

“Croc” Utility Truck Looks Like A Deere

“It’s painted like a Deere so I call it my ‘Croc’ utility truck. It’s the only one of its kind,” says Paul Tucker, Wickliffe, Ky., about his home-built, mini dump truck.

The 2-WD rig seats two people and has a large cab with plexiglass windows. It’s powered by a 1.6-liter, 4-cyl. Chevette gas engine with a 4-speed transmission. The hydraulic-operated dump bed on back measures 6 ft. 2 in. long by 5 ft. 10 in. wide and has 1-ft. high sides. A 2,000-lb. electric winch can be used to bring objects up onto the bed. Painted crocodile teeth, made from old mower sickle sections, bolt on front between the headlights. And there are crocodile emblems on the hood and behind the cab.

“I’m disabled and built this machine for fun. But I’m happy with how it turned out,” says Tucker. “I used a little bit of everything to build it.”

The engine, transmission, and front and rear axles are off a 1978 Chevette, with the axles welded to frame rails made from 2 by 3-in. steel tubing (the Chevette has a unibody design with no frame). It has two bucket seats out of a 1987 Dodge Shadow. A pair of “suicide doors” open from the front, making it easier for Tucker to get in and out. The rig sports West Coast mirrors on custom made brackets and has a tilt-forward metal hood. “The hood, fenders, and bumper all tilt forward together at the same time so I can easily work on the engine,” says Tucker. “The sides of the hood are made from an old clothes dryer. The front bumper is made from a 2 by 4 galvanized metal stud.”

The cab’s instrument panel is equipped with temperature, oil pressure, amp, tach and fuel gauges. The dash, as well as the back of the cab, are padded with foam and black leather. The suicide doors open from the front and are locked in place by inserting a 1/2-in. steel rod through a hole in the car frame. The gas tank is off an old steam ginnie washer. A length of curved galvanized pipe comes out one side of the rig and serves as a muffler.

The steering wheel is out of another car, but the foot pedals are off the Chevette. Inside the cab is a 5-speaker stereo system. On top of the cab is a flashing rotating light, with a spotlight just below it.

“I use it to haul everything from my ATV to fencing materials,” says Tucker. “It took me about two years to build. I couldn’t have built it without the help of my children and my wife.”

“It’s highway legal and would probably go about 75 mph, but I’ve never gone more than 50 mph. It has brakes on all four wheels, and I made all the brake lines. I mounted a pair of crocodile emblems on the hood.

“I replaced the Chevette’s coil springs with new 2,500-lb. leaf springs for more hauling capacity. The bed is raised and lowered by a 12-volt hydraulic pump with 2,500 lbs. of pressure. The pump acts on a 3-in. dia. cylinder with a 16-in. stroke.”

The rig has dual wheels on back. They were made by taking six 13-in. wheels, cutting the center out of four of them, and leaving the bolt pattern still in one wheel on each side. Tucker bolted those wheels onto each end of



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the axle and welded two rims onto both sides of each of those wheels. Tucker, Sr., 864 Fraser Rd., Wickliffe, Ky. 42087 (ph 270 876-7467).

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Firewood Cages Reduce Wood Handling

Thanks to his firewood cages, Ken Islo only handles his wood twice — stacking it in the cage, then throwing it in the woodstove. Owning a skid loader and having a drive-in basement help make his system work.

Whenever the Tomahawk, Wis., man cuts firewood, he slips a 5 by 6 by 2 1/2-ft. cage onto his skid loader’s forks. He cuts wood and loads it directly into the cage, which holds about 92 cu. ft. or 3/4’s of a cord of wood. He drops off the cage near his home to dry, and when he needs wood in the house to burn, he picks up the cage with his skid loader, drives it into his roomy basement and slides off the cage.

His 13 cages are made of 2-in. tubing and 1/8-in. reinforcing mesh welded on the sides and back. Two steel receivers at the bottom

slip onto the skid loader’s forks. To protect them from the weather, Islo had his cages professionally powder coated. After 10 years of use, the paint is still in excellent condition. Each cage cost \$350 for materials and powder coating.

Islo intends to switch to an outdoor stove and will store the cages under a roof.

“It just makes it so easy to handle the wood. It’s a real time and back saver,” Islo says.

Islo notes that anyone making cages should consider how much weight their equipment can handle and size the cages accordingly. Even if they can’t drive in the basement with the wood, the cages still save a step, he notes.

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When Ken Islo needs wood in the house to burn, he loads up a wood-filled cage with his skid loader and drives it into his roomy basement.

Drill-Powered Duck Plucker

Dave White associates four-letter words with plucking ducks by hand. So when his company, Cajun Archery of Logan, Utah, had an opportunity to buy rights to The Plucker, he seized the chance.

The Plucker is a 4-in. cast aluminum wheel that has sixteen 1-in. hard rubber fingers that are easy to replace (\$12.99/set) by just popping them in.

Any drill with at least 2,000 rpm’s can be used to turn The Plucker. As each finger spins around it peels off feathers and most of the pinfeathers.

“You can do a mallard in two minutes,” White says. A video on his company’s website shows how to hold the duck under the wheel, with the wheel spinning away.

“It really works,” White says. “This is an example of technology they use commercially; it’s just a smaller consumer version.”

At \$30 for the basic kit that runs off a drill, The Plucker is the least expensive on the market, White adds. Often customers upgrade

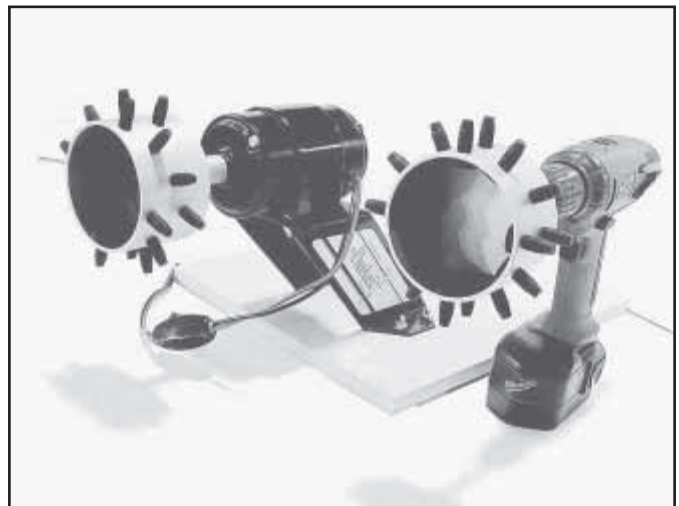
to the \$100 deluxe unit, which has a motor that can be hooked up by DC to a truck or ATV battery in the field or AC converter to use with electricity. The unit comes with a handy mounting board.

“You learn and get better as you use it and get the feel of how to run the bird across it,” White says. The Plucker works best on dry ducks, but also works when they’re wet. It also works on geese but hasn’t been widely tested yet on chickens.

Many hunters like the idea of plucking ducks in the field to put the feathers back in the environment to be used for nesting material the next year, White says.

The Plucker makes it easier to take off feathers and keep the skin intact, which helps ducks stay moister and taste better during roasting, White says.

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Plucker is a 4-in. cast aluminum wheel with 16 hard rubber fingers. Any drill with at least 2,000 rpm’s can be used to operate it.