 10-ft. sections. The 7 1/2-gauge aluminum rails and treated ties are light enough to carry under the arm and sell for \$160/section. Additional riding cars cost \$1,475 each. Everything is built at the company's factory in Minnesota.

"We plan to introduce a new car every 6 months," says Strobel. "The first one will be a ballast car for hauling rock for track building. A tank car with a spray system will be next for spraying herbicide on the track to hold down weeds.

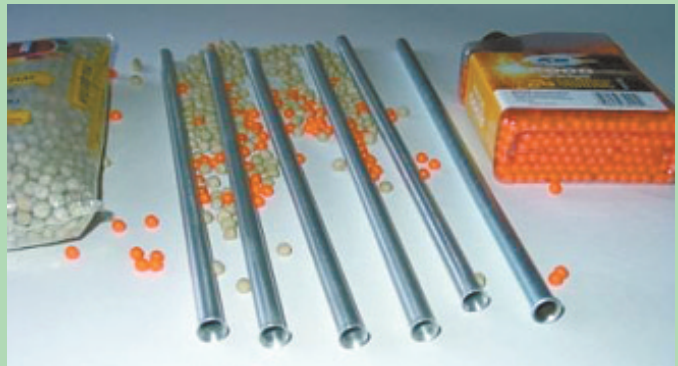
"We are also planning a hand crank car for

larger children or adults to use," he adds. "Kids love the prototype. It keeps them busy for hours."

Strobel acknowledges that the trains are not cheap. However, he points out, unlike some hobbies, it is one that can involve the entire family and can grow over time with the addition of tracks, structures, bridges, etc. It also doesn't require driving through traffic jams to get to a cabin on weekends.

The electric motors in the engine and the tender are powered by 6 deep cell, golf cart batteries that give 6 to 7 hours of use and recharge in several hours. Pulling capacity of the motors is 1,600 lbs. at a 3 percent grade. When pulling three cars and a caboose, that leaves nearly 800 lbs. of capacity for people.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Great American Train Company LLC, 2 Carlson Parkway North, Suite 375, Plymouth, Minn. 55447 (ph 763 476-5140; toll free 800 486-0553; fax 763 475-6677; mstrobel@greatamericantrain.com; www.greatamericantrain.com).



Comet Peashooter is a metal tube that shoots dry peas with "deadly" accuracy.

## State-Of-The-Art Peashooters

Whether you just want to scare squirrels off a backyard feeder or you're gearing up for the World Peashooting Championship in Witcham, England, you can't do better than the Comet Peashooter.

"When I was a boy, we used straws and a bag of peas and spent hours shooting at tin cans," says Ron Forster. "With the flared end on my metal shooters, you can load faster and get more concentrated pressure behind every pea."

The Comet Peashooter's 12-in. length qualifies for competitions such as the World Championship. Forster says the barrel is designed to fit the average dry pea. The close tolerance lets the shooter maximize the pressure behind the pea.

Priced at \$5.95 plus \$1.95 shipping and

handling, the barrel of the Comet is copper-brazed, double wall steel. A galvanized zinc coating protects it. The weight, Forster says, is just right for steady, surer shots, attributes that may have attracted World Championship organizers.

"About a week before this year's championship, the organizers called and ordered some for use with mounted lasers," says Forster, who points out there is no North American Championship at this time.

"It would be a great opportunity for a community to build a festival around it," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Forster, Railriders, 90 Memorial St., Franklin, N.H. 03235 (ph 603 934-1938; railriders@verizon.net; www.railriders.net).

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