



After years of ice storms, tonados and draught, Calvert finds plenty of use for his home-built brush grapple.

Home-Built Brush Grapple

Picking up brush and downed tree limbs is a breeze for Ken Calvert since he built a brush grapple for the front-end loader on his 68 hp Kubota tractor. Between ice storms, tornadoes and drought, Ken Calvert has lots of limbs and brush to move on his 300-acre property in East Texas.

"I just scoop the branches with the forks to line them up, clamp down on them and move them wherever I want to," Calvert says.

"All of the material to build the grapple came from my scrap pile," he adds, noting that he and his son are construction engineers. "The only thing I bought was the hydraulic cylinder and a lot of welding rods."

The double-acting hydraulic cylinder has a force of about 12,000 lbs. and opens the mouth of the grapple up to 60 in. The forks and grapple raise about 10 ft., and the loader is capable of lifting 3,800 lbs. without counterbalance weights on the back. Calvert limits loads to about 1,000 lbs.

He made the upright pieces out of 2 by 6-in. channel iron. Angles were calculated so the grapple is perpendicular to the forks.

"The thing that was most critical is the 2 3/8-in. OD tubing that pins the grapple," Calvert says. "It was tedious to make sure it was in line within 0.0006 of an inch."



Grapple "really comes in handy" for moving limbs and brush on Calvert's Texas farm.

He designed a latching T mechanism that allows him to take the grapple off and just use the forks or to attach other front-end implements.

Calvert uses the grapple mostly to move brush, but also moves rebar and other iron. It also holds big round hay bales.

"I have approximately \$300 in the grapple," he says. "A commercial device of this type, but not nearly as big or versatile, sells for about \$2,500."

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New Brushes Make Painting A Snap

Snap-in brush heads on paint brushes with pistol grip handles that swivel 360° make so much sense you'll wonder why no one thought of the idea before now.

The idea for the wrist-friendly design was the result of a stroke. "Earl Schiesz, father of one of the founders of the company, loved to paint but after his stroke was unable to hold traditional brushes in his hand," explains Beth James, spokesperson for the manufacturer, Green Toad. "When his son Lou couldn't find a brush his dad could hold, he started working on one. It became the Green Toad."

Two pistol grips (standard and extra contoured) are offered along with four brush heads (1 1/2-in. and 2 1/2-in. tapered and 2-in. and 3-in. straight edges), 6-in. and 9-in. rollers, and a 2-in. sponge.

"The pistol grip keeps the center of gravity on arm muscles and off the wrist and hand," explains James. "People who have trouble gripping a traditional brush can use the Green Toad without muscle pain."

A quick-release button locks the brush heads in place, but also allows the pins to rotate in 45° increments. The pivot mechanism uses a 19° clutch that is snug and offers full control. The handle comes with a lifetime warranty.

"You can use it in vertical, horizontal or at an angle and never have to change wrist position," says James. "Try it with one of the rollers, and you won't believe how different it



Paint brush has a snap-in brush head and a pistol grip handle that swivels 360 degrees.

is. It cuts down on painting time and mess."

A sample kit of a grip, three heads and two rollers with covers is expected to start retailing this summer in the U.S. for under \$30. They're already on the market in Canada.

Dealers will be listed on their website starting in early summer after the product is introduced.

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Gopher bait applicator deposits bait deep in gopher tunnel. It's made from a 28-in. flexible metal cable and a 1 1/4-in. dia. clear plastic bait chamber with a spring-loaded control handle.

Gopher "Snake" Places Bait Deep In Tunnel

Using a long-handled spoon to slip gopher bait into tunnels didn't work very well for Ken Gouff. So he asked his brother, Rod, for help. He used some steel cable and old auto parts to create the Gopher Snake, a 32-in. long gopher bait applicator.

"It's more a safety device than anything else," Gouff says. The bait is deposited deep in a gopher tunnel, and the opening is closed so the poison and poisoned gopher are buried. The brothers have used the Gopher Snake extensively and have been very satisfied with how it works.

The Gopher Snake is made from a 28-in. flexible metal cable and a 1 1/4-in. dia. clear plastic bait chamber with a spring-loaded control handle. It's simple to use. Push in the handle with the bait chamber shoved down

into the bait container. Release the handle to fill and close the chamber. Place the Gopher Snake as far in the tunnel as it will reach, and push the handle to open the chamber, and shake out the bait as you pull the unit out. Then cover the hole.

"There's nothing else like it on the market," Gouff says. "It works like an eye dropper. It's the only gopher bait applicator on the market that can be used with all baits."

Gouff and his brother patented the Gopher Snake and sell it for \$10.95 through their website. They welcome dealer inquiries.

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Upper half of X-Box hay feeder holds bales off the ground, while solid panels on lower sides protect dropped hay from getting trampled.

X-Box Feeder Slashes Hay Loss

Steve Greenslade says his X-Box hay rack cut his hay feeding costs in half. Greenslade and his father brainstormed the two-bale feeder during a year of high hay prices. However, he says the X-Box pays for itself even when prices are normal.

"My dad and I were trying to find a way to lower our feeding costs when we came up with the X-Box design," recalls Greenslade. "It works so well that the only thing I use my bale processor for any more is bedding and all I need a tractor for is to load the bales in place."

To sell the feeder through their company, Greenslades Northern Welding, they had to get permission from the computer game company of the same name.

The heavy-duty hay feeders are fabricated from 3/8-in. wall, 4-in. dia. recycled oil field tubing. They are 12 1/2 ft. long, 7 1/2 ft. wide and 7 ft. high. A cow/calf model is available with 10-in. bar spacing and a bull model with 12-in. bar spacing. They weigh 2,300 lbs. and are mounted on skids.

"You can pick them up with a hydraulic bale mover like a big bale or just skid them with a tractor," says Greenslade.

The upper half of the feeder holds the bales up and off the ground. Solid panels on the lower sides protect dropped hay from getting soiled.

"It even works well with freshly weaned calves," says Greenslade. "They have no problem learning to reach up to the hay."

Greenslade says customers have told him their X-Box feeder paid for itself in only a month with feed savings alone. They are built so heavy they're almost impossible to break, he adds.

The hay feeders are priced at \$2,795 (Canadian). Greenslade offers 15 percent discounts on additional units ordered.

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